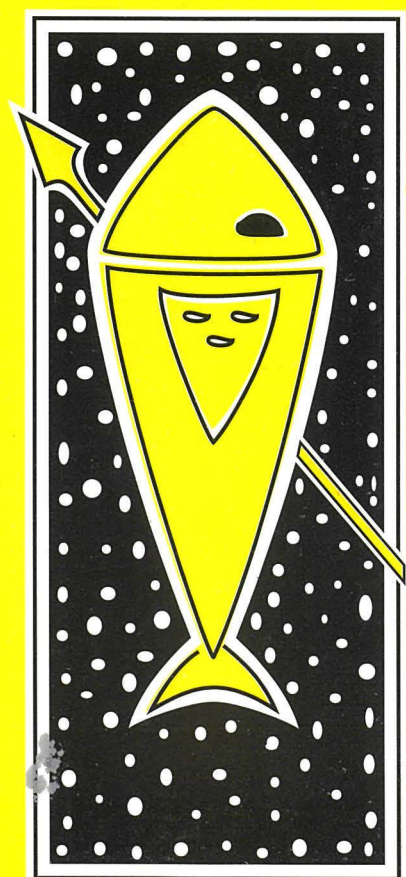




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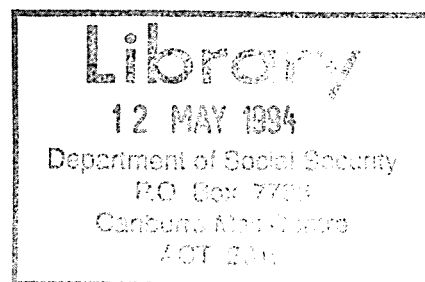
**The Jobs, Education and Training Program:
Aboriginal access in the Northern Territory.**



**Jobs, Education and Training
(JET):**

**Aboriginal access in the
Northern Territory**

Project Officer - Lorraine Randall



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A TRIBUTE TO LORRAINE RANDALL

Lorraine Randall, the author of this report, spent her early childhood in Point Pearce, an Aboriginal community in South Australia. The early part of her career was spent in the NT Welfare Department. From there she joined the National Aboriginal Education Committee at DEET in 1986.

As evidence of the considerable regard in which she was held as a public servant, Ms Randall was placed on the Executive Development Scheme in 1988. Under this scheme her final placement was as the Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Section (ATSIS) in the Department of Social Security (DSS), to which she was subsequently appointed on a permanent basis.

Ms Randall was justly renowned for her dedication to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Within DSS her tireless work and innovative approach has resulted in a strong network of field services that many other Departments regard as a pacesetter in service delivery standards. Among the programs which Ms Randall had a major role in establishing were the Support Network for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Parents (SNAP), Remote Visiting Teams (RVTs) and the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Interpreter Service.

In the latter part of her career as Director of ATSIS, she also became increasingly involved in ensuring that the concerns of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients received due recognition in "mainstream" DSS programs such as JET, Newstart and Disability Reform. This report is just one example of her efforts in improving access to JET for Aboriginal sole parents.

Ms Randall passed away on January 8, 1992. As a tribute to her work this department has established a Lorraine K Randall Scholarship to promote educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within DSS.



D VOLKER
SECRETARY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SECURITY

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I'd like to thank all the people who helped me make this report a reality, but especially I'd like to thank the Aboriginal Communities and the individuals I spoke with; the SNAP Officers in the Northern Territory, particularly Eileen Shaw and Sarah Huppartz; the Area Manager, Area Northern Territory, Pat Fegan, for his support for the project; the staff of the Alice Springs Regional Office and the Regional Managers Laurie Irvine and Peter Doure for all the invaluable information and practical help they gave me.

I also thank Jennifer Phillipot, my support worker, for help in arranging appointments and answering the phones when I was away on the road. Doreen Hook provided many hours of invaluable support, through word processing and the electronic mail work which got all the information from Alice Springs to Canberra.

I want also to acknowledge with gratitude the support of Carmen Zanetti, Assistant Secretary of Sole Parent Programs Branch, who gave me the opportunity to undertake this project, and personal support in carrying it out. I thank also Chris Butel, First Assistant Secretary of Program Delivery Division for his support for the project, and Janet Ramsay, Hedda Murray and the other members of JET Section for their administrative assistance.

I also thank my family for their advice and support, particularly my husband Bob, for taking the time to travel with me.

Lorraine Randall

December 1991

1. PROJECT STATEMENT

1.1 Objectives

- 1.1.1 To explore options and means of identifying and contributing to community based projects in the vicinity of Alice Springs, as part of the JET Program charter to provide training and employment for Aboriginal sole parent pensioners.
- 1.1.2 To investigate the other requirements and possibilities for successful delivery of the JET Program to Aboriginal sole parent pensioners in the Northern Territory.

1.2 Project Description

- 1.2.1 To explore and report on options and means of approach for identifying and contributing to community based enterprise project(s) in the vicinity of Alice Springs and on how to provide training and employment experience for Aboriginal sole parent pensioners.
- 1.2.2 To examine and report on other requirements and possibilities for successful delivery of the JET Program to Aboriginal sole parent pensioners in the Northern Territory, including culturally appropriate child care and the development of appropriate publicity methods and materials.

2. FOREWORD

- 2.1.1 As the Project Officer, I want to emphasise the importance of recognising, within the framework and context of the project:
- that Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander men, women and children have long established, complementary roles (see National Aboriginal Education Committee's response to *Girls in Australian Schools - Aboriginal Perspective*, Consultant Margo Weir);
 - that this report, whilst identifying the specific needs and present status of Aboriginal women, does not seek to deflect attention from the fundamental problems, such as poor access, inequitable outcomes and low self-esteem, suffered by Aboriginal men;
 - that any service or program for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people must be delivered in a holistic, non-authoritarian manner, if it is to be culturally acceptable. Factors such as physical environment, kinship responsibilities, the importance of maintaining the family, and respect for boundaries of non-negotiable procedures, must be accommodated if a program is to assist in effecting social change.
- 2.1.2 The traditional role of Aboriginal women has been to assist in sustaining the family unit economically, socially and culturally. This sustenance began with hunting and gathering and was centred around the campfire within the family unit, prior to European intervention (see Eleanor Bourke *Aboriginal Women in Education*, 1988. A record of the Australian Teachers Federation Womens Conference and the Interim National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Council, Alice Springs).
- 2.1.3 Since European contact, Aboriginal women have shown incredible adaptability, survival skills and cultural flexibility. I believe that the independence and assuredness that Aboriginal women have always had in Aboriginal society enables a continual strength of purpose today.
- 2.1.4 This project is an attempt by an Aboriginal person to bridge the gap between a mainstream program in DSS and the needs of the Aboriginal community in Central Australia.
- 2.1.5 In accepting the project, I was adamant that it not be viewed as a work of research, because I am not an academic and because I am convinced that we, the Aboriginal people, are one of the most researched indigenous people in the world. Our return to "Homelands - Country" has been not only for the affiliation to the land, but to ensure privacy and the maintenance of dignity.
- 2.1.6 I was also concerned that I did not become a "taker", but that, at the end of the project, I could honestly say to the community that the JET program is relevant to

their needs and aspirations for the future, and that its implementation in Central Australia will be done in a culturally sensitive manner. As part of my commitment to the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander communities and to the staff who serve them, I wish to provide a copy of my report to Area Northern Territory.

