

NEW CHAIR OF CAIRNS REGION CDEP NO STRANGER TO STARTING FROM SCRATCH

The ten Directors Elected at the Cairns Regional CDEP Annual General Meeting in November 2008 have chosen Libby Morgan as the new Chair.

With huge change coming through the organisation caused by CDEP program closures, Libby sees her role as one of mentoring community growth through this exciting period.

"There are lots of new opportunities that will allow us as an organisation to go forward in different directions, I can see partnerships with different providers opening doors for our community", Libby said.

"And new projects and employment strategies being driven by both government and indigenous communities have to be guided to ensure we gain the most possible benefit", she said.

This is the first Chair role Libby has taken on but she is no stranger to committees and difficult periods of change.

"I am more comfortable behind the scenes, one of those quiet achievers", Libby said. "But I accepted the role as I can see the huge community growth we can achieve over the next 20 years, and it is exciting to lead and direct that growth positively".

Libby's background is in radio. She has been involved with

community radio since the early 1980's in Sydney. On arriving in Cairns she was one of the founders of Cairns Aboriginal Broadcasters.

"I remember setting up the first broadcasting studio in Grafton Street with Townsville ABC radio's technical support, and doing sessions as a volunteer for many years", Libby said.

"I used to get to ask politicians hard questions from the safety of behind the desk - it gave me a lot of confidence back then", she said.

She thinks the radio is a great technology to reach a wider audience and get ideas across to communities no matter how isolated they may be.

"You can explain complex information and give people all the different points of view to help them make an informed opinion on issues and activities affecting them".

Libby said she feels more comfortable behind the mic than being interviewed but in her new role will put her on the other side of the desk.

"I'm looking forward to helping our people understand the changes happening around us with CDEP and other training and funding programs".



Yvonne Coghlan discusses training options with Rodney Molloy at the Cairns office

CYCLONE LARRY NOT ALL BAD

When Yvonne Coghlan and her son Shane, moved to Cairns after Cyclone Larry to try and get some normalcy back into their life again, Yvonne never realised what doors would open in just three years.

Yvonne explained she had been working in retail sales with The Warehouse in Innisfail since her son left school and they was understanding enough to help her transfer to Cairns after the cyclone when she needed the break.

"Not long after", she said, "I had the opportunity to really start again and took an admin position with Cairns Regional CDEP. It's not so physical and I'm using skills I've always known just needed nurturing."

"While Shane was at school I worked with young people as a teacher's aide, tutoring them with their school work - often one on one - helping them make it real", she said.

"I love working with young people and now I'm working toward becoming a trainer for young adults under 20 - those guys that are older and have been under-employed for a long time".

"It's a terrible feeling knowing you want a job but not having the skills to get past first base as a job seeker", she explained.

About 18 months ago Yvonne got involved in the STEP ERS program as a trainer and mentor; helping job seekers work out their skill set; building mind and skill maps for them to follow toward success; and helping them with resumes, cover letters and interview techniques.

"That job was fantastic and I was determined to formalise my skills so I could take full advantage of the opportunity", Yvonne said.

"Cairns CDEP sponsored me and with their encouragement I enrolled in a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland".

"It was a huge effort", she said, "There was three days block training each month for three months in Cairns and I had to get all the assessment done between times".

"But now at the suggestion and with the help of Cairns Regional I'm getting work experience delivering work readiness training and mentoring with the Learning Workshop team. Helping people become motivated and confident. I know I'm good at finding solutions to trainees needs through listening and supporting them. It's great to be living my passion!"

Who would have thought Cyclone Larry could help change someone's life so positively.

SELF CONFESSED "BITUMEN MURRI" LOVES GETTING OUT TO COMMUNITIES

Indigenous Job Connections CDEP Administration Officer Kerry Lenoy has worked her way up from being a CDEP participant herself back in 2003.

She takes every opportunity she can to get out to the communities with the field officers to help them explain to individual participants their job network requirements and make sure registrations are done properly

"I'm a Cairns girl born and bred, but I've really enjoyed going out to places like Croydon, Coen, Chillagoe and Mount Garnet; getting to know participants and their personal challenges", she said.

"I hope to have visited every program by the end of the year - it makes my job easier too".

CROYDON MOWING GANG PIN-UP MODELS

Croydon State School looked so good after the Croydon CDEP lawn mowing gang had done their job that everyone went around taking photos of the new lawn.

Field Officer Don Blackman proudly explained 14 local men make up the work crew who are eager to work toward self sufficiency with the business.

Don expanded that Council was keen to help the men with their training program and have offered work at the town cemetery, around historical buildings and some footpath work.

