



Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Economic Participation Framework

December 2013

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Respect for deceased people and culture

While every effort has been made to respect cultural traditions, readers are advised this publication contains names and images of people who are deceased.

All reasonable measures have been taken to ensure that information contained in this document is accurate, including histories, traditional names and pronunciations.

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Foreword

The Newman Government is committed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people having the same level of participation in the Queensland economy as non-Indigenous people – in workforce participation, employment, careers and business ownership. Together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people we have a critical opportunity to act effectively to achieve this.

Significant actions to achieve this are already occurring, including freehold ownership of land in remote communities and implementation of memoranda of understanding with major industries. But these are only a start.

There are already striking examples to build on – the legendary reputation of Aboriginal stockmen, the contribution of Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people to construction projects including railways across Queensland and other states, the increasing numbers who are securing employment and creating businesses in major sectors, the inspiring achievements of artists and authors and notably Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have become leaders in many areas including within the medical, legal and academic professions.

But there is much to be done for economic participation to occur widely. The challenge is particularly critical and the opportunity significant because the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is young. A third is under the age of 15 years. This provides the prospect for them to be valuable contributors to and beneficiaries of Queensland’s wealth and prosperity.

Over a long period of time, governments’ policies and programs have not worked well. There is now an imperative to take a different approach. Key features of the Queensland Government’s different approach will be: a focus on education, effective and targeted training linked to actual jobs, enabling entrepreneurship, promoting enterprise and economic development for positive local economies, a balanced participation in the private and public sectors, and business ownership.

Concerning these features, it is encouraging that the new Australian Government shares our commitment to greater self-sufficiency and economic independence for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders, with the inclusion of Indigenous affairs as a standing agenda item for the Council of Australian Governments (COAG).

The Queensland Government is committed to a strong economic participation agenda for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people, and is championing this vision across government, industry and the community.

The purpose of this Framework is to realise that vision as part of the overall 30 year state vision set by *The Queensland Plan: a 30-year vision for Queensland*, starting in early 2014 with an Action Plan that will be prepared with all sectors based on current successes and a new approach.

We encourage all organisations who can contribute to this work to do so.



**The Honourable
Campbell Newman, MP**
Premier of Queensland



**The Honourable
Glen Elmes, MP**
Minister for Aboriginal
and Torres Strait Islander
and Multicultural Affairs
and Minister Assisting the
Premier

Overview

The Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Economic Participation Framework (the Framework) sets a basis for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, families and communities, all levels of government, industry and business, and the non-government sector to work together to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to participate in Queensland's economy.

Based on the Framework, in early 2014 actions will be developed with communities, industry, non-government organisations (NGOs) and the different levels of government. They will be incorporated in an Action Plan for endorsement by the Queensland Government for immediate implementation. The approach will be coordinated and targeted.

Actions developed from the Framework and set out in the subsequent Action Plan will take account of the specific education, training and employment needs of people living in urban, regional and remote locations.

Informed by the views of community and industry stakeholders, and evidenced by what works, the Framework is based on values which are expressed as four guiding principles:

- respect and cultural recognition
- education enables choice
- working together
- responsibility and opportunity.

Actions will be developed under three priority areas:

- 1. Individual responsibility and opportunity:** Enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to build their capabilities including educational attainment to take up and retain employment and to run businesses successfully.
- 2. Unlocking economic potential:** Enable economic opportunities by removing barriers to economic development and by supporting business growth.
- 3. Contributing to the economy:** Facilitate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people contributing to the four pillar industries and the broader Queensland economy through partnerships, employment and business growth.

Actions will also give effect to *The Queensland Plan: a 30 year vision for Queensland* (the draft Queensland Plan) which includes a target to match workforce participation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous Queenslanders, and highlight education, health, and regional development.

The Framework builds upon other Queensland Government economic and regional development policies and initiatives, including *Governing for Growth: Enabling a stronger Queensland economy* and the *Cape York Regional Plan*. It also draws on education and training-focussed policies such as *Solid partners Solid futures* and *Great skills. Real opportunities*.