- 2.1.7 I therefore approached this project in a practical and unpretentious manner. Where there was an identified need to change an approach, it was done immediately. I was a listener and a facilitator and I acknowledged that my time in the field was limited. I worked on the basis that, if social change is to be acceptable and long lasting, it must be conceived and implemented by Aboriginal people themselves. You, the reader, will find that this report does not dwell on larger theoretical research findings. It is a simple and direct response to the need for social change and proposes a coordinated and holistic approach to service delivery by DSS in Central Australia.
- 2.1.8 Aboriginal staff in general support the holistic view of program delivery and agree that the Aboriginal client should not be seen as a human being fragmented across the range of DSS programs. The Department should, therefore, take responsibility for ensuring coordination of all programs that have an impact upon the lives of Aboriginal people.
- 2.1.9 The JET program has promoted the importance of community and individual involvement, participation and responsibility. We, as Aboriginal people seeking to improve the quality of our lives, must begin to address specific issues, needs and concerns, within the framework of our communities. It is not good enough to continually accept changes because someone has said they are good for us.
- 2.1.10 I approached this project, and its objectives, within the broader objective of seeking to ensure that Aboriginal sole parents can develop their potential within the fabric of our cultural identity, empowering them to become dignified and active members of Australian society, with a future for their children.
- 2.1.11 I consequently added to the stated project objectives the following subsidiary objectives:
- To reinforce the need for a coordinated, holistic approach to providing access to employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal sole parents.
 - To develop two way links between Aboriginal sole parents and employment and training opportunities.
 - To strengthen links between DSS Regional Offices and the remote communities they service through a mainstream program.
 - To make proposals towards ensuring that Aboriginal service delivery issues are incorporated in discussions about the directions that JET is to take in the future.
 - To develop a solid foundation for the future growth of the JET program and its relationship with Central Australian communities.
 - To signal to the National JET Steering Committee issues for delivery of the JET program nationally, with respect to the needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

2.1.12 As I was to return to the role of Director, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Section, DSS, at the conclusion of the project, it would have been a waste of a valuable opportunity if I had not also made observations about the wider delivery of DSS programs to the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people. These wider observations are contained in the Introduction and in Section 7 headed 'Observations on Wider Social Security Program Delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People'.

Lorraine Randall
Project Officer

3. INTRODUCTION

3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 JET was introduced to the Northern Territory in June, 1990 when a JET Adviser was appointed in Darwin. However, the low numbers of Aboriginal people involved in the program indicated that some problems existed which needed attention. One approach has been to employ an Aboriginal JET Adviser, based in Alice Springs, who started work in April 1991.
- 3.1.2 This project was undertaken in an attempt to identify the problems facing the JET program *prior* to the Alice Springs JET Adviser commencing.
- 3.1.3 It is expected that the findings and recommendations in this report will lay the ground-work for change in JET, as it applies to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as well as providing some direction for JET delivery in the Northern Territory.

3.2 Complexity of Community

- 3.2.1 In order to have the JET program accepted in a community I had to re-familiarise myself with kinship patterns and community politics.
- 3.2.2 JET cannot be imposed. To ensure its success it needs to be woven into community structures. This way women's participation will be ensured and supported at the community level.
- 3.2.3 In the same way, the JET Adviser will have to understand and acknowledge the kinship structures of a community. She or he will have to be able to work within the correct relationships and know which people are able to work together, otherwise the program will fail.

3.3 Gathering the Information

- 3.3.1 The project took me on an extensive itinerary in and around Alice Springs, where I was based between 7 November 1990 and 19 February 1991. Being based in Alice Springs enabled me to quickly identify who could give me the insights and information I was looking for in and around the area.
- 3.3.2 I visited numerous organisations, communities and community-run business enterprises in and around Alice, each one providing important information on the options available to Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people in the area.
- 3.3.3 The community-run enterprises have great potential for inclusion of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander JET clients. However, at the time I visited the communities these opportunities were primarily open only to clients receiving unemployment

benefits (now known as Jobsearch Allowance or Newstart Allowance). Consequently, in-principle agreements to include JET clients were obtained from the communities and DEET. These enterprises and agreements are discussed further in Section 5. (*See also Appendix A.*)

- 3.3.4 In Alice Springs I consulted with the Aboriginal Congress, Tangentyere Council, and CAAMA/IMPAJA media organisations. These groups had useful proposals to make about the JET program, outlined further in this report.
- 3.3.5 I spoke with members of the Yuendumu, 6-mile, Multji and Mt Allan/Yeulamu communities and councils. The duration of my visits ranged from two to ten days, depending on distance, the amount of consultation and discussion to be undertaken, and the timing of any 'Business' (*see Appendix B*).
- 3.3.6 Numerous private business enterprises are underway in the Alice Springs area which may offer opportunities to JET clients. The enterprises I visited were:
- the Kings Canyon Station;
 - the AAKI Gallery;
 - the Ti Tree Roadhouse;
 - the Aileron Hotel; and
 - the Dahlenburg Farm.
(*See 5.12*)
- 3.3.7 In the towns of Katherine, Tennant Creek and Darwin I met with staff in the Departments of Social Security (DSS); Employment, Education and Training (DEET); Health, Housing and Community Services (HHCS); the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC); and Departments of the Northern Territory Government.
- 3.3.8 I also conducted a national survey of Social Security workers involved either with JET or with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients (*see Appendix C*).
- 3.3.9 Training institutions I visited were the Bachelor College, Darwin, and the Institute of Aboriginal Development, Alice Springs. Discussions held with staff at these meetings provided invaluable background information on education and training opportunities for Aboriginal people. This is discussed further in Section 5.7.
- 3.3.10 My background literature included:
- Northern Australian Development Unit (NADU) Reports, DSS.
 - 'Training Needs Analysis of Community Government Councils in the Northern Territory', Northern Territory Government.
 - 'Women's Business', Office of the Status of Women, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C).
 - 'Girls in Australian Schools - Aboriginal perspective' Commonwealth Schools Commission Report.
 - Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) - Women's Reports.
 - Health, Housing and Community Services (HHCS) - Aboriginal Support

Worker Report.