"Approaches have been made for the crew to get out on cattle properties and help with post-flood and wet season maintenance, including fence repairs and other rural maintenance work", he said.

"Currently they earn enough to cover equipment maintenance, petrol and oil costs but the crew hope to get good enough to charge commercial rates and stop drawing CDEP wages".

Grass becomes lawn with the hard work of CDEP participant



COEN CDEP WORKING TOWARD 20 FULL TIME JOB PLACEMENTS BY JUNE

By pulling together the different employment support networks working in Coen the team mentored by Indigenous Job Connections' David Sexton has already had 17 participants find full time work locally around Coen.

David explained that by making sure people get co-ordinated support from all the agencies - training, job networks, wage subsidies and mentoring - they have the best possible chance of not only getting into work, but staying in the job.

"We have 62 locals in the program, we hoped 20 would be have secured full time work by 30 June - and we've already placed 17", he said.

Locals James Creek and Anita Creek are co-ordinating the program and it is a great opportunity for them to really make a difference.

Participants are working on yard mowing, trimming and maintenance and recently secured a contract to do the rubbish run around town each week.

Six men make up the crew emptying 70 bins a week.

"I understand the challenges lots of people face - I've been there myself. I saw CDEP as a stepping stone to a full time job and if I can do it from where I was, anyone can. It's a matter of putting your mind to it", Kerry explained.

Kerry started out doing her Certificate II in Business but there wasn't any work in the field so she joined the CDEP program at Warrama Farm working on the horticulture team maintaining the nursery and looking after plant sales.

Kerry said she kept her eyes open and soon had other opportunities coming her way.

"Warrama had training programs they were running that needing catering provided for the students. I always liked organising functions and preparing food so I asked if I could have a go", she said.

"I did the catering at Warrama Farm and up in Kuranda and my biggest success was doing all the catering for the Christmas Party in 2005. It was such a buzz."

"Pat Lowe from Cairns Regional CDEP noticed my efforts and offered me a 'real' job at the office as an admin officer in 2006".

Kerry has been able to use her skills and do extra training while on the job as well.

She completed her Cert III in Business as an admin trainee while also performing as a finance officer job at the same time.

"It was a challenge to keep up with all the things coming at me but it's been worthwhile", Kerry said.

"I finished my Cert III in 2007 and now I've been promoted to this fantastic job where I can really start helping people achieve like me", she enthused.

"It's a bit embarrassing to admit it, but my family are so proud of what I've done. And their pride is more reward to me than anything else I've got".



Kerry Lenoy at work in Cairns

INNISFAIL GIVES A HELPING HAND TO INGHAM

A joint project between Innisfail CDEP and Innisfail Community Justice saw 10 workers head down to Ingham for five days during February to help with the flood clean up.

Ingham's Indigenous Health Authority identified older people requiring help to get their homes back to a safe and clean condition.

The team washed down and disinfected the interiors of homes, mowed and trimmed gardens and removed rubbish.



Libby Morgan (front, second from left) with fellow directors at the February Board meeting

IRENE STREET TRAINING FACILITY ENGAGES LEARNERS

Indigenous Job Connection programs being run from the ATSI Youth Welfare building (known as Ildinji) on Irene Street over the last two years are providing a vital link for isolated and at-risk trainees.

Pre employment training for young people, and even older workers, wanting to get a start in construction, manufacturing and rural industries has been held in two week blocks since late 2007.

Enterprise Development Manager, Tradesman, Training Co-ordinator and "All-Round Useful Bloke" Mal Pask has been involved in youth training and mentoring for many years and has been the glue to keep his students and their dreams firmly together throughout the courses offered.

Mal is very proud of his students and their achievements.

"These guys and girls come to us because they are running out of options; they've had lots of problems in their lives and many have lost their way", Mal said.

"To see them in the beginning just managing to turn up, and then two weeks down the track enthusiastic, motivated and keen to develop the skills they've been introduced to, is so motivating for me and the trainers involved", he said.

"Everything we teach is practical and useful in normal life - even learning to hammer a nail straight and true is a life skill that comes in handy around the house or in the community".

There is a strong demand for labour in regional and rural areas where tradesmen are scarce. People with practical skills are highly sought after.

"Location is no barrier to learning, with many students being supported to join these courses from Torres Strait and Cape York communities, afterwards going home to a job helping construct housing, hospitals and other vital infrastructure in their own communities", Mal explained.

"We've had five graduates join Cairns Hardware making roof trusses, windows and doors in the Cairns factory - and four of those men are still active in the industry".

A co-operative project between Indigenous Job Connections and Greencorp at the Irene Street site introduced 10 budding horticulturalists to the reality of working in gardening and landscaping.

