



NEWSLETTER

Indigenous
JOB CONNECTIONS

THE GREAT CHILLAGOE WHEEL BARROW RACE



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OCTOBER 2012

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For the first time in the Chillagoe Wheel Barrow Race history an Indigenous team entered and completed the three day 140km fundraising event.

Over the weekend of 18th of May 2012 individuals and teams walked or ran their way, wheel barrow in hand, from Mareeba to Chillagoe. As the world's longest wheel barrow race, every May the weekend pays tribute to frontier times when hordes of miners travelled from Mareeba to Chillagoe with all their belongings in barrows.

The Indigenous Job Connections (IJC) Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) Team consisted of 10 runners, a bus driver, marshal, team coordinator and a huge support group of family and friends. Suzanne Potter Team Marshall said "the event was a complete success and all participants had a great time."

"We had more support people than we had runners which meant many hands make light work. The support group ensured healthy meals were prepared each night for the runner's energy levels and comfortable camps were all set up by the time the runners would retire for the day."

Suzanne described how by the end of the second day of the race you could see the runners getting tired; however on the third day they still put in 110 per cent. "When the finish line came into sight you could see the runners forget how tired they were, physically

and mentally, and worked up the energy to run across the line. The CDEP team finished 25th out of 52 teams and 13th in their category. We were all extremely proud of their efforts."

The end of the race came as a sweet relief with Chillagoe turning on an end of race celebration with all teams contributing with activities and entertainment. The CDEP team set up a stall offering free samples of Pumpkin Soup and Corn and Zucchini Soup. This was all part of CDEP's healthy eating project Living Strong which Participants have been involved with for the past 8 months.

Suzanne explained how along with the free samples of soup the CDEP community also organised painting displays, free show bags including the Smoke-Free Support Program, Kids Poster Painting and Indigenous dancing.

"The CDEP team nominated the Cerebral Palsy League as their charity and encouraged everyone they knew to participate in their fundraising events. Our efforts resulted in a whopping \$1000 final figure for the charity," she enthused.

Overall IJC couldn't be more proud of their Chillagoe Wheel Barrow Race runners and supporters. The outcome was not to win but have fun and promote a healthy lifestyle for the Chillagoe CDEP Participants. "Everyone had a brilliant time and there have already been whispers of several teams being organised for next year."



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BRISBANE WELCOMES IJC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Indigenous Job Connection (IJC) Board of Directors travelled down to Brisbane to visit the new Go Work & Safety and Bundarra factory for the very first time. The factory manufactures clothing for both brands and manages all stages of production from design to screen printing and retail selling. As a joint partner in Go Work and Safety and Bundarra, the IJC Board were able to explore their investment first hand and were treated to a complete tour of the factory followed by the monthly board meeting held on site.

Two special guests attended this meeting including Architect Dr James Davidson and CEO of the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) David Galvin. Architect Dr James Davidson presented the newly created models and plans of the Mona Mona Cultural Centre and Bilwon Farm Training Facility to all board members as well as Mr Galvin. IJC has worked closely with ILC on both of these projects and Mr Galvin was extremely impressed with the progress made on these two projects including the models and plans.

The Kuranda Boxing Troupe Co-ordinator also attended the Brisbane factory visit. As the first team to wear Bundarra produced uniforms sponsored by IJC, Kuranda Boxing Troupe Co-ordinator Blaine saw how the singlets were produced. Blaine commented "seeing the process of how the singlets were made was really interesting and I now understand the effort that was put into them."



CDO'S UP SKILL TOO

Indigenous Job Connections (IJC) has introduced a new professional development program to broaden the skills of the Community Development Officer's (CDO). The program has been specially designed to target business planning, engagement skills and monitoring Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Building on the CDOs current knowledge and skills in these areas will assist CDOs find employment for CDEP participants.

The CDOs currently travel to the Cairns IJC office once per fortnight to participate in the workshops. The workshops focus on strengthening the CDO's skills to find and secure employment in these culturally diverse areas. IJC is a unique service provider as each remote community the CDOs work in has different social, cultural and community needs. IJC recognises their CDO's have strong skills to work across all their communities with a variety of staff, colleagues, employers and participants.

Part of the new development program saw CDOs recently spend a day training at IJC's Bilwon Farm facilities. The training was formed around 'What is Communication?' and 'What is Mentoring?' using case studies based on common situations encountered by the CDOs. This allowed the group to identify their strengths and areas for improvements. They practised their new skills through role play and analysing case studies.

The professional development workshops are building a uniform and consistent approach for the CDOs to practise so every community can feel confident in their CDEP program and CDO in charge.