- Aboriginal Economic Enterprises Development Unit (AEEDU)
- Aboriginal Employment Development Policy (AEDP) plans, DEET.

3.3.11 Other sources of information came from examining the Department's sole parent pensioner data issue, Aboriginal and Islander Liaison Officer (AILO) visiting service reports, and SNAP Officer reports.

4. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sole Parent Pensioners

- 4.1.1 In November 1990 the number of Aboriginal sole parent pensioners in the Alice Springs region was 963. In January 1991 the total number of sole parent pensioners in the same region was 1096.
- 4.1.2 Unfortunately, statistics for these two population groups are not available for the same month. However, it is fair to approximate from these data that between November 1990 and January 1991 88% of sole parent pensioners in the region were Aboriginal clients. This demonstrates the enormous number of sole parent pensioners in that region who are Aboriginal.
- 4.1.3 Further, of the 963 Aboriginal sole parent pensioners in the region, 165, or 17%, were teenage clients - three-and-a-half times the national average (TABLE 1).
- 4.1.4 In addition, this data may significantly underestimate Aboriginal and Aboriginal teenage sole parent pensioners as Aboriginality is not always recorded on client data. Therefore many Aboriginal sole parent pensioners are not identified as such on the system, and data can only underestimate. At the moment there is no way of identifying the size of the error (*see 6.13*).

TABLE 1: Aboriginal SPPs aged 16-19 as at 1 November 1990.

| <u>Age</u> | <u>Number</u> |
|------------|---------------|
| 16 | 14 |
| 17 | 29 |
| 18 | 54 |
| <u>19</u> | <u>68</u> |
| Total | 165 |

- 4.1.5 These statistics indicate not only the high proportion of Aboriginal sole parent pensioners within the sole parent pensioner population of Central Australia, but also that the proportion of teenage Aboriginal sole parent pensioners is greatly out of proportion to the rest of Australia and that this group may need special attention.
- 4.1.6 From this it should be recognised that the Department urgently needs to address its approach to service provision for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander JET clients in the Northern Territory.

4.2 Under-utilisation of JET

- 4.2.1 It is clear from my discussions with Aboriginal Service Unit Managers and JET State Co-ordinators that the JET program is not well utilised by Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander sole parents.
- 4.2.2 Many are unaware of the program and are reluctant to contact JET Advisers for information. Furthermore, indications are that Aboriginal & Islander Liaison Officers and SNAP Officers are not well informed about JET. Reasons for under-utilisation of JET range from Aboriginal people's perceptions of the program, to difficulties in administration.

4.3 Employment Prospects

- 4.3.1 I found there to be a fair degree of scepticism among Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory about prospects for employment after training. To some extent this scepticism is well founded. Rural employment opportunities have declined sharply during the current recession.
- 4.3.2 Lack of experience in the workforce is an obvious disadvantage in the job market. When coupled with widespread prejudice on the part of employers, it is a major disadvantage for Aboriginal women and sole parents.
- 4.3.3 I found that most commercial enterprises that I spoke with would not employ Aboriginal people as they are stereotyped as unreliable, shy, lacking in confidence and initiative, inept with money, and having unacceptable health and hygiene standards.
- 4.3.4 The Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) provides only limited prospects for Aboriginal women, and virtually none for Aboriginal sole parent pensioners at this time (*see section 5.5*).

4.4 Perceptions of Aboriginal Sole Parents

- 4.4.1 More significantly, many Aboriginal women are caught in a cycle of low expectations and poor outcomes. Those with large families and substantial kinship obligations cannot readily enter the workforce and may not be encouraged to move outside traditional female roles.

4.5 Child Care and Transport Facilities

- 4.5.1 Child care facilities are perceived by Aboriginal women as culturally inappropriate, and few places are sought by them. Lack of transport and the consequent need to be uprooted from family to attend residential courses, is another significant obstacle to taking up training and employment opportunities for those living at a distance from urban centres.

4.6 Difficulties faced by Northern Territory Aboriginal People

4.6.1 The following statement, taken from the Aboriginal Employment Development Policy (AEDP) policy document, will give readers a deeper insight into the difficulties faced by Aboriginal people, and Aboriginal women in particular. It is particularly important that the JET program take into consideration not only the immediate situation of Aboriginal sole parent pensioners, but also the economic and social environment in which they live day-to-day.

4.6.2 "The Government acknowledges that Aboriginal people are the most disadvantaged group in the Australian labour market, as evidenced by the following:

- only one-third of Aboriginals of working age (ie those in the population aged 15 and over) are employed, whereas nearly two-thirds of other Australians of working age have jobs;
- the Aboriginal employment that does exist is concentrated in lower skilled and lower paying jobs that are frequently casual, temporary or seasonal jobs or in jobs that are disappearing from the Australian labour market (particularly in rural areas) because of technological and structural change;
- just over 2% of Aboriginal people who have jobs are self-employed compared with a national rate of almost 15%;
- Aboriginal unemployment is at least five times higher than the national unemployment rate;
- nearly one-third of all Aboriginals of working age are dependent on unemployment benefit for their income, a rate that is six times the national rate; and
- Aboriginal incomes are, on average, only half the levels enjoyed by other Australians.

4.6.3 The Government notes that Aboriginal unemployment is markedly different in underlying structure from the national unemployment because:

- the Aboriginal population is concentrated in rural and remote areas where there are few or no employment opportunities. Some 42% of the Aboriginal population live in or around settlements or townships of less than 1,000 in total population;
- the number of Aboriginals participating in education and gaining recognised skills are lower, with the retention rate of Aboriginal students in secondary schooling being only one-third of the national rate and the proportion of Aboriginals having obtained post-school qualifications is only one-fifth of the national rate;
- a greater proportion of the Aboriginal population are in younger age groups that typically experience high unemployment, as two-thirds of Aboriginal people are under the age of 25 compared with only 40% of the non-Aboriginal population;
- the existence of racial discrimination exacerbates the employment problems Aboriginals face; and

- the level of social disadvantage with respect to housing, health, other social conditions and, in some cases, language, inhibits the ability of Aboriginal people to participate in mainstream employment.”

4.6.4 Given that the JET program is specifically relevant to the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, it is important to recognise that within the Aboriginal Employment Development Policy (AEDP) it has been recognised that Aboriginal women are the most disadvantaged of all Australian women.

4.6.5 Specific strategies to promote Aboriginal women’s access to employment and training need to be developed.

4.6.6 In recognition of the barrier that child care responsibilities may pose, the issue of culturally appropriate child care and the establishment of child care facilities on CDEP communities needs to be addressed as soon as possible.

4.7 Conclusion

4.7.1 The fundamental conclusion I reached is that, while the Department’s programs are becoming more and more sophisticated, the reality ‘on the ground’ for Aboriginal clients is the prime need for:

- daily resources;
- basic education in preparation of food;
- community health care for babies and old people;
- alcohol education; and
- positive role models for young people.

