

Research Synthesis

Indigenous housing workforce capacity building background paper

authored by

**Georgie Foster, Hellene Gronda,
Ian Winter and Laura Vitis**

by the

AHURI Research Synthesis Service

May 2010

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
INTRODUCTION	4
The need for an Indigenous Housing workforce capacity building strategy.....	4
1 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS: WHAT THE HOUSING LITERATURE INDICATES.....	5
1.1 Overall Indigenous housing needs are shaped by distinct cultural, geographic and demographic factors.....	5
1.2 The geography and demography of the Indigenous population will have implications for all housing-related workforces	5
1.3 Housing evidence suggests that there are workforce implications for five broad industry groups.....	6
2 AUSTRALIAN POLICY FRAMEWORKS: WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT INDIGENOUS WORKFORCE CAPACITY BUILDING STRATEGIES	8
2.1 Policy directions in Indigenous housing and employment.....	8
2.1.1 The National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous economic participation	8
2.1.2 The National Partnership Agreement on remote housing	8
2.1.3 Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program (SIHIP).....	9
2.2 Indigenous workforce capacity building strategies predominately feature in health policy.....	9
2.2.1 The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce National Strategic Framework	9
2.2.2 Cultural Respect Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health 2004-2009	10
3 INDIGENOUS WORKFORCE CAPACITY BUILDING: WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT INCREASING PARTICIPATION.....	12
3.1 Changing mainstream systems and practices is crucial to a successful Indigenous workforce capacity building strategy.....	12
3.1.1 There is a lack of cultural safety for Indigenous people in mainstream workplaces.....	13
3.1.2 Indigenous people face culturally insensitive recruitment strategies.....	13
3.1.3 Indigenous people experience poor induction processes and inadequate workplace support.....	13
3.2 Making a contribution to community and kin is a key driver behind Indigenous career motivations and aspirations.....	14
3.3 The provision of targeted opportunities and support in the workplace is crucial to a successful Indigenous workforce capacity building strategy	14
3.3.1 Ongoing workplace support	14
3.3.2 Mentoring and peer support	14
3.3.3 Indigenous leadership.....	14
3.3.4 On-the-job training opportunities	15
4 CONCLUSION: THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENCOURAGE THE PARTICIPATION AND SENIORITY OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN THE HOUSING SECTOR WORKFORCE	16

BIBLIOGRAPHY	17
APPENDIX: SYNTHESIS OF EVIDENCE ON INDIGENOUS WORKFORCE CAPACITY BUILDING.....	20

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper provides a background resource for AHURI's *Australian Indigenous Housing Workforce Development Program*. This program aims to:

- Increase Indigenous seniority and participation in the housing sector.
- Ultimately to increase the quality of Indigenous housing and housing research.

The purpose of this paper is to identify workforce implications from the housing research evidence base and to synthesise findings on effective workforce capacity building strategies for Indigenous people. The first chapter highlights workforce implications emerging from the housing research evidence base and some broad cultural, geographic and demographic characteristics of Indigenous Australians. First, Indigenous Australians as a group have distinct cultural, geographic and demographic characteristics that impact on their housing needs and have implications for the housing workforce. Second, there is a relatively high level of unmet Indigenous housing need compared to non-Indigenous Australians, implying the need for improvement in housing delivery and services. Third, housing research identifies specific implications for a range of industry groups including: policy and research, building and maintenance, finance, design, and services and support.

Findings from housing research presented in Chapter 1 indicate that there is a high level of opportunity for Indigenous employment in the housing sector. For example, research has indicated positive results are achieved when Indigenous people access Indigenous-specific and Indigenous-provided housing services (Szava & Moran 2008). The young and growing Indigenous population represents an opportunity to increase Indigenous involvement in the housing sector and provide high levels of Indigenous-specific and Indigenous-provided housing services.

In the second chapter, a review of current Indigenous policy frameworks, this paper identifies that National policy is being directed towards linking Indigenous housing and employment. Currently, all states and territories have strategies in place to grow Indigenous employment as stipulated in:

- The National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous economic participation.

And all states and territories have strategies in place to grow the quality of Indigenous Housing as stipulated in:

- The National Partnership Agreement on remote Indigenous housing.
- The Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program (SIHIP).