CDO Development workshop at the Cairns IJC Office. Back row from Left to Right: Tanya Whiting, Tony Soteriou, Tony Connors, Karla Taylor. Front Row: Rebecca Early, Rachel Van Hassel, Kerry Lenoy. Absent: Lindsay Jones

Q-BUILD CDEP PROJECT TAKING OFF IN LAURA

For the last 6 months a team of four CDEP participants have been working with Q-Build assisting with maintenance and renovations of the Laura Public Housing Stock.

CDEP Manager Tony Soteriou said the program is running smoothly and all participants have been making a great effort.

“The attendance has been 100 per cent without a single CDEP Participant missing a day of work. They have all been working really hard painting, completing general repairs, upgrading kitchens and totally renovating the houses. For most properties the tenants have to vacate their houses for the project to be completed.”

Tony explained that through this employment all participants had come to understand how important this maintenance is and how their work impacts families and lives throughout their communities.

“With the current success of our participants, we are hoping Q-Build will consider them for future long-term employment.”



IJC SUBMITS FOR GOVERNANCE AWARD

IJC recently entered the annual Indigenous Governance Awards run by Reconciliation Australia. The awards consider all aspects of the business in terms of governance; such as future plans, organisation structure, decision making and dispute resolution. IJC was nominated for the award due to their exceptional governing board and achievements over the past year. The IJC board of directors work hard to continually improve their governing abilities and the governance award submission detailed how these efforts are assisting the company.

TANYA WHITING – MORE THAN A CDO

CDO Tanya Whiting has just finished coordinating IJC’s first Chillagoe Wheel Barrow Race team. This however is just one of the contributions she makes to her community. Tanya has always been involved with the Chillagoe community motivating, mentoring and helping whoever needed her.

It wasn’t until she was approached in March 2011 to become a CDO Tanya even considered it. “I have always enjoyed helping people so I didn’t even consider I would be able to have a job doing something I loved. My role as a CDEP CDO means I get to assist people with finding employment. Sometimes it is simple tasks such as helping them fill in forms or make a phone call.”

To be a CDO Tanya believes it’s all about being flexible, getting along with the participants, and understanding what needs to be done. “I find that being flexible is one of the most important aspects of being a CDO as you need to accommodate to the needs of your participants if you want to do a good job.”

While helping her community and CDEP participants is Tanya’s number one priority, she said cooperation throughout the process is a major determinant for the success of the individual.

“I love helping participants, however at the same time I have to communicate that as a CDO we have a responsibility to find them work, make sure they turn up and have all of the right equipment. I hold my participants accountable so that if they make mistakes they understand what has gone wrong and can learn from it.”

The Chillagoe CDEP program has seen major achievements throughout 2012 with over half of the participants in traineeships and job placements. Tanya hopes that her contribution as CDO will make a difference and encourage others to look into the role. “There is nothing more satisfying then seeing my participants finding jobs that make them happy.”



CDEP TO BE REPLACED IN JULY 2013

Indigenous Job Connection (IJC) will see the end of CDEP and introduction of the new Remote Jobs and Communities Program (RJCP) in July 2013. This will mark the end of IJC's 11 year contribution to indigenous progress as a successful and well-respected provider of the CDEP Program. The company has been actively preparing for the end of CDEP by upskilling its Board and staff and diversifying its commercial activities. These activities will also eventually allow IJC to be less reliant on government contracts.

The Commonwealth will soon ask Providers to submit Expressions of Interest for any of 65 areas across remote Australia. Providers will be required to cover all unemployed people in these areas, not just indigenous people, and contracts will combine Job Services Australia programs, Disability Employment Services, Indigenous Employment Projects and other smaller services as part of their contract. Each area will have one provider and it will serve as a one stop shop.

IJC will be tendering for the RJCP and has also recently tendered to cover the Cairns area for the Commonwealth's National Disability Employment Services Program. For this contract IJC has joined with Cassowary Coast Employment Services, a DES provider in Innisfail, and Employment Services Queensland, the Job Services Australia business which IJC is one of four not-for-profit partners. IJC is quietly confident they will be successful in both of these bids thus securing a strong project and future for the organisation.

CEO SKILLS EARN CARERS QLD BOARD POSITION



Chief Executive Officer of Indigenous Job Connections (IJC) Chris Martin's recent graduation from the Australian Professional Directors course has provided IJC with advanced skills in management, leadership and governance. The course is run nationally by the Australian Institute of Company Directors and the accreditation is internationally recognised.

Chris dedicated a significant investment of time to the course and his recognised leadership skills have secured his additional position as a board director at Carers Queensland. Up against many other applicants, Chris was accepted for his role as director in view of his long term involvement with indigenous people in remote areas.

Representing the diverse needs and interests of carers in Queensland, the not-for-profit organisation empowers carers by providing information, education, training, advocacy, counselling and other support services that may assist in their caring role. IJC are hoping to help raise awareness for the valuable roles carers play by providing training and support for carers in remote areas.



The IJC Board of Directors came across a familiar face at a recent board meeting in Cooktown.



Indigenous
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