The 10 tackled the Certificate I in Conservation and Land Management with six successfully graduating and three securing full time employment over the six months of the course.

The paddock behind Ildinji was transformed from a rough grassy area into a broad acre garden from scratch.

"The group worked hard to design garden beds, paths, water ways and other features; then creating them literally from the bare earth", Mal enthused.

"Not only did the students create this garden but they had to learn how to maintain it too", he said.

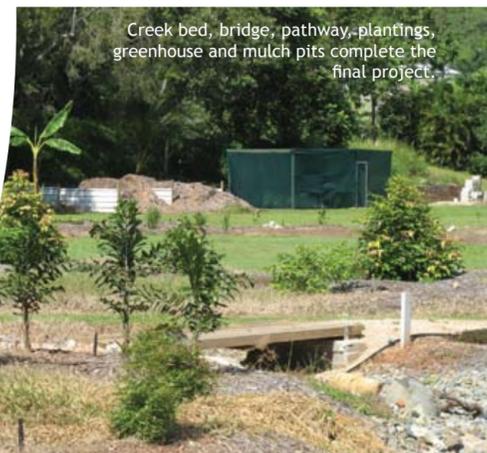
"We now have a great paved area with a pergola cover; a winding creek with erosion controls, bridges, rockery and plantings; a vege patch; and lots of native garden beds".



Pre-employment training group learn to handle a nail gun



Greencorp trainees start to make an impression on the Irene Street site



Creek bed, bridge, pathway, plantings, greenhouse and mulch pits complete the final project.

INDIGENOUS JOB CONNECTIONS ADDS ANOTHER PRODUCT TO ITS RANGE

Indigenous Job Connections, as an equal partner in Employment Services Queensland, has successfully tendered for 10 of 20 Job Network Employment Service Areas in Queensland.

CEO Chris Martin said the four ESQ directors felt humble to be given the responsibility of primary employment service provider for at least 10,000 Queenslanders.

"This is a fantastic opportunity for Indigenous Job Connections to share expertise and resources with our business partners, expanding the services and expertise available to our clients over time", he said.

"This is a new business unit and income stream for our operation to manage for the improvement of our client's lives".

Employment Services Queensland will trade as One Stop Employment and is a partnership between Career Employment Australia Inc, Challenge Employment and Training, Skill Centred Queensland Inc and Cairns Regional CDEP (Trading as Indigenous Job Connections). All the partners are not for profit organisations reinvesting all funds back into their programs.

The four organisations share 88 years service experience assisting disadvantaged and marginalised job seekers.

Chris said the tender results reflect Indigenous Job Connections long term success in provision of quality programs and services for job seekers and its community-focussed commitment to the more disadvantaged.

Employment Services Queensland has been selected to provide a full range of services in Capricornia, Bundaberg, Gympie, Sunshine Coast, Outer North Brisbane, South Brisbane, Ipswich, Toowoomba and Western Downs. It will also provide specialist ex-offender services in Logan and South Brisbane.

"I am confident the four partners will look at other joint business opportunities together", Chris expanded.

"As we write this newsletter I am waiting for the results of the CDEP tender for remote areas", he said.

"I hope we are recognised for our past success in these areas, but whatever is decided Indigenous Job Connections will continue to diversify and provide employment services".

"We have been working toward a broader service provision since 2006, knowing that CDEP had a finite life span."

"It is an exciting and challenging time".

www.one-stop.com.au



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NEWSLETTER

OUR NEW LOOK

In the last newsletter readers were asked to contribute their ideas toward a new look and name for Cairns Regional CDEP. We hope you like the result!

The old name has been kept for legal reasons but the company will be trading under the commercial name of Indigenous Job Connections. All business activities and projects will come under this umbrella organisational name and look.

BASKET WEAVERS IMPRESS VISITORS TO KICKARTS EXHIBITION

Mona Mona elder Rhonda Brim's basket weaving course participants (featured in the last newsletter) exhibited their results at the "blak roots" Indigenous Survey Exhibition at kickArts Contemporary Art Gallery in Cairns from December 2008 to February 2009 to wonderful acclaim.

64 different artists participated in the exhibition from 18 different indigenous clans.

The opening night was the biggest night yet for an opening of a kickArts standalone exhibition with 468

attending. A fantastic opportunity for the weavers, and wonderful exposure for their craft and the project.

Indigenous Survey Exhibitions present emerging and established artists side by side.

It is a great opportunity for exposure. The new artists learn about the exhibiting process from the experience and the other established artists. Emerging artists can also lend confidence from their more experienced counterparts - such an exhibition can be daunting!



Rhonda Brim's weavers display their works along with other indigenous artists