Introduction

The Framework has a clear goal – the economic independence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have, over very many years, made an enduring contribution to the Queensland economy. They have not, however, enjoyed the same standard of living as other Queenslanders. Levels of educational attainment, employment, business and home ownership, for example, are below that of the broader community.

This Framework is designed to focus Queensland Government resources and harness other inputs from the Australian Government and local governments, business, industry and NGOs towards the increased participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the Queensland economy.

Improving the level of economic participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people starts with people themselves; then governments, community and industry must work collaboratively to enable each and every Queenslanders to fully participate in the Queensland economy.

Economic participation leads to independence. It enables people to accumulate savings, make investments, buy their own home, build businesses and buy goods and services, leading to improved well-being and life outcomes.

Higher levels of employment can transform communities and the lives of individuals and families. It can break welfare dependency, increase social participation and support stronger, more resilient families, safer communities and reduce risks of offending.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders and communities have called for efforts to increase employment. Their calls have been echoed across Queensland with the draft *Queensland Plan: a 30-year vision for Queensland* identifying a target to raise the level of workforce participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders to match that of non-Indigenous Queenslanders. This Framework is a step towards achieving that goal.

There are many opportunities in Queensland's growing economy. Through *Governing for Growth – Enabling a stronger Queensland economy* the State Government is creating a positive environment for business growth and is unlocking economic opportunities through the four pillar industries, tourism, agriculture, resources and construction, as well as the broader economy.

Goals and commitment

The purpose of this Framework is to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders to take up economic opportunities and participate in, and benefit from, Queensland's growing economy through increased employment, labour force participation, career development, and home and business ownership.

This will require commitment from individuals, communities, industry and businesses, NGOs and all levels of government:

Individuals: to commit to education, training, employment, careers and business opportunities.

Communities: to take up opportunities for economic development, provide leadership and support individuals.

Industry and business: to provide employment and business development opportunities and a culturally supportive environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and NGOs: to take up opportunities to build capacity and grow.

All levels of government: to enable opportunities for economic development including through procurement processes, to provide effective employment and training services and opportunities, and to get the 'basics' right for supporting good health and community stability which enable economic participation.

The Australian Government plays a critical role in providing incentives and support to all people to engage in work. It is undertaking a significant reform agenda including sponsoring the development of the Empowered Communities model, reviewing Indigenous Employment and Training Programmes and establishing the Prime Minister's Indigenous Advisory Council. The Queensland Government will work closely with the Australian Government to ensure programs meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

“The only way we'll see poverty and disadvantage reduce, and ultimately eliminated, is through commercial activity and economic development.”

Warren Mundine | Chair, Prime Minister's Indigenous Advisory Council.

What community and industry told us

The views of more than 100 stakeholders were sought throughout Queensland in urban, regional and remote areas. Stakeholders included Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Councils and community leaders, the Local Government Association of Queensland, peak bodies, industry, academia, Australian Government agencies and NGOs.

All stakeholders welcomed the Queensland Government developing a framework focusing on increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic participation, which they saw as essential for improving life outcomes and empowerment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families and communities.

Education was considered essential for increasing economic participation. Many stakeholders indicated that literacy and numeracy levels needed to improve, and that a focus on transitions from school to higher education, vocational education and training and work were necessary.

Stakeholders noted the important role played by Elders and families as role-models for their communities and for young people.

Stakeholders also indicated that individuals experienced practical barriers to taking up opportunities, including: not having a birth certificate and/or a driver licence; not being linked into labour markets; and not having the right training to meet particular skill and labour shortages. Stakeholders also indicated that those looking for work would benefit from mentoring to secure and retain their job. All stakeholders called for practical on-the-ground action as the best way of increasing economic participation.

State Government contestability processes were identified by some stakeholders as a significant opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander NGOs to build their business, provide more effective services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders, and increase employment.