4.7.2 The national social and economic circumstances in which JET operates, and in which Aboriginal sole parents are trying to enter or return to the labour market, can be summarised as follows:

- although there is a smaller number of Aboriginal sole parents in comparison to non-Aboriginal clients, within the Aboriginal community the percentage of sole parents is high;
- there are disproportionate numbers of unemployed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
- cultural and social patterns do not readily fit into mainstream program delivery;
- education standards are low, but some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are returning to tertiary and confidence building courses;
- availability of work fluctuates over time and varies between areas.

4.7.3 All of my more specific recommendations follow from these general conclusions.

6. OBJECTIVE 2: JET AND ABORIGINAL SOLE PARENT PENSIONERS IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

6.1 Objective 2

6.1.1 To investigate other requirements and possibilities for successful delivery of the JET program to Aboriginal sole parent pensioners in the Northern Territory.

6.2 The Current Situation

6.2.1 In my previous position of Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services, DSS, I was aware of the negative perceptions of JET from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community and staff of DSS.

6.2.2 Of particular concern were:

- the JET image;
- no information products targeted to this group;
- JET Adviser positions were not in areas where there are high Aboriginal sole parent populations;
- at that time there was not one Aboriginal JET Adviser position in the JET program;
- perceived inability of the JET program to provide culturally appropriate child care arrangements; and
- the lack of JET promotion to Aboriginal and Islander Liaison Officers (AIOs).

6.3 Current Views on the JET Image in the Northern Territory

6.3.1 From the visits I undertook in the Territory it became noticeable to me that:

- JET National Information Campaign had no relevance specifically to the Aboriginal Community and very little appreciation by mainstream clients.
- There was no understanding and knowledge that JET is relevant to the circumstances of the Aboriginal community, by either the client group or the staff of DSS.
- The program has come across as a European, middle-class program.

6.4 Perceptions of JET from Field Operations Staff in Social Security

6.4.1 In accepting the JET Aboriginal Access Project, I felt it imperative to obtain comments from Aboriginal staff in the field operations areas.

- 6.4.2 I wrote to the DSS Aboriginal Service Unit Managers and staff in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Section of DSS requesting them to provide written comments addressing the following five areas:
- Perceptions of the JET program - positive/negative.
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander access to the JET program from a national perspective.
 - Marketing strategies - how they might be made more culturally appropriate.
 - Requirements for successful delivery of JET to Aboriginal sole parent pensioners.
 - General comments.
- 6.4.3 In addition, a letter was sent to JET Advisers asking that they phone Aboriginal Service Unit staff with their impressions of the JET program so that a clearer picture could be obtained on a State by State level.
- 6.4.4 The details of this survey are contained in Appendix C. In summary, the responses confirmed my own observations, indicating that JET was not relevant in its current format and that radical changes need to take effect if it is to become viable for use by Aboriginal sole parents.

6.5 Conclusion

- 6.5.1 Given all of the above, I was of the opinion that DSS has a responsibility to address cultural discrepancies in JET and other mainstream programs. The following strategic responses provide a step towards that end.

6.6 Access and Equity for Aboriginal Clients

- 6.6.1 In addition to points already made, it became obvious in the course of my Community visits that it is unrealistic to believe that the program would be successful if the JET Adviser begins to distinguish between those women who fit the JET eligibility criteria, ie between women in receipt of the sole parent pension and those in receipt of a split Jobsearch or Newstart Allowance (previously known as split unemployment benefit).
- 6.6.2 Many women who choose not to apply for the sole parent pension do so because of kinship obligations, community stability or threat of violence. Given that the living conditions of the majority of women in receipt of the sole parent pension and split Jobsearch or Newstart Allowance are the same, those receiving the split allowance should not be excluded from JET.
- 6.6.3 (For details of living conditions of women receiving split payments in remote communities, refer to 'Where to Now?' Department of Social Security payments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities in North Australia, North Australia Development Unit, September 1990.)
- 6.6.4 In addition, eligibility should be extended to SNAP clients, as evidence exists that SNAP clients are progressing from SNAP, which provides support with nutrition and other personal care issues, to JET (*see recommendations 23 and 24*).

6.7 Establishment of JET in Alice Springs

6.7.1 As a consequence of this project, Regional Office staff have become familiar with the JET program, its aims and objectives and, more specifically, its viability to the Aboriginal community at large.

6.7.2 This has occurred through the following means:

- day to day liaison with Regional Office staff throughout the duration of the project;
- regular correspondence to Regional Office Management Teams providing updates on project outcomes;
- information seminars, targeted:
 - at employers, held at the Mayor's chambers with the Mayoress and Regional Office Manager as the joint hosts;
 - at Aboriginal organisations, introducing the JET program, along with an update on DSS programs for 1991;
- extensive Community visits with both SNAP officers and Aboriginal and Islander Liaison Officers (AILO); and
- ongoing consultation with other Government Departments, particularly DEET and HHCS.

6.7.3 Due to a delay in the selection of a JET Adviser for the Alice Springs Office, I was unable at the conclusion of the project to provide an extensive handover.

6.8 Publicity

6.8.1 It has been evident for the duration of this project that there is a need for a comprehensive marketing approach to meet the information needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

6.8.2 I have already referred to the failure of current JET publicity and information materials in communicating with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. From my own observation in the majority of communities I visited, there were no indications of DSS publicity materials at all.

6.8.3 I came to the conclusion that information and promotional campaigns to the Aboriginal community in Northern Australia are best undertaken at the local level, eg. CAAMA/IMPAJA's campaigns 'AIDS', 'Beat the Grog', and 'Nutrition'.

6.8.4 It is my opinion that previous marketing programs have had limited success because of the difficulties in adapting national campaigns to varying local circumstances.

6.8.5 The success of these localised campaigns, I believe, has been their ability:

- to incorporate locals in the script, therefore emphasising the concept of role models;
- to respond to local or regional topical issues as demonstrated by the 'Beat the Grog' campaign; and

- to increase response to the message by giving possible solutions to the problems (*see recommendations 25 to 28 and Appendix E*).

6.9 Outreach

6.9.1 Prior to the commencement of this project, information seminars were held in Darwin. It was documented by the JET Adviser that the seminars were not successful.

6.9.2 The reasons given were:

- Lack of co-operation by other Departmental staff.
- An opinion that JET was not relevant to the living situations of the Aboriginal community.
- The JET Adviser at that time had limited contacts within the Aboriginal community.

6.9.3 Soon after commencing this project, there was another, more co-ordinated attempt to reach sole parents within the Darwin region. This second JET information day incorporated a sausage sizzle and involved staff from DSS, DEET, HHCS and the Darwin University. The Information Day was advertised in newspapers and over the radio.