Policy directions linking Indigenous housing and employment outcomes are positive, however, there is little emphasis on workforce capacity growth.

The Australian health sector provides a useful model for workforce capacity building in *The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce National Strategic Framework*. The framework aims to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders working in the health sector by employing strategies of:

- Improving recruitment of Indigenous secondary school students.
- Improved vocational training for Indigenous health workers.
- Implementing workforce ratio targets and developing performance indicators in order to monitor progress.

ABS statistics on Indigenous involvement in the health sector both before and during this framework's implementation indicate growth. In 1996 approximately 2831 Indigenous Australians were working in the health sector contributing to 0.8 per cent

of the health workforce, in 2001 this percentage had increased to 0.9 per cent (AIHW 2007). In 2006, the number of Indigenous healthcare workers had increased to 4891 thereby contributing to 1 per cent of the health sector workforce.

To identify effective workforce capacity building strategies, Chapter 3 synthesises findings from the research evidence. Details on this research can be found in the appendix. The findings identify three important aspects of building an Indigenous workforce: providing a culturally safe environment, understanding Indigenous career motivations and providing ongoing workplace support.

The research defines cultural safety as an environment where workers are able to express their identity, practice their culture and have their values respected without fear of ridicule, chastisement or prejudice (Hutchins, Frances & Siggers 2009, p.5). The lack of a culturally safe work environment can act as a significant barrier to workforce development (Day et al. 2004; Hutchins, Frances & Siggers 2009; Santoro & Reid 2006; Sheehan & Jansen 2006; Whiteside et al. 2006).

The literature indicates that a lack of cultural safety is often found within job recruitment for Indigenous people. For example, employers don't often recognise cultural skills as competencies (Day et al. 2004; Hutchins, Frances & Siggers 2009; Whiteside et al. 2006) and large interview panels can comprise of non-Indigenous people asking inappropriate and patronising questions (Day et al. 2004). In order to remove these barriers to Indigenous recruitment and employment, the literature recommends:

- Cultural awareness training (Day et al. 2004; Hutchins, Frances & Siggers 2009; Sheehan & Jansen 2006).
- Position descriptions that recognise cultural skills and life experience (Bartik, Dixon & Dart 2007; Day et al. 2004).
- Interview panels that include Indigenous people (Bartik, Dixon & Dart 2007).
- Flexible employment practices (Hutchins, Frances & Siggers 2009).

This paper finds that to grow Indigenous workforce capacity it is critical to understand Indigenous career motivations. The evidence indicates that one of the key career aspirations for Indigenous people is the desire to contribute to the community and promote the wellbeing of others or the next generation (Juntunen et al. 2001; M. Ratima et al. 2007; Santoro & Reid 2006). For example, in a study on career aspirations, Indigenous students felt significantly more confident than their non-Indigenous counterparts in their abilities to make a contribution to society, more likely to work for altruistic reasons and more likely to return to their communities after post-school options (Craven et al. 2005). Therefore, a workforce development strategy could mobilise these aspirations and provide employment pathways and education that suit Indigenous career motivations in a culturally appropriate way.

The third crucial aspect of growing Indigenous workforce capacity pertains to providing ongoing workplace support. Support from colleagues, employers and upper management as well as supplying Indigenous employees with a level of mentorship is vital to successfully recruiting and retaining Indigenous staff (Day et al. 2004; M. Ratima et al. 2007; Santoro & Reid 2006; Sheehan & Jansen 2006). Similarly, the implementation of existing Indigenous leadership in the workplace can also create a level of support. This is demonstrated by a successful New Zealand bicultural training program designed to increase the number of Maori healthcare professionals qualified to clinically supervise other Maori healthcare workers (Sheehan & Jansen 2009).

This paper finds that while there is currently a deficit in skilled, senior Indigenous housing policy makers, practitioners and researchers, housing employment offers an opportunity for Indigenous people to become involved in a sector that is able to make

a difference to their communities. A program to increase the participation and seniority of Indigenous people working across this sector could utilise the strategies of: ongoing workplace support, mentoring and peer support, Indigenous leadership and on-the-job training opportunities.

INTRODUCTION

The need for an Indigenous Housing workforce capacity building strategy

Housing is a critical foundation for all aspects of health and wellbeing. We know that affordable, adequate and appropriate housing allows people to fulfill their potential through education, employment and social opportunities.