Context and economic participation

The fundamentals considered in developing the Framework were:

- Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is young and growing.
- In the coming years, a greater proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people will be leaving school and entering the workforce.
- 'More of the same' will not work and a different approach is necessary.
- Relative to the substantial resources applied, governments generally have had few successes in improving the economic and social circumstances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the past decade.
- Governments have concentrated on delivering services and infrastructure (often not fit for purpose), frequently without consultation.
- Consideration of economic development and community growth has been perceived, in some circumstances, as token.
- Appropriate and effective engagement and outcomes-focused partnerships are required as opposed to 'consultation'.
- Arrangements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and people must be owned by them.
- Effective services and support are required to enable people to develop their capabilities.



My name is **Richard Monaei**. I am of the Meriam Le, Nguarapai, Kaurareg, and Mongoprang people.

I've never been afraid to step forward in life, and this has led to opportunities and success. I believe you can learn from your failures and use them to attain success. I encourage all my Indigenous brothers and sisters to 'take that one step forward'.

I am currently a senior recruiting officer in the Queensland Police Service (QPS) which works well for me because I am passionate about increasing Indigenous employment.

I hope to one day gain a senior executive policing role so I can create positive change on Indigenous and multicultural issues across Queensland. As it stands, I hope that I am leading by example by being a proactive ambassador and advocate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

I encourage young Indigenous people to be strong and proud of their cultural heritage. Be the ambassador and advocate to your community and be the goal you set out to achieve.

Photography: Tony Phillips, Profile Photographics.

Noting these fundamentals and taking account of the views of community and industry stakeholders, seven factors relating to the economic participation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders were examined:

- demographics
- current levels of economic participation
- self-employment and business ownership levels
- individual capability
- educational attainment
- linking training to skills and labour shortages
- locations with low levels of economic opportunity.

Demographics

At June 2011, Queensland's **188,950** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders represented **four per cent** of the state's population.

Eighty one per cent of Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population live in urban and regional communities.

Significantly, the population is young and growing. A third is under the age of 15 years. In the coming years, there will be greater numbers of school leavers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in Queensland is the fastest growing of all States and Territories.

Current levels of economic participation

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are less likely than non-Indigenous people to participate in Queensland's economy with lower employment, labour force participation, business ownership and home ownership rates¹.

In 2011, 80 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders participating in the labour market were employed² compared to 94 per cent of other Queenslanders. Around 10,700 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders were unemployed in 2011 and approximately 4360 were aged 15 to 24.

Further, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not accounted for in unemployment figures. The 2011 Census reported that 40.3 per cent (around 35,700) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders of working age (15 to 64 years of age) were not in the labour force compared to 22.2 per cent of non-Indigenous Queenslanders.

¹ Queensland Treasury and Trade, Office of Economic and Statistical Research: *Census 2011: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population in Queensland 2nd edition*.

² People are employed if they are engaged in paid work (not including those on the Community Development Employment Projects scheme).

Self-employment and business ownership levels

Nationally there are signs of improvement in the level of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-employment and business ownership. According to the Australian National University, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (2013), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-employment, nationally, has increased substantially in the last two decades. In 2011, 12,500 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were self-employed, compared to 8900 in 2006, representing a 40 per cent increase in five years.

For Queensland, 2011 Census figures indicate that about 2300 or five per cent of all employed 15 to 64 year old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders were working in their own business (compared with 277,200 and 14 per cent of non-Indigenous Queenslanders).

Individual capability

Poor health, lower education levels and contact with the criminal justice system are identified factors that reduce an individual's capability to obtain employment.

For those who do obtain employment, job retention rates have been cited as a further factor in lower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment levels. Research indicates that mentoring and more supportive workplaces can increase the length of time Indigenous people remain in employment.