6.9.4 AILO and SNAP officers informed special interest groups directly and provided transport for those clients in outlying areas who wished to attend.

6.9.5 The outcome of the information day was the same as the original one in that very few sole parents attended. However, it was effective in having DSS staff work and co-operate together.

6.9.6 I am of the opinion that while the numbers of clients attending the sausage sizzle were down, the joint co-ordinated effort of SNAP, JET, AILO, DEET, HHCS officers, and staff from Darwin University has indicated that in the future a lot more interaction and communication will take place, therefore improving the service to all JET clients, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal (*see recommendations 29 to 32*).

6.10 Relationship between JET and Social Security Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Staff and Programs

6.10.1 Closer liaison between the JET Advisers, the AILOs, Social Workers and SNAP Officers in the Northern Territory is important to improving delivery of the JET program to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, not least as these staff often work with the same clients and their programs have common objectives.

6.10.2 Closer liaison between these complementary programs would result in a better service delivery to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients. (*See recommendations 33 to 37.*)

6.11 JET Staffing and Training

6.11.1 I initiated a pilot in the Casuarina Regional Office, Darwin, to trial a composite AILO/JET position. The Average Operative Staffing Level (AOSL) allocated for provision of a JET clerical assistant was combined with existing AILO AOSL to up-grade the AILO position from Administrative Service Officer (ASO) 4 to ASO5. The Selection Criteria and Duty Statement for the position were extended to include JET responsibilities (*see Appendix F*).

6.11.2 This trial was undertaken in response to:

- the need for close AILO, SNAP, JET liaison for effective delivery of JET to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; and
- the poor take-up of JET by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sole parent pensioners in Darwin and their perception of DSS staff.

6.11.3 The trial was undertaken from 2 January to 30 June 1991.

6.11.4 Such composite positions would also be of value in regions where there is a high Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population but not a general sole parent pensioner population high enough to justify a separate JET Adviser. They would have particular value in linking JET and SNAP and so assisting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sole parents in progressing from SNAP (which offers nutritional and personal care assistance) to JET.

6.11.5 If Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people are to have access to JET, there is a need to reverse the trend of generously servicing 'easy' client groups, eg. major cities, and underservicing areas of relatively low population, but with a high proportion of Aboriginal sole parents, eg. Moree and Tennant Creek.

6.11.6 In reversing this trend, JET Advisers who are appointed to regions with significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations will need to work with the AILO and Regional Manager to gain knowledge of the Communities' cultures, aspirations and needs (*see recommendations 38 to 43*).

6.12 JET Performance Monitoring

6.12.1 The reports of my visits to remote Communities (Yuendumu, Imampa, Multji, *see Appendix B*) indicate the time-intensive nature of effective delivery of JET to sole parents in these Communities.

6.12.2 Successful JET delivery to remote Communities will require:

- long-distance travel;
- liaison with external organisations servicing the communities;
- liaison with internal community service-providers;
- careful identification and acknowledgement of the different skin groups within the Communities and their influence on Community and individual working relationships and patterns;
- careful establishment of contacts with sole parents within the Community, over a number of visits;

- recognition of the extreme difficulties faced by such sole parents in accessing training and employment.
- 6.12.3 It is clear that effective JET delivery to these Communities cannot be expected to meet the usual new client targets and outcome expectations of JET.
- 6.12.4 This is also an access and equity issue. We should be reorganising resource allocations to ensure that the client group with the greatest need is given more resources. This is not the client group closest to town, which has an ability to utilise resources, given their confidence and comprehension level.
- 6.12.5 It is my opinion that the JET Adviser will continually have low client numbers. However, this should not be seen as a reflection of the workload.
- 6.12.6 What the JET Adviser will be confronted with is intense case loads, encompassing a broad range of educational standards and differing social values. It is therefore necessary that isolated positions such as these be given additional support from management, support which encourages innovative options in addressing the broad range of needs of this client group (*see Appendix G, and recommendations 44 and 45*).

6.13 Statistical Records

- 6.13.1 It is essential that a good statistical record is maintained of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander JET clients, sole parent pensioners and DSS clients as a whole. This is necessary so that access and equity needs can be addressed in delivery by JET and the Department as a whole. It is also important to have an accurate record of JET and Departmental success in meeting the needs of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people.
- 6.13.2 Identification of their Aboriginality is optional for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients of DSS, and some always choose not to so identify themselves; however, the statistical record of those who do identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander is not accurate. Analysis of such statistics is also inadequate.
- 6.13.3 It is well known that Regional Office coders frequently code Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients as 'Australian' rather than 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' because the 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' bar is on a separate page of the form, and because they do not understand the significance of the distinction.
- 6.13.4 There is currently no program to extract statistics of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients by State. Only the total for Australia is provided.
- 6.13.5 On the JET On-line System, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander JET clients are at present only recorded through a code for Preferred Language. This is inadequate.
- 6.13.6 The JET Indicator on the DSS Pensions System provides a further indication of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander client numbers. However, given the unreliability of the Pensions System record, an improved JET record is required. (*See recommendations 46 to 49.*)

7. OBSERVATIONS ON WIDER SOCIAL SECURITY PROGRAM DELIVERY TO ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE

7.1 General Observations

- 7.1.1 As mentioned in the Foreword to this report the current environment and living situation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sole parents impacts not only on the effectiveness of the JET program, but upon DSS delivery in general. Therefore, I took the opportunity to look also at DSS service delivery in general, and how it can be improved for the benefit of both the Department and the clients.
- 7.1.2 It is essential that, if the Department is seriously committed to social justice, access and equity, that appropriate weight is given to the area of Aboriginal service delivery in the Regional Office staffing models.
- 7.1.3 Irrespective of the fact that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander client population represents a small minority of the national client population in a specific program, they do in fact represent a majority of the most grossly disadvantaged group in Australia.
- 7.1.4 The Department needs to accept across all program areas that there are costs to be incurred in providing Equity of Access for this client population, due to geographical isolation, low literacy levels and cultural barriers.
- 7.1.5 Social change must come from the community. For any program to survive, the objectives must be based on the needs of individuals. Consultation and liaison prior to new initiatives being implemented are essential (*see recommendations 50 to 53*).

7.2 North Australia Development Unit (NADU)

- 7.2.1 Within the context of this project, I was confronted quite early with the need for common DSS policy, service delivery, and program issues across Central Australia to be addressed in a co-ordinated way.
- 7.2.2 It was reported to me that, during field initiation by Regional Office field staff, issues are being raised but only being addressed in an ad hoc manner or just left in the air. Having sat and listened, I believe it is immoral for us not to have a medium through which these concerns can be reported and properly addressed.
- 7.2.3 I believe that a permanent presence by NADU in Central Australia and better lines of communication between NADU and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Section would assist in this. I am also aware of there being community support for a NADU presence in Central Australia (*see recommendations 48 to 63*).