Careers in the housing sector represent an opportunity for Indigenous Australians seeking to make a difference in their communities. Growing the Indigenous housing workforce in both overall participation and seniority will lead to better housing outcomes, better housing policy and better housing research.

The evidence from housing research to date finds generally poor outcomes in the delivery of housing to Indigenous people and a strong case for greater engagement of Indigenous people in all aspects of the housing industry. The evidence on workforce capacity building similarly recommends greater Indigenous involvement and identifies some concrete strategies for building participation and seniority.

Indigenous Australians currently access a range of housing types. The 2006 Census found that 34 per cent of Indigenous Australians owned or were purchasing their homes, 31 per cent were renting privately and 29 per cent were renting from public or community housing providers¹ (AIHW 2009). Comparatively, 69 per cent of non-Indigenous Australians owned or were purchasing their homes, 23 per cent were renting privately and 4 per cent were renting from public or community housing providers (AIHW 2009).

While some Indigenous Australians are accessing their housing of choice, it is clear there remains a gap in housing outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Housing outcomes are linked to the gaps in health, education and employment outcomes and all these areas must be tackled together. For example, the gap in home-ownership rates is related to lower incomes on average, and higher unemployment than non-Indigenous Australia (FAHCSIA 2010).

Housing careers are wide-ranging and include building and maintenance, finance, design, management, services and support, policy and research. These employment opportunities, coupled with the need to improve housing policy and housing delivery, provide the rationale for this Indigenous-specific housing workforce capacity building strategy.

¹ An additional 5.6 per cent reported other tenures or not stated.

1 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS: WHAT THE HOUSING LITERATURE INDICATES

This chapter highlights workforce implications emerging from the housing research evidence base and some broad cultural, geographic and demographic characteristics of Indigenous Australians.

First, Indigenous Australians as a group have distinct cultural, geographic and demographic characteristics that impact on their housing needs and have implications for the housing workforce. Second, there is a relatively high level of unmet Indigenous housing need compared to non-Indigenous Australians, implying the need for improvement in housing delivery and services. Third, housing research identifies specific implications for a range of industry groups including: policy and research, building and maintenance, finance, design, and services and support.

1.1 Overall Indigenous housing needs are shaped by distinct cultural, geographic and demographic factors

It is well understood that Indigenous housing needs at present differ from the needs of the overall population (AIHW 2009). The reasons for these differences are multi-dimensional and result from historical and contextual circumstances. They include:

- Cultural factors: kinship responsibilities motivate and support high levels of Indigenous mobility, which impacts living arrangements, homelessness and overcrowding (Birdsall-Jones et al. 2010; Memmott, Long & Thomson 2006).
- Geographic factors: 25 per cent of Indigenous people live in remote or very remote areas compared to 2 per cent of non-Indigenous Australians and 43 per cent live in regional areas, while only 32 per cent live in major cities compared to 64 per cent of the total Australian population (ABS 2008, p.192; ABS & AIHW 2008, p.5).
- Demographic factors: the Indigenous population is young and growing while the rest of Australia is ageing. This has particular implications for housing type and size.
- Only 3 per cent of the Indigenous population is over the age of 65 compared to 13 per cent of the non-Indigenous population and 37 per cent of the Indigenous population are under the age of 15 years compared to 19 per cent of non-Indigenous Australians (ABS & AIHW 2008, p.4). The Total Fertility Rate for Indigenous mothers is 2.1 babies compared to 1.8 babies for non-Indigenous mothers (ABS and AIHW 2008, p.79).

1.2 The geography and demography of the Indigenous population will have implications for all housing-related workforces

The geographic differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians will have implications for all housing-related workforces. Given that a disproportionately high number of Indigenous people live in remote or very remote locations comparative to non-Indigenous people, there will be implications for the location of housing-related workforces, particularly those related to the building and maintenance industry. There may also be significant implications for government policy makers as this type of geographic dispersal raises issues of workforce scale and concentrations of effort.

Demographic factors will also have implications for a number of housing-related workforces. First, a young population provides an opportunity for growth and

development. Secondly, there may be a need to fast-track careers as there will be fewer older people to fill senior positions.

1.3 Housing evidence suggests that there are workforce implications for five broad industry groups

The following table details housing evidence that indicates there may be implications for five broad industry groups: academia and research, building and maintenance, finance, design, and services and support.

Table 1: Housing evidence and industry groups

Industry	Housing evidence
Academia and research	→ There is a workforce gap of Indigenous researchers and authors (Long, Memmott & Seelig 2007, p.2)
Building and maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Poor dwelling conditions in remote areas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 36 per cent of permanent dwellings in remote areas and 30 per cent in very remote areas require major repairs or replacement (ABS 2007, p.2). → Remote area housing construction costs challenge affordability in these areas. (between 66% and 84% higher than urban areas) (Hall & Berry 2006, p.105). → There are high levels of overcrowding in Indigenous households: 27 per cent (ABS and AIHW 2008, pp.40–41), which can be attributed to undersupply, seasonal migration and kinship obligations (Fien et al. 2008, p.25, pp.30–31). This indicates that there is, in part, a need for additional housing stock.
Finance e.g. home loan providers, financial advisers,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Evidence indicates that Indigenous Australians may feel more comfortable accessing indigenous-specific home loan and financial providers as they valued strong and familial relationships with loan officers and appreciated provider's cultural appropriateness and flexibility (Szava & Moran 2008, p.25, p.48). → Indigenous people are under-represented in home ownership (34% compared to 69%) (ABS and AIHW 2008, pp.30–35).
Design e.g. architects, engineers, landscapers, planners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Indigenous Australians are highly mobile and this mobility is a critical part of Indigenous culture that creates bonds which provide resilience in times of need (Birdsall-Jones & Corunna 2008; Birdsall-Jones et al. 2010). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ These mobility patterns can contribute to temporary overcrowding, which when coupled with undersupply can be harmful. ▪ This indicates that current housing may be poorly designed and cannot accommodate Indigenous mobility patterns. → Local involvement of Indigenous people in housing design, construction and maintenance can improve the cost-effectiveness, efficiency and longevity of remote area housing provision (Fien et al. 2008; Memmott 2003).

Industry	Housing evidence
Services and support e.g. homelessness service providers, real estate agents, ICHOs, public housing authorities, medical and allied health industries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Disproportionately high level of homelessness which is 3.5 times that of non-Indigenous Australians (AIHW 2005, p.26). → Access to tenancy and other social support services are critical for some Indigenous Australians in maintaining stable tenancies and avoiding homelessness (Flatau et al. 2009; Flatau et al. 2005). → High levels of mobility and mobility patterns that differ to those of the mainstream may impact on ICHOs, public housing authorities and other service providers. → Social housing delivery for Indigenous people is affected by a capital backlog and recurrent funding shortfalls. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Estimated SOMIH recurrent funding shortfall of \$44.6 million p.a. and capital backlog of \$58 million (Hall and Berry 2006, p.93). ▪ Estimated ICHO recurrent funding shortfall of \$52.6 million p.a. and capital backlog of \$705 million (Hall and Berry 2006, p.94). → Racial discrimination continues to inhibit Indigenous people's access to the private rental market (Birdsall-Jones & Corunna 2008, p.21; Flatau et al. 2005, p.124; Long, Memmott & Seelig 2007, p.92; Short et al. 2008, pp.49–53) and underpins some Indigenous people's experience of social housing (Flatau et al. 2005, pp.121–122). → The relationship between mainstream public housing authorities and Indigenous tenants is a cause of negative outcomes and tenancy instability (Birdsall-Jones & Corunna 2008). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Flatau et al. (2005) find that having Indigenous staff in mainstream service providers has a positive impact on this client-provider relationship (p.xvii). → A significant information management deficit exists in remote area social housing sectors which impacts on social housing delivery (Seeman et al. 2008, pp.49–58). → Indigenous people are under-represented in home ownership (34% compared to 69%) and over-represented in social housing (29% compared to 5%) (ABS and AIHW 2008, pp.30–35).

2 AUSTRALIAN POLICY FRAMEWORKS: WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT INDIGENOUS WORKFORCE CAPACITY BUILDING STRATEGIES

This section briefly details national policy documents that incorporate Indigenous workforce capacity building as a strategy to *close the gap* between Indigenous and non-Indigenous social, economic and health outcomes.

2.1 Policy directions in Indigenous housing and employment

Relevant policies:

- National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation.
- National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing.
- Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program (SIHIP).

2.1.1 *The National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous economic participation*

This Partnership aims to halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people within a decade and all states and territories are signatories except Tasmania.

The Agreement is largely framed around the idea of employment targets and has four key objectives (COAG 2009a):

1. Creating sustainable employment and jobs that are identified positions.
2. Strengthening current government procurement policies. Successful contractors will have to engage in Indigenous employment, training and supplier strategies.
3. All new COAG reforms must incorporate Indigenous workforce strategies.
4. Reviewing of all public sector Indigenous employment and career development strategies in order to increase Indigenous employment to representative levels.

By 2015, The Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation aims to increase public sector employment for Indigenous people to 2.6 per cent nationally. And to reduce the gap between Indigenous workforce aged employment to population ratio from 24 percentage points to 12 percentage points by 2018 (COAG 2009a).

2.1.2 *The National Partnership Agreement on remote housing*

The agreement on Remote Housing is the only national housing policy document that has a workforce capacity building element and all states and territories except the ACT are signatories. It aims to improve poor standards of housing and infrastructure in remote Indigenous communities as well as addressing the issues of overcrowding and homelessness. By 2018 the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Housing aims to have improved the state of remote housing by:

- Reducing incidences of homelessness by 50 per cent.
- Reducing the number of overcrowding by 4200.
- Constructing 4200 new houses.
- Repairing and replacing 4876 houses.

One of the nine outputs designed to achieve these aims relates to Indigenous workforce/ employment:

(e) increased employment opportunities for local residents in remote Indigenous communities (COAG 2009b, p.5).

The number of local housing-related jobs created for Indigenous people is the performance indicator and 20 per cent Indigenous employment targets have been set (p.9).

2.1.3 Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program (SIHIP)

SIHIP is a partnership program between the Australian Government and the Northern Territory Government, which resulted from the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing.

Its objectives are to strengthen communities, make families healthier and enable economic growth through job opportunities. There is an emphasis on sustainable jobs and a 20 per cent Indigenous employment target across the program. This is in line with the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing.

The first review conducted in late 2009 reported that employment targets are being met (Australian Government & NT Government 2009, p.26) and the second, independent review released in 2010 reported that 36 per cent of the construction workforce was Indigenous across all worksites (Donald & Canty-Waldron 2010, p.12). The full implementation of this strategy will be completed by 2013.

The reviewers note that:

Local Indigenous people reported favourably on the noticeable differences between SIHIP contractors whose brief was to build and refurbish dwellings in ways that served both the local community and the broader and longer term social and economic objectives, versus the one-off projects that import all labour and materials, usually make no connection with the community and convey no added-value (p.13).

2.2 Indigenous workforce capacity building strategies predominately feature in health policy

Relevant policies:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce National Strategic Framework.
- Cultural Respect Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health 2004–2009.

2.2.1 The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce National Strategic Framework

This framework is driven by the principles listed above and aims to achieve a competent workforce that has appropriate clinical, management, community development and cultural skills to address the health needs of the Indigenous population.

The objectives are:

1. Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people working across all the health professions (p.6).

Strategies revolve around increasing the number of Indigenous students enrolled in and completing health-related courses, which involves the development of recruitment and retention strategies and the examination of Indigenous secondary school students' career aspirations and motivations (pp.6–7).

2. Improve the clarity of roles, regulation and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers as a key component of the health workforce, and improve vocational education and training sector support for training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers (p.8).

Strategies look to bring together the Australian, state and territory governments as well as key community organisations to work collaboratively to better define and articulate the role, training requirements and competencies of Aboriginal Health Workers across the nation (pp.8–10).

3. Address the role and development needs of other health workforce groups contributing to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health (p.11).

Strategies include engaging allied health sectors in cultural awareness programs, working with associations and colleges to better support clinicians working with Indigenous people, and various workforce scoping and mapping exercises to determine training needs (pp.11–12).

4. Improve the effectiveness of training, recruitment and retention measures targeting both non-Indigenous Australian and Indigenous Australian health staff working within Aboriginal primary health services (p.14).

Strategies include providing further workplace support, training and incentives for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff (p.14)

5. Include clear accountability for government programs to quantify and achieve these objectives and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and people to drive the process (p.16).