Educational attainment

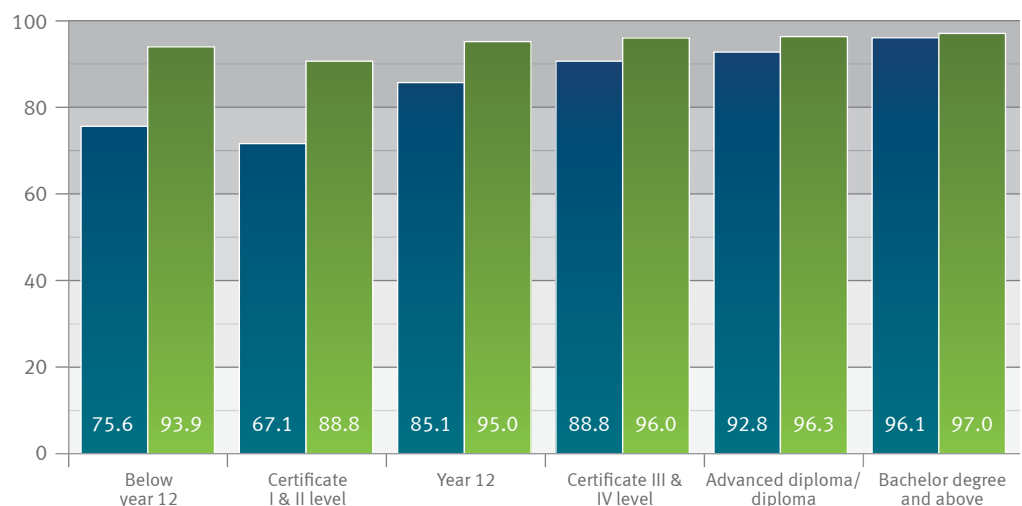
Increasing educational attainment levels has been identified as offering the most promise in increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment, and consequently, business ownership.

There is clear evidence that as the level of educational attainment increases for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, employment increases and more closely matches the rates of non-Indigenous people. As shown in Figure 1, the employment rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with a bachelor degree or higher is virtually identical to non-Indigenous people with the same qualifications (96 per cent and 97 per cent respectively).

Figure 1: Employment rate for 25–64 year old Queenslanders by highest level of education attained, 2011



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012, 2011 Census of Population and Housing, Commonwealth Government Canberra.



Linking training to skills and labour shortages

The need to link vocational education and training to jobs is recognised by researchers, industry and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders and communities. Training ‘just for the sake of the training’ without links to jobs wastes time and money for everyone involved.

An example of how training programs are linked successfully to employment through the vehicle of Aboriginal business development in Queensland is the work of the Myuma Group, a group of not-for-profit, Aboriginal-owned corporations managed as a regional social enterprise, based at Camooweal in the state’s north west.

Case study: The Myuma Group

The Myuma Group has been providing a 13-week pre-vocational training residential work/life skills course (the Dugalunji Pre-vocational Training Program) at Camooweal since 2007. To date, 400 Indigenous people have participated in the Dugalunji Programs. Myuma works with all participants to support their transition into employment. Of the 30 participants in the April-June 2013 Program, 27 had secured full-time employment by October 2013. The September-December 2013 Program, 19 participants all have full-time employment positions confirmed and awaiting them after their graduation.

To deliver its pre-employment programs, the Myuma Group has created successful, ongoing commercial and in-kind investment relationships with industry employers, the Queensland and Australian Governments, and a range of other stakeholders including community organisations, service agencies and university research institutes.



Photo source: Myuma Pty Ltd.

Locations with low levels of economic opportunity

While the number of people living in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is small, rates of unemployment and non-participation in the labour market are high. Lack of economic opportunity is a key factor.

Barriers to increased economic opportunities in remote areas include: land tenure issues which prevent individual ownership of land and business operation, and a lack of available finance. Further, there are barriers which prevent people from remote communities moving to urban and regional centres to take up employment, training and education opportunities including a lack of affordable housing.

Bringing about sustainable change requires both economic development and community growth. They are interdependent. For discrete Indigenous communities particularly, a community's overall strength and development is a factor that binds community members together and sustains them. One without the other is not sustainable in the long term.

The appropriate approach to be taken, and which also applies for regional and urban communities, includes:

- effective community engagement
- development of community priorities
- community ownership of processes
- collaborative implementation.

Recent examples of remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities undergoing sustainable community growth and economic development include:

- the Hope Vale banana farm
- the Mossman Gorge Centre tourism business
- community and economic development – Napranum.

Case study: Economic development in Hope Vale

The Hope Vale Banana Farm, operated by Hope Vale Foundation and established in 2011, shows how with the right assistance, economic development can be achieved in a remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Through partnerships and financial support from the Queensland and Australian Governments through the Cape York Welfare Reform program, Indigenous Business

Australia and the Indigenous Land Corporation, the Hope Vale Banana Farm has been able to build a sustainable business.

The first year of harvest, in 2013, saw the first full commercial crop of bananas. The farm will provide significant revenue for the community which can be used for the community's benefit and there is every indication this venture will become a long-term, self-sustaining business.

The Hope Vale Banana Farm provides local training opportunities and employment options for the community. In full production the farm will employ 40 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The farm will also provide an opportunity for school-based vocational training.



Photography: Vicky Yen.

The Framework

The Framework sets priorities for Queensland Government services to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and business ownership. It is the first step towards achieving the draft Queensland Plan's target that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce participation will match that of non-Indigenous Queenslanders within 30 years.

The data, research and community and industry views which have been considered indicate that to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic participation, action needs to be taken in:

- **improving educational attainment** in school and into post-school training and education including higher education
- **ensuring vocational education and training** is linked to jobs
- **improving health and social factors** such as reducing incarceration, alcohol and substance misuse and homelessness
- **addressing practical issues** such as birth certificates and driver licensing
- **promoting economic opportunities** in areas with few job and business opportunities and providing support to people who wish to move from these areas to access employment and educational opportunities
- **improving job retention** by providing supportive work environments
- **developing outcomes-focused partnerships** with industry to facilitate participation in the economy
- **building the capacity** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, businesses and NGOs.

My name is Stephanie King. I am a Wanyai-Garawa woman who lives in Mount Isa.

My path to a career in medical research started with the health problems, cancer and chronic disease in my family. I wanted to do something in health. I felt that if I could make a small difference in my family then I would help to improve the health situation locally.

I am the first from my immediate family to graduate university, so it's a wonderful achievement for my family and community. I think that by striving to be a good role model, and leading by example, I am helping to create change for the better in my community.

Photographer: Michaelangelo Grimaldi.



Guiding principles

The Framework is based on values expressed as four guiding principles:

- respect and cultural recognition
- education enables choice
- working together
- responsibility and opportunity.

Respect and cultural recognition

The Queensland Government acknowledges that culture is at the heart of Aboriginal peoples' and Torres Strait Islander peoples' identity and everyday life. Community and family play a significant role in the lives of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Elders and Traditional Owners are important role models providing support and guidance to young people as they enter adulthood.

The Framework will build on the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and will be delivered in a way that respects culture. It acknowledges that services and initiatives are most effective when they are culturally responsive, taking into account the importance of practices and values.

Case study: Mossman Gorge Centre

As part of the Cape York Welfare Reform agenda, the Mossman Gorge Centre (the Centre) was established as a world-class eco-tourist business in Mossman Gorge to provide significant jobs and on-going training opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including from its 20-bed residential training centre located on the site.

Opened in 2012, the Centre consists of a visitor centre, Indigenous art gallery, a training facility and passenger terminal. The Centre is creating significant returns for Mossman Gorge and the surrounding area.

The Indigenous Land Corporation, which funded the \$20 million venture, ensured Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment opportunities were provided throughout the development of the Centre and after it was constructed.

A requirement was built into the contractual arrangements during construction to ensure 20 per cent of workers were Indigenous. When opened, the Centre employed 60 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, representing 90 per cent of the total staff profile. The Centre continues to provide ongoing employment for local Indigenous people including in retail, hospitality, transportation, tourism guiding and interpretation, and administration areas.