7.3 Child Support Program

- 7.3.1 One of the opinions given to me while I was involved in the JET project was that Aboriginal sole parent pensioner numbers are down because of women's reluctance to pursue Child Support, and that this is reflected in the large numbers of split Jobsearch or Newstart Allowance payments.
- 7.3.2 Given my time constraints, I was unable to pursue this further. However I am also aware of some officers' frustration in dealing with Aboriginal women on remote communities, and in establishing which category their circumstances fit into.
- 7.3.3 A review of the Child Support Program and the Child Support Agency process and guidelines as they impact on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community could assist with this problem. (*See recommendation 59.*)

7.4 Roles and Functions of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Liaison Officers (AILOs)

- 7.4.1 In my capacity as Director of the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Section in DSS, I have been aware of the changing roles of the AILO since the program was first implemented.
- 7.4.2 Now having observed the workload of AILOs at a Field Operations area, I am alarmed at the pressures placed on them.
- 7.4.3 AILOs are now expected to be the point of contact to pass on information of all changes occurring in DSS and to deal with contentious issues about the appropriateness of these changes, without fully understanding the implications themselves, as they have been given no time for proper training.
- 7.4.4 I have observed mainstream staff continually referring 'conflict issues' to AILO staff, or emphasising that it is the role of the Aboriginal staff to deal with "the problems of Aboriginals."
- 7.4.5 Of specific concern are the expectations placed on the AILOs to deal with:
- the complexity of Social Security payments and trying to match this knowledge to an individual client's circumstances;
 - the changes to CDEP; AILOs need time to become familiarised with all forthcoming changes.
- 7.4.6 Other concerns are:
- travelling schedules and time management; and
 - the stress on AILOs and their families (*see recommendation 60*).

7.5 Newstart

- 7.5.1 I cannot emphasise enough the concerns throughout the Aboriginal community at the implications of Newstart to remote communities, given their employment opportunities.

7.5.2 There has been talk of the possibility of 'exemptions' to Newstart rules in some areas, given local conditions. This, I believe, is putting the issues under the carpet.

7.5.3 Realistic strategies and time-frames need to be developed reflecting local circumstances. (*See recommendations 61 to 63.*)

7.6 Tennant Creek

An account of my visit to Tennant Creek and issues which arose is in Appendix B (*see recommendations 64 and 65*).

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 This report is primarily concerned with JET delivery to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the Northern Territory.
- 8.2 However, as mentioned in the Introduction, a holistic approach is preferred because our Aboriginal clients should not be seen as a people fragmented across a range of DSS programs. This would not benefit the clients, the JET program, or DSS in general.
- 8.3 Therefore, both JET specific and other more general recommendations are listed together, although main areas of responsibility have been highlighted.
- 8.4 Rather than divide the report between JET and other programs, I have instead divided the recommendations into the following categories:
- 8.5
- I GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS
 - II CHILD CARE
 - III EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES
 - IV ACCESS AND EQUITY FOR ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CLIENTS
 - V PUBLICITY
 - VI OUTREACH
 - VII RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JET AND DSS ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STAFF AND PROGRAM
 - VIII JET STAFFING AND TRAINING
 - IX JET PERFORMANCE MONITORING
 - X STATISTICAL RECORD: ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SPPs AND JET
 - XI WIDER DSS DELIVERY TO ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE
 - XII OTHER DSS PROGRAMS
 - NORTH AUSTRALIA DEVELOPMENT UNIT (NADU)
 - NEWSTART
 - CHILD SUPPORT PROGRAM
 - TENNANT CREEK
 - AILO PROGRAM

I GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Responsible Area Recommendation

1. DSS/DEET/
HHCS That Communities be encouraged to share responsibility for their own well-being, to help promote self determination, active participation, education and ownership.
2. JET That access to transport needs to be analysed by JET Advisers prior to referring clients to training or job placements.
3. DEET That training be tailored to local enterprise and work opportunities, and that it allow for progressive skills acquisition.

II CHILD CARE

4. HHCS/JET That Health, Housing and Community Services focus on the importance of cultural appropriateness in provision of child care services to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and that JET Advisers be well-informed as to the availability of culturally appropriate child care services.
5. HHCS /
ATSIC That on-going monitoring should be maintained by HHCS and ATSIC of those CDEP communities which have made allocation for a female participant to be a child care worker to ensure that:
 - inbuilt support is maintained with regard to number of hours, child care facility, toys/books etc, number of children, relief workers;
 - appropriate training is provided;
 - the on-going quality of culturally appropriate child care provisions is ensured.

III EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

6. DEET That initial training be linked to existing courses at established education institutions with community acceptability, eg. Batchelor College, Darwin (Remote Area Teaching Program; Community Development Processes; Field Officer Training etc.) and the Institute of Aboriginal Development, Alice Springs.
7. JET/DEET/
ATSIC That the Alice Springs JET Adviser, in consultation with the Regional Manager, DEET and ATSIC, continue to monitor the involvement of sole parents within the identified initiatives of:
 - the Aboriginal Employment Development Policy (AEDP), including the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP); and
 - the Aboriginal Employment and Education Development Units (AEEDU).
8. JET That the JET Adviser seek opportunities for employment for JET

clients within such initiatives.

9. DSS/DEET That, when appropriate, commitment should be sought for the inclusion in such initiatives of specific employment opportunities for women, including sole parent pensioners.

10. JET That the JET Steering Committee support the further development of the projects listed in recommendations 12 to 20, and that Departmental representatives convey this support as appropriate to their Departments.

11. JET That the Alice Springs JET Adviser follow up on the in principle agreement given for JET clients to participate in the enterprises, listed in recommendations 12 to 20.

Yuendumu

12. DSS/ATSIS That there be seeding money made available to support Yuendumu's request for a Community laundromat as per the objectives of the SNAP program.

13. DEET That funding be made available to support Yuendumu's request to establish the Yurrampi Crafts and the Bush Medicine enterprises (*Appendix A*).

14. DEET That support be given to the concept of Aboriginal Economic Enterprises being linked with the Community's long term plans for self-management.

Imampa - Mount Ebenezer Roadhouse

15. DEET That consideration be given to a specifically funded position by DEET to be the Trainer/Liaison Officer for Aboriginal staff at Mt Ebenezer Roadhouse.

16. DSS/DEET That when consideration is given to the development of Economic Enterprises for Aboriginal Sole Parents, it should be with a view to ensuring that they are given the opportunity to utilise their natural/positive skills as a basis for further learning.