Strategies include developing a methodology to formulate workforce ratio targets, developing performance indicators against which progress can be monitored, and developing regular reporting plans (pp.16–17).

ABS statistics on Indigenous involvement in the health sector both before and during this framework's implementation indicate growth. In 1996 approximately 2831 Indigenous Australians were working in the health sector contributing to 0.8 per cent of the health workforce, in 2001 this percentage had increased to 0.9 per cent (AIHW 2007). In 2006, the number of Indigenous healthcare workers had increased to 4,891 thereby contributing to 1 per cent of the health sector workforce.

2.2.2 Cultural Respect Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health 2004-2009

A complimentary document supporting Indigenous involvement in the healthcare sector is the *Cultural Respect Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health 2004–2009*. The framework aims to achieve equity of outcomes for Indigenous people and details a set of guiding principles that can provide a basis from which to create health policy and service delivery strategies. It is included here because it documents the principles for creating an inclusive environment for Indigenous Australians.

These principles are:

- A holistic approach that meets spiritual, physical, mental, emotional needs (p.8).
- Mainstream responsibility and a joined-up approach where the whole healthcare sector takes responsibility for the health needs of Indigenous Australians (p.8).
- Community control and localised decision making where local communities define their health needs and solutions (p.8, p.9).

- Building the capacity of health services and communities so that communities can respond more effectively and take responsibility for their health outcomes. Building capacity involves promoting cultural knowledge and clinical expertise, building a physical and intellectual human infrastructure and fostering leadership, governance and financial management (p.9).
- Accountability for health outcomes, which includes recognising that accountability, is reciprocal and that funds need to be used effectively.

Importantly the Standing Committee notes that:

The Cultural Respect Framework is not another tool for building cross-cultural competency. It is an overarching framework that recognises that a concerted effort across a number of dimensions is required to systematically lift the cultural competency of mainstream health services (p.9).

3 INDIGENOUS WORKFORCE CAPACITY BUILDING: WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT INCREASING PARTICIPATION

This chapter details Australian policy and academic literature that relates to Indigenous workforce capacity building. The principles and practices that can be drawn from this evidence may assist in efforts to build Indigenous capacity in the housing related workforces that are identified in the following chapter.

Electronic search engines and academic databases such as Google scholar and EBSCOHost were used to source relevant research. *Workforce capacity building* is also known as *workforce development*, *workforce recruitment and retention*, *workforce planning* and *workforce employment* and all of these terms as well as *Indigenous*, *Aboriginal*, *health*, *housing*, *national partnership agreement*, and *policy* were used as search terms.

Both policy and academic literature from Australia and overseas emerged from the search phase. All of the research is qualitative and the studies are largely descriptive case studies that draw on data collected in interviews and focus groups.

There are no strong outcome evaluations; however conclusions are reasonably robust because the studies deliver consistent findings across industry areas and geographic jurisdictions. Studies have largely examined Indigenous workforce development in relation to the medical and allied health industries, although studies from the fields of education, childcare and criminal justice have also been conducted.

Indigenous workforce capacity building is not a new concept. It evolved largely out of the medical and health fields where it was identified as a key strategy to improving the health outcomes of Indigenous populations in a number of developed nations such as Canada, New Zealand and Australia. Indigenous workforce development initiatives began in Canada and New Zealand roughly 15 to 20 years ago (Anderson & Lavalley 2007; M. M. Ratima et al. 2007). In Australia, initiatives began a little later in the early to mid-2000s and were largely precipitated by the Australian Government's *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce National Strategic Framework* released in 2002 (Whiteside et al. 2006).

Some Australian jurisdictions have also adopted workforce capacity building strategies in the education and childcare fields. However, very little has been done to build Indigenous workforce capacity in the Australian housing sector.

3.1 Changing mainstream systems and practices is crucial to a successful Indigenous workforce capacity building strategy

Overall the evidence indicates that there are two equally important aspects to building and retaining an Indigenous workforce.

1. Changing mainstream systems and practices to create working environments that are culturally safe² for Indigenous people. For example, strategies include cultural awareness training for all employees or flexible employment practices that can accommodate kinship responsibilities.

² Cultural safety in the workplace refers to workers being able to express their identity, practice their culture and having their values respected without fear of ridicule, chastisement or prejudice (Hutchins, