

Aboriginal Employment Program policy

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| 1.0 | 30 January 2018 | Sue Wright | Initial document |
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Acronyms

You will find the following acronyms in this document.

| Acronyms | Full form |
|----------------------|--|
| ABN | Australian Business Number |
| AEP | Aboriginal Employment Program |
| ARSG | Aboriginal Responsive Skilling Grants |
| AWG | Aboriginal Workforce Grants |
| DTBI | Department of Trade, Business and Innovation |
| KPI | Key Performance Indicator |
| MOA | Memorandum of Agreement |
| NT | Northern Territory |
| VET | Vocation Education and Training |
| Definitions | Explanation |
| Aboriginal | 'Aboriginal' should be read as including all Australian Indigenous persons. An Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander is a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which he or she lives. |
| Territorian | A person whose permanent place of residence is in the Northern Territory |
| Territory Enterprise | A business or organisation operating in the Northern Territory, with a significant permanent presence in the NT and employing NT residents |

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1 Policy Scope

This policy applies to the Aboriginal Employment Program (AEP) and associated grants allocated by Workforce NT, Department of Trade, Business and Innovation (DTBI).

The policy applies to:

- Aboriginal Workforce Grants (AWG)
- Aboriginal Responsive Skilling Grants (ARSG)
- Regional Services

2 Policy Statement

- AEP grants will be governed by the DTBI's Grants Policy.
- AEP grants will be administered in accordance with the DTBI's Grants Guidelines.
- The assessment and approval processes for the AEP grants will ensure due diligence and will be consistent with grant program guidelines and stated criteria/processes.
- AEP grants consist of demand driven and open round grants, as such a selection process for each grant type will apply.

3 Objective and Purpose

The program aims to increase economic participation outcomes for Aboriginal Territorians through employment, skilling and support for employers.

The AEP have been developed to assist industry, the business sector and organisations, including those in the not-for-profit sector to:

- support employer access to an available and local skilled workforce to meet current and projected needs
- plan and establish practices and systems to engage and expand the number and skills of Aboriginal Territorians in the workforce
- assist or result in supporting Aboriginal Territorians entering and remaining in employment and developing their career within the workplace
- maintain or improve business activity through local employment.

4 Program Components

The program components have been developed to assist Territorian Enterprises to:

- access funds to meet costs to support Aboriginal employment through;
 - mentoring
 - workforce development
 - wrap around services
 - skilling opportunities including pre-employment support
- access complimentary services through other Workforce NT programs.

4.1 Aboriginal Workforce Grants

Aboriginal Workforce Grants are a responsive grant to meet the needs of organisations to help increase the number of Aboriginal people getting into and staying in jobs.

Grants will be available for projects that result in sustainable jobs or career advancement for Aboriginal people.

There is the capacity within AWG to allocate funding to support one-off initiatives. Partnership projects will be considered on the basis that they meet priority needs and expectations of Government and the community, demonstrate broader industry application or which can be rolled out across regions. They will also be used to contribute to government initiatives and major projects.

Guidelines will be made available for the public and identify:

- priority areas for funding allocation and eligible activities
- assessment process
- how approved grants will be administered to achieve the objectives of the grant
- obligations that recipients will be required to satisfy (including financial reporting and acquittal).

All applicants will be offered the opportunity for feedback including reasons why their application was not successful.

Review of decisions will follow the delegation escalation levels; that is, Director, Executive Director, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Chief Executive Officer.

4.2 Aboriginal Responsive Skilling Grants

A responsive grant to meet the needs of Aboriginal people living in urban, regional and remote NT communities by providing access to skilling opportunities leading to employment outcomes including Vocational Education and Training (VET), that cannot be funded through any other sources.

Allows for packaging of short term activities and supports accredited and non-accredited training that links into community projects that leads to employment outcomes, improved employability skills or enterprise development.

All applicants will be offered the opportunity for feedback including reasons why their application was not successful.

Review of decisions will follow the delegation escalation levels; that is, Director, Executive Director, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Chief Executive Officer.

4.3 Regional Services

Regional Services, Workforce NT will work with and advise organisations and industry locally on the AEP and other Workforce NT programs, services and initiatives.

5 Priorities

AEP priorities will be identified and reviewed to ensure they continue to anticipate and respond to current and emerging needs and opportunities.

Outcomes will be achieved by focused investment in a number of priority areas. The following, singularly or collectively, may inform competitive public rounds and partnership projects. These priority areas may be reviewed and varied by the Chief Executive Officer, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, and Executive Director Workforce NT.

- **Specific employment initiatives**
Such projects would meet employer demand to achieve jobs for Aboriginal workers that would not otherwise occur through existing programs.

- **Sustainable job outcomes for Aboriginal people across the NT**
This may include ‘pathway to employment’ pre-apprenticeship activity and/or projects that complement existing or proposed initiatives being supported by Australian or NT Government programs. Applicants must show evidence of support for the project from stakeholders, particularly if it is to involve regional or remote communities.
- **Initiatives or opportunities that support the delivery of Government’s Jobs Plan and other Government economic participation priorities**
Design of responsive grants, partnership projects and regional services will be informed by Government’s strategic directions and initiatives including the Northern Territory Economic Development Framework that facilitate local Aboriginal employment.
- **Services that support business to build capability to support their Aboriginal workforce**
This may include service products to assist employers to buy-in or embed services to support Aboriginal Territorians to enter, remain and progress in employment.
- **Government strategies**

Program priority areas are reviewed as part of the AEP’s ongoing monitoring and assessment and in response to research or other evidence warranting a change in focus.

Projects outside of these focus areas may be approved by the Executive Director Workforce NT.

6 Promotion and Frequency

AEP will be promoted to potential applicants through the following mechanisms:

- Notifications on the NT Government website and social media
- Circulation through existing networks
- Advice to departmental field officers and other relevant networks.

The DTBI’s Strategic Engagement and Communication group will be consulted to determine the best methods and media material.

Briefing sessions may be held depending on funding opportunities being offered.

| Components | Frequency |
|--|------------------|
| Aboriginal Workforce Grants (AWG) | All year |
| Aboriginal Responsive Skilling Grants (ARSG) | All year |
| Regional Services | All year |

7 Program Management

7.1 Coordination

Regional Services will be required to:

- adhere to all elements covered by this policy and AWG and ARSG Guidelines
- provide project and contract management, including assessment of project progress and reporting
- maintain all records in line with departmental record keeping processes
- finalise financial acquittals
- undertake regular assessment of the respective activities covered by this policy to ensure currency and efficacy as well as ensuring they represent value for money for the department and the NT Government and delivers benefits to the NT population cohorts.

Regional Services will maintain a full schedule of funded projects detailing the following:

- title
- project description, funding allocation and duration
- project location / geography
- best practice models
- outcomes against KPIs
- jobs, enhancements, employers supported
- other indicators as required to inform review and assessment of the AEP and for any departmental purpose subsequently identified
- grant payments.

These elements will, as a minimum, form the basis of all reports for the AEP.

7.2 Promotion of Successful Projects

For the purposes of transparency, information sharing and increasing the knowledge base in the area of Aboriginal workforce participation and development, details of successful applications will be published where appropriate. Details will include the following information:

- project title
- project objective
- project description
- duration
- amount allocated.

Where projects require the preparation of resources, such as case studies and good practice models, these may also be published.

8 Reporting

8.1 Financial Reporting

- AEP expenditure will be reported annually, as a minimum, indicating funds committed, funds expended and outstanding commitments.
- The financial status of AEP will be monitored as part of the department's regular budgetary process.
- Recipients of funding will be published through the department's annual reporting and other requirements.

9 Privacy and Confidentiality

All projects, funding and interactions will occur with the context of privacy and confidentiality provisions and its overarching Grants Policy.

The use and disclosure of information provided for AEP funding is regulated by the relevant provisions and penalties of the Public Service Regulations, the *Privacy Act 1988*, the *NT Information Act*, the *Crimes Act 1914*, the Criminal Code and general law.

Confidential information contained in applications/proposals may be disclosed for audit purposes to contractors engaged by the department and by other Northern Territory and Australian Government agencies for audit, reporting and law enforcement purposes. Further, the department or the assessment panel may release confidential information if it obtains your consent or is required or permitted by law to do so.

10 Evaluation

All elements of the AEP will be regularly evaluated to determine:

- Appropriateness and reach
- Outcomes
- Value for money
- Compliance
- Other elements that apply to DTBI programs and its overarching Grants Policy.

11 Policy Management

The Regional Services will be responsible for the AEP policy development, implementation and review activities.

12 Related Documents

12.1 Legislation

12.1.1 Northern Territory Financial Management Act

<https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/FINANCIAL-MANAGEMENT-ACT-1995>

12.1.2 Northern Territory Treasurer's Directions A6.4

<http://www.treasury.nt.gov.au/BudgetAndFinance/Pages/Treasurer's-Directions.aspx>

12.1.3 Records Management Standards and Guidelines

<http://ntgcentral.nt.gov.au/ntg-tools-services/ict-and-records-management/records-management/standards-and-guidelines>

12.2 Other Relevant Policies / Key Documents

12.2.1 Department of Business Grants Framework and Guidelines

<http://uluru.nt.gov.au/dob/staff/toolkit/grants-framework.shtml>

12.2.2 Good Practice Guidelines for Funding Non-Government Organisations

<https://nt.gov.au/community/non-government-organisations-ngos/guidelines-for-working-with-ngos>

12.2.3 Northern Territory Government Digital Strategy

<https://digitalterritory.nt.gov.au/digital-directions/building-digital-skills>

12.2.4 Northern Territory Government Buy Local Plan

<http://www.buylocal.nt.gov.au/the-plan/index.shtml>

12.2.5 Northern Territory Government Red Tape Reduction Strategy

<http://www.cuttingredtape.nt.gov.au/>

12.2.6 Australian National Audit Office Better Practice Guide on Grants Administration

<https://www.anao.gov.au/work/better-practice-guide/implementing-better-practice-grants-administration>

12.2.7 DTBI strategic directions 2017-2021

<https://business.nt.gov.au/business/publications/strategic-directions>

12.2.8 Economic Development Framework

<https://edf.nt.gov.au/the-economic-development-framework>

12.2.9 The Northern Territory Jobs Plan

http://www.territorystories.nt.gov.au/bitstream/10070/259605/3/Gunner-030216-Michael_gunner_outlines_first_term_agenda_attachment2.pdf