Tangentyere Council Home Makers Program

17. DSS/DEET That the Alice Springs JET Adviser, in consultation with the SNAP Officer, maintain a close liaison with the Home Maker Program, with the aim of identifying and acting upon opportunities for JET clients.

Alice Springs town area: Tyeweretye staff training proposal

18. JET That the Alice Springs JET Adviser monitor the development of the Tyeweretye Staff Training Program and actively seek opportunities for JET clients within it.

19. DSS
DEET/HHCS That the special needs of Aboriginal Town Campers be acknowledged by DSS, DEET and HHCS staff, and that these people's needs be included in any development of new programs

and service delivery proposals within the Alice Springs town areas.

King's Canyon and Other Private Business Enterprises

20. JET/DEET

That the JET Adviser, Alice Springs, in conjunction with DEET, maintain contact with the King's Canyon tourist venture and other private business enterprises which may provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander JET clients.

IV

ACCESS AND EQUITY FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CLIENTS

21. JET

That strategies be developed to ensure JET be seen as culturally and practically relevant to Aboriginal sole parents in their fight for economic independence.

22. JET

That, if JET is to be culturally acceptable in the Northern Territory, JET Advisers in the Northern Territory should have the option to include in JET Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in receipt of split Jobsearch or Newstart payments.

NB:

It may be necessary for such women to register at the CES as Unemployed in order to qualify for access to labour market training.

Where appropriate, the JET Adviser should suggest that women on split payments consider registering for benefit in their own right.

JET Advisers should be aware that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who are not sole parent pensioners do not have access to JET child care assistance, or to other child care assistance available to sole parents. (DEET advise that it may be possible for child care costs to be met by CES offices as part of course costs. Local discussions with AEEDU staff could assist in this.)

23. JET

That all JET Advisers have informal discretion to include in their activities all Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander women who wish to be involved. These are likely to include women on split benefit payments and SNAP clients.

NB:

This recommendation is made in recognition that a distinction between sole parent pensioners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women is often culturally inappropriate and has been found to be a barrier to participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in JET activities.

JET Advisers should be aware that Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander women who are not sole parent pensioners will have to register as UE at the CES, and qualify for this registration, if they

are to participate in labour market program training.

JET Advisers should be aware that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who are not sole parent pensioners do not have access to JET child care assistance, or to other child care assistance available to sole parents. (DEET advise that it may be possible for child care costs to be met by CES offices as part of course costs. Local discussions with AEEDU staff could assist in this.)

24. JET That the Alice Springs JET Adviser provide a 'safe environment' in which Aboriginal sole parents, particularly women, are able to talk through their needs and identify which programs are helpful.

V

PUBLICITY

25. JET I&PR That funds be made available for the production of culturally appropriate national JET publicity and information materials.
26. JET I&PR That funds also be made available for the production of culturally appropriate materials at the local level.
27. JET I&PR That JET publicity and information materials be produced in conjunction with integrated national publicity materials to inform Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women about DSS programs.
28. JET I&PR That in considering the development of national JET materials for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people, National JET Steering Committee should give consideration to Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA) to develop culturally appropriate JET video and press materials for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. CAAMA has proven experience in developing products appropriate to specific client groups.

VI

OUTREACH

29. JET/DSS AREA NT/ DEET/HHCS / ATSIIC That the JET Adviser, Alice Springs, ATSIIS staff and Area Outreach, in liaison with DEET, HHCS and ATSIIC, build on the experience of the attempt so far to provide JET Information Seminars for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sole parent pensioners.
30. JET/DSS AREA NT/DEET/ HHCS /ATSIIC That Information Seminars on a smaller scale and in a community setting be trialled.
31. DSS AREA NT That strategies which incorporate a holistic approach be developed to improve access and equity for Aboriginal women, ensuring internal co-ordination between benefit areas.
32. DSS AREA NT That co-ordination occur between the positions of JET, AILO,

SNAP and Area Outreach, and between these positions and DEET.

VII

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JET AND SOCIAL SECURITY ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STAFF AND PROGRAMS

33. JET/ATSIIS That the importance of close liaison between JET Advisers, AILOs and SNAP Officers in delivering JET to Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people be recognised.
34. JET/ATSIIS That SNAP Officers and JET Advisers dealing with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients sit down and discuss common objectives and strategies.
35. JET/ATSIIS That a co-ordinated visitation schedule should be developed by the JET Adviser in consultation with SNAP officers.
36. JET/ATSIIS That training on the nature and objectives of the JET program should be provided for:
- AILOs
 - SNAP Officers
 - members of Remote Area Support Unit (RASU)
 - selected Regional Office staff.
37. DSS That consideration be given to the establishment of the Special Customer Services model, presently operating in Alice Springs, in other DSS Regional Offices. Under this model, clients have access to a Social Worker, a SNAP Officer and a JET Adviser in a single organisational unit. Experience in Alice Springs shows that sole parents benefit from this integrated service.

VIII

JET STAFFING AND TRAINING

38. JET/ATSIIS That ATSIIS monitor the outcomes of the trial composite position in Darwin (eg SNAP/JET). Regions with Aboriginal sole parent numbers that do not meet national requirements for location of a JET Adviser, but do not represent a high proportion of Aboriginals in need of service across two program areas.
39. JET/ATSIIS That pending the outcome of the trial composite position, such a composite position be adopted on a permanent basis in Darwin.
40. JET That new JET Adviser positions be provided in areas with high numbers of Aboriginal clients, e.g. Tennant Creek, Moree. The position profile should have the same selection criteria and Duty Statement as the Alice Springs position.
41. JET That the JET program adopt recruitment practices in line with the recommendations of the DSS Access and Equity Program and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy (ATSIIS) to reflect 2.8%, or at least the percentage of Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islanders in the general population of each State.

42. TRAINING/JET That a cross-cultural training module be developed as part of the National JET Training Package.

43. AT SIS/JET That as newly appointed JET Advisers become appointed to regions where there are significant Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander populations, AILO staff, in consultation with Regional Managers and Aboriginal Service Unit Managers, educate the JET Adviser to the Community's culture, needs and aspirations for the future.

IX

JET PERFORMANCE MONITORING

44. JET That the National JET Steering Committee should acknowledge that targets are not going to be met when working in remote communities, and that the servicing of remote Aboriginal communities is going to be resource intensive.

45. JET That given relatively low educational standards, differing social values and the lack of visible employment opportunities, standard quantitative measures are not valid for measuring the success of the JET program in Aboriginal communities.

X

STATISTICAL RECORD: ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SOLE PARENT PENSIONERS AND JET

46. DSS That, as accurate statistics are essential in decision making for program delivery, DSS should improve the recording of statistics to identify Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander sole parents on an Area basis.

47. DSS That Regional office staff, particularly those involved with client data processing, should understand and communicate the reasons for keeping statistics on Aboriginal clients, as distinct from other client groups. However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients have the right to decline to be identified as Aboriginals.