The Centre isn't just focused on getting people a job, it also looks to build the skills of its staff through training and career development so they can progress to senior positions.

The Mossman Gorge Centre is an example of how partnerships between Cape York Institute, community and the Australian and Queensland Governments, can lead to long-term economic and social benefits for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Education enables choice

Education opens up opportunities to all Queenslanders. It provides young people with the skills and knowledge to meet their aspirations and start a career of their choice. Education and training are more than just knowledge and skills development in content areas. They include people understanding how to operate in a workplace and interact with people outside their usual circle. With such a comprehensive approach young people can be provided with a foundation for career success and progression. The Framework is founded on improving educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Working together

Increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic participation involves many people. Achieving long-term and sustained improvements will require ongoing support and commitment from all stakeholders and employers.

The Framework is based on outcomes-focused partnerships between all levels of government, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, industry and the NGO and private sectors.

Responsibility and opportunity

Community leadership and individual commitment are needed to make long term change and increase economic participation. Increasing employment will require individuals to take up opportunities and commit to education, training and employment. The State Government will work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and people to build capacity and enable economic participation.

Case study: Community and economic development – Napranum

The Napranum Aboriginal Shire Council (the Napranum Council) has undertaken a facilitated community growth process which is having both economic and social benefits. The Napranum Council advises that through this process it has:

- implemented a whole of community change program comprising community leaders, young leaders, students, men of worth, women of worth and parents
- become principal contractor for a social housing program and developed a competent workforce
- entered into joint ventures with housing companies for the construction of a factory to build houses
- been jointly working with housing companies to construct houses for a mining company
- undertaken a robust construction program in the community including developing civil works and road building capability
- been working jointly with a supermarket operator to build and run a supermarket at Napranum
- entered into a joint venture with a restaurant to operate a take away shop
- commenced the planning process for the redevelopment of a location for a cattle enterprise
- been constructing a multimillion civic centre using council staff
- been carrying out upgrade and maintenance of about 220 community houses.

Three priority areas

Actions coming out of the Framework will be under three priority areas. The priority areas will also inform future Queensland Government policy, programs and services to ensure a coordinated and targeted approach towards increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic participation.

- 1. Individual responsibility and opportunity:** Enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to build their capabilities, including through educational attainment, taking up and retaining employment and running businesses successfully.
- 2. Unlocking economic potential:** Enable economic opportunities by removing barriers to economic development and by supporting business growth.
- 3. Contributing to the economy:** Facilitate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people contributing to the four pillar industries and the broader Queensland economy, through partnerships, employment and business growth.



My name is Mark Dancey. My father is a Kooma man of the Dirranbandi area and my mother is a Bidjara woman from around Barcaldine.

I am a third-generation shearer and left school at the age of 16. For the next 23 years I worked in the shearing industry. I then moved into the mining industry after gaining employment at Cobar, NSW. I stayed there for six months.

For the next 20 years I worked in various positions around the country before returning to Barcaldine where I secured a position as an economic development officer for the Central West Aboriginal Corporation.

I then ran for a Councillor's position and was elected onto the ATSIC board. I then moved on to become a ranger with Parks and Wildlife.

A few years ago, an opportunity arose to buy the Barcaldine Post Office, where my wife and I have been ever since.

I want to leave a legacy for our children so it brings them up to the next level in life.

Photography: Peter Waddington.

Priority 1: Individual responsibility and opportunity

Enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to build their capabilities, including through educational attainment, taking up and retaining employment and running businesses successfully.

Educational and vocational education and training linked to employment

Queensland Government strategies and initiatives supporting this focus area are:

- *Solid partners Solid futures 2013–2016*: a partnership approach for excellence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood, education, training and employment.
- Implementing *Great skills. Real opportunities*, a five-year reform action plan and create an additional 10,000 new apprenticeships within six years. This will support all Queenslanders to access and complete the skills training they need to get a job. In particular, the following initiatives will positively impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:
 - the *Certificate 3 Guarantee* program
 - the *Community Learning* program
 - the *User Choice* program for apprentices and trainees
 - the *Strategic Purchasing* program.

Better health, housing and social services

Actions already being undertaken include those implemented as part of:

- *Housing 2020: Delivering a flexible, efficient and responsive housing assistance system for Queensland's future* which aims to establish a financially-sustainable, regionally-based, integrated system that sees social housing services delivered by community housing providers.
- *Homelessness-to-Housing Strategy 2020*.
- The *Employment Related Accommodation* program which removes housing as a barrier for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in remote communities wishing to pursue employment, education and training opportunities in regional centres.
- *Blueprint for better healthcare for Queenslanders* and supporting initiatives.
- The review of *Alcohol Management Plans*.

**Priority 2:
Unlocking
economic
potential**

Enable economic opportunities by removing barriers to economic development and supporting business growth.

The State Government has committed to enabling and promoting economic growth in Queensland in the four pillar industries and across the broader economy. A key Queensland Government contribution to this priority is reducing red tape for industry to assist job creation through expansion and new project development.

This Framework seeks to involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in that enabling environment, and to support businesses and local governments to build their capacity to grow.

Strategies will vary for urban and regional areas and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Statewide

Actions will enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander NGOs and businesses to grow and take up new business opportunities. Actions include building the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander NGOs to deliver services and actions to support small businesses through *The Queensland Small Business Strategy and Action Plan 2013–2015*.

The Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs' regional offices will support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to be entrepreneurial in exploring potential business development and employment opportunities.

This work will include actions to:

- support collaboration with existing employment agencies and service providers for united and greater effect
- identify options for mentoring support for young people once in a job
- increase accountability for Queensland Government programs and services
- facilitate stronger communication between employers and business and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies and individuals
- Seek performance based arrangements for Australian Government funded employment agencies
- Adopt mainstream approaches wherever possible
- Identify a wide range of employment preparation options for young people.

Three priority areas continued...

Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

Actions for remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities will focus on ensuring:

- appropriate community engagement
- communities are able to develop their own priorities
- communities have ownership of the process and the solutions
- solutions are implemented collaboratively with communities, government agencies, industry and the NGO sector.

Actions include enabling economic opportunities by resolving land tenure issues and supporting local employment opportunities through a range of programs including the rollout of infrastructure and social housing and Cape York Welfare Reform.

The Framework will be supported by current State Government initiatives including: *Governing for Growth: Enabling a Stronger Queensland economy*. Plans and initiatives currently under development such as the *Cape York Regional Plan* will also support this priority area.

Case study: Aboriginal Employment and Cultural Heritage Management Plan

CopperChem is a copper mining company with a strong focus on local relationships and employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

‘Our Community and Stakeholder Relations approach is to obtain mutually beneficial outcomes for exploration, development, and production activities. Traditional owners require a special focus and the formal engagement with these groups is given high priority,’ said Noel Gertz – Community Liaison Officer, CopperChem.

Operating on Mitakoodi Traditional lands, CopperChem has forged a strong relationship with the local Aboriginal people and has proven its commitment to employing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through its targeted employment programs.

CopperChem has entered into a Cultural Heritage Management Plan with the Mitakoodi people. The Plan has led to the employment of over 30 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people representing 30 per cent of CopperChem’s workforce.

CopperChem continues to build relationships between all levels of government, community resource agencies, and allied industries that support and encourage social and economic development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



Photo source: CopperChem.

Priority 3:
**Contributing to
the economy**

Facilitate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people contributing to the four pillar industries and the broader Queensland economy, through partnerships, employment and business growth.

In partnership with industry and businesses, the Queensland Government will facilitate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's and business' entry into the four pillar industries and the broader economy.

The Queensland and Australian Governments have entered into a tri-partite agreement with the resources sector. The Queensland Government has also entered into agreements with the construction and agricultural sectors. These agreements address barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people working in the four pillar industries.

Memoranda of Understanding have been signed with Construction Skills Queensland, the Queensland Farmers' Federation, AgForce, Leighton Contractors Pty Ltd and the Queensland Resources Council. These industry agreements, and the projects and actions negotiated under them, aim to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic participation through direct employment and supply chain arrangements for Indigenous businesses.

Opportunities for increased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and business opportunities in the broader economy will also be identified. For example, the roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme will see a significant increase in employment and opportunities for NGOs. These opportunities will be identified and work will be undertaken to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, NGOs and businesses to take up these opportunities.

Where to from here

This Framework will be used to engage with communities, industry and across different levels of government to identify specific actions to support economic independence by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and business ownership.

The ideas of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and leaders will be explicitly sought.

The process will be led by the Director-General of the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs reporting to a governance group comprising the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs, the Assistant Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and supported by senior executives from relevant government agencies. A focus will be identifying and implementing innovative solutions towards increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment.

Case Study: Arrow Energy's Whanu Binal employment and training program

St George father of three and Mandandanji man Daniel Blades has secured full-time work in the construction industry as a result of participating in Arrow Energy's Whanu Binal program.

The 29-year-old stayed in Toowoomba to complete the 12-week program which includes accredited construction training, cultural training and vocational work placement.

Mr Blades said it was a major career stepping stone which helped him secure a full-time job as a labourer with construction company Silverstrand. 'I am really thankful for the opportunity and all the help given to me,' Mr Blades said.

The 2013 employment and training program was run in partnership with Energy Skills Queensland and provided opportunities for traditional owner groups in the Bundaberg/Gladstone area (camp operations), and in the Western Downs area (construction).

As part of the program, participants are supported to make connections with local employers, and are monitored for 12 months after they finish training.

There has been a strong take-up and retention in the training program, followed by significant success in employment outcomes, especially through the Western Downs program. Outcomes to date include:

- graduation of all 15 Camp Operations participants with half in full-time employment or further learning and the remaining half being supported to find employment
- graduation of 10 Construction participants, with eight in employment and the remainder being supported to find employment.



Mr Blades is also a talented artist. He presented a painting to program partners to show his gratitude.

Photo source: Arrow Energy.

The Action Plan

An Action Plan will be developed in early 2014 and publicly released by mid-2014. Actions will support achieving the draft Queensland Plan's target that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce participation will match that of other Queenslanders within 30 years. It will also draw from and support other draft Queensland Plan targets in education, health, and supporting the regions.

Actions will include:

- **Home ownership** and free-holding for which actions are in progress.
- **Supporting Mayors of remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities** through the Local Government Association of Queensland and departmental services to identify and develop economic opportunities, for example through waste management and recycling.
- **Enabling services in communities** by NGOs, for example, in primary health care.
- **Linking training to jobs** through the *Great skills. Real opportunities.* program of action and the Indigenous Vocational and Educational Training (VET) partnership.
- **Working with industry** to identify employment opportunities and linking Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to those opportunities.
- **Identifying opportunities in the broader economy**, for example in the disability sector, and enabling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, businesses and NGOs to take up those opportunities.
- **Enabling rural developments** including cattle, farming and silviculture (care and cultivation of forest trees) with science based production improvements.
- **Working with construction companies** to maximise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment, training and business opportunities.
- **Working with resource companies** to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and job retention.
- **Enabling opportunities** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and people to participate in eco-tourism opportunities.
- **Providing access to information** and advice for business development.

Identifying localised actions.

The Action Plan will include distinct actions for urban, regional and remote locations with their differing opportunities and varying needs. This will involve:

- **Identifying employment and business opportunities** which exist by location, including government infrastructure and services, and existing and new industry and business opportunities.
- **Facilitating community development** processes resulting in a plan for which the community has identified priorities and has taken ownership and responsibility.
- **Supporting partnerships**, joint ventures, principle and other contract arrangements, including with investment, which are based on outcomes.
- **Aligning government programs** and community plans and priorities and avoiding duplication and waste.

