



Institute of Public  
Administration Australia

The Nationwide Professional  
Association of the Public Sector

## Media Release – 21 October 2011

### Public administrators promote Indigenous employment

Australia's public servants have taken a strong stand on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

The Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA), through its revamped quarterly magazine, has presented a positive showcase of Indigenous employment and workforce issues.

*Public Administration Today (Today)* has taken the high ground in the drive to see more First Australians gainfully employed as the foundation for improving their lives.

IPAA National President Percy Allan has called on his senior public service colleagues to emulate the private sector in pledging more jobs for Indigenous Australians.

"Indigenous success stories tell us those who find work have far fewer problems than those who don't," he said.

"To find work Indigenous Australians need skills and opportunities to escape the downward spiral of hopelessness and despair that many regrettably view as the natural fate for Australia's original peoples".

Mr Allan's plea echoed a similar recent call by Special Minister of State Gary Gray on public service chiefs to 'lead by example' in hiring more Indigenous employees.

He said he expected the public service to be doing more towards achieving the 2018 target of a further 100,000 private and public sector jobs for Indigenous Australians.

While IPAA's new-look publication is a celebration of the positive aspects of Indigenous employment it has not shirked the controversial aspects of Indigenous policy and its practise on the ground.

**Today** points to major and damning reports on Indigenous affairs, including *The Strategic Review of Indigenous Expenditure Report to the Australian Government*.

Released under FOI and subjected to close media scrutiny, that report recommended 25 existing Indigenous-specific programs across the Commonwealth be closed immediately, and 51 others be consolidated into 18.

It said Commonwealth Government expenditure on its Indigenous-specific programs amounted to some \$3.5 billion annually and that 'this major investment, maintained over many years, has yielded dismally poor returns to date'.

**Today** also gives further publicity to a subsequent report by the Productivity Commission with similarly damning findings.

The magazine features articles supporting its Indigenous employment theme by public service mandarins including Auditor General Ian McPhee, Commonwealth and ACT Ombudsman Allan Asher and the Australian Public Service Commission.

This special edition of **Today** also covers positive employment initiatives across the nation including Queensland's Project 2800 and its North Stradbroke Island's successful land rights case.

It reports Victoria's IPAA division encouraging Indigenous employment through an awards and scholarships program, while in WA its Public Sector Commissioner Mal Wauchope has established a dedicated unit to drive implementation of an employment strategy to increase Aboriginal employment in the public sector to 3.2 per cent by 2015 in line with the State's Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) commitments.

South Australia's Aboriginal Power Cup, supported by the State's Justice Department, has been very successful in engaging Indigenous youth in productive study and the exploration of employment pathways, while TAFE SA's Aboriginal Access Centres are adopting a flexible approach to delivering vocational education and training.

NSW is progressively implementing Local Aboriginal Action Plans, while ACT-based consulting group Noetic Solutions recently entered a long-term partnership with the Malpa Project, focusing on Aboriginal health.

There are stories celebrating other achievements and initiatives in the far north of WA, in the Northern Territory and Tasmania.

Commenting in ***Today*** on his first edition, newly appointed, Adelaide-based editor Ron Dent, said he hoped the special edition would make a contribution towards recognition, reconciliation and the advancement of our fellow Australians.

"That's a matter for every brain, every heart," he said.

"My hope is that alongside continued positive exposure in the political, business, sporting and artistic media, we will see more and more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander faces in the *social* pages."

***Today* is distributed nationally and read by public sector employees in all three tiers of government, statutory authorities and not-for-profits. It also is now available online at [www.act.ipaa.org.au](http://www.act.ipaa.org.au) where Institute members can access the full publication digitally by password.**

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