48. DSS That a program be established to identify Aboriginal sole parents on a State by State basis.

49. JET That improved measures for recording the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sole parent pensioners participating in the JET program be introduced. (Aboriginality is at present recorded through a code for Preferred Language.)

XI

WIDER SOCIAL SECURITY DELIVERY TO ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE

50. DSS/I&PR That support be given to reconsidering the proposal for a Market Research consultancy to examine the relative effectiveness of the

various media which DSS have used in the past to communicate with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

51. DSS/I&PR That appropriate strategies be developed within current operational constraints which will enhance the effectiveness of the Department's future information strategies directed at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
52. DSS/I&PR That serious consideration be given by the Information and Public Relations area to re-introducing the position of the Aboriginal National Information Officer.
53. DSS/I&PR That it be acknowledged that, irrespective of the fact that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sole parent pensioner population represents a very small proportion of the national client number, this group actually represents an enormous proportion of the most grossly disadvantaged group in Australia, and that the information needs of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities must be met if the Department is to fulfil its charter "to deliver social security entitlements with fairness, courtesy and efficiency."

XII

OTHER SOCIAL SECURITY PROGRAMS

North Australia Development Unit (NADU)

54. NADU That there be a permanent presence of the North Australia Development Unit in Central Australia.
55. NADU That there be established a formal line of communication between NADU and the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Section in National Administration, given their common focus.
56. NADU That a position be made available for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representative on the NADU Advisory Committee.
57. NADU That there be established a sub-committee to the NADU Advisory Committee, comprising representatives of the Aboriginal Community across the north, similar to the very active Migrant Advisory Committee.
58. NADU That additional staff resources for NADU be allocated to have a position based in Alice Springs but serving Tennant Creek for long periods.

Child Support Program (CSP)

59. CSP/
CSA That a review be made of the impact of the Child Support Program, including the processes and procedural guidelines of the Child Support Agency (CSA), on Aboriginal communities and on individuals within them.

AILO Program

60. ATISIS That a review be undertaken of the roles and functions of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Liaison Officers.

Newstart

61. NEWSTART That strategies and guidelines be established for staff to deal with the impact of Newstart on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
62. NEWSTART That DSS respond to the immense concerns about the effect of Newstart policies on the isolated Aboriginal Communities in the Barkley Region.
63. NEWSTART That it be acknowledged by DSS management in delivering Newstart that, whilst the population of Northern Territory town camps are adjacent to established urban infrastructures, the majority of the population of these town camps are culturally and socio-economically isolated from the established urban population.

Tennant Creek

64. DSS/
AREA NT That a revision be made of the DSS staffing model in the Tennant Creek office, including the allocation of additional staffing resources to Tennant Creek to match the needs of the community, eg. a composite SNAP/JET Adviser position, or a new AILO position.
65. DSS/
AREA NT That, in consultation with the AILO, the eligibility criteria for Remote Area Newstart be extended to incorporate those Aboriginal people who are living in the Tennant Creek town area and are involved in Ceremonial Business. This administrative arrangement would allow for extended reporting intervals, which would be an advantage for people who travel out of town for extended periods while undertaking Ceremonial Business.

RESPONSES FROM DSS, DEET AND HHCS TO THIS REPORT'S RECOMMENDATIONS AT OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER 1991

CIRCULATION OF DRAFT REPORT

The draft Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander report was initially circulated to JET Steering Committee members for comment.

The Labour Force Programs Branch, DSS, having co-responsibility for the report, also received a copy for comment.

Following endorsement from the Steering Committee the JET Section further circulated the draft report to:

- Area Northern Territory, DSS
- JET Adviser, Alice Springs.

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES RECEIVED TO DATE

Responses have been received from HHCS and DEET, Labour Force Programs Branch, DSS, and from Area Northern Territory, DSS, including a response from the Casuarina Regional Office and the JET Adviser, Alice Springs. Copies of these responses are attached. The report has also been discussed within DSS National Administration with input from the areas listed above.

These responses are generally very positive and in agreement with the recommendations. Both HHCS and Area Northern Territory strongly supported liaison between the departments and within the departments.

Only three recommendations were not accepted (rec: 38, 39, 40). These are discussed below.

JET SECTION'S ACTION ON RELEVANT RECOMMENDATIONS

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

REC 7 The JET Adviser, Alice Springs, has established co-operative links with AEDP representatives, as well as links with the JET Contact Officers and the DEET Aboriginal Program Manager.

ACCESS & EQUITY FOR ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CLIENTS

REC 21 to 23: These recommendations were endorsed at the August 1991 meeting of the JET Steering Committee. The JET Adviser, Alice Springs, reports that she will begin targeting these other sole parents once she has identified and made contact with the sole parent pensioners in the Communities around the Tennant Creek region.

These recommendations will also be distributed to JET Advisers and Area Managers in other areas with large Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander populations.

PUBLICITY

REC 25 to 28: Meetings have been held with representatives from the Office of Indigenous Women (ATSIC). The purpose of these meetings was to involve DEET in publicity briefing; further input will be sought as the project progresses.

These recommendations have been discussed between JET Section and DSS Publicity Section. Input from OIW and DSS Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Section have contributed to the development of a draft publicity brief, prepared DSS Information and Public Relations.

DSS has recently established a Co-ordinating Committee on DSS Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Publicity. This committee will be looking at methods of providing an integrated publicity package for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander women which addresses all DSS programs and payments of relevance to them, including JET.

JET STAFFING & TRAINING

REC 38 and 39: The trial JET/AILO position was carried out in 1991 in Area Northern Territory. The Area Office found that the composite position met with limited success. However, if additional resources are provided by the Government in the future, consideration will be given to the appointment of JET/AILO positions in areas where the population doesn't warrant a

stand alone JET Adviser or AILO but a combined position might be effective, eg. Moree.

See the comments on the trial on page 70.

REC 40: Area Northern Territory recommended that the JET Adviser position, Alice Springs, be evaluated after 12 months operation prior to committing new JET Advisers at Moree or Tennant Creek. This suggestion is supported by the JET Section.

REC 41: The JET Program currently employs one Aboriginal JET Adviser and one Aboriginal back-up JET Adviser. They occupy identified positions, located in Alice Springs. This meets 2.5% of the 2.8% employment level required by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy of the DSS Access and Equity Program.

JET PERFORMANCE MONITORING

REC 44 and 45: The JET Section is still consulting with Area Northern Territory on the matter of target-setting in remote communities and how servicing will be resourced.

Area Northern Territory suggested that, in addition to the recommendations made, a more detailed statement of JET Adviser activities be forwarded to National Administration for monitoring purposes. This has been adopted by the JET Section and the JET Adviser, Alice Springs, is forwarding monthly planning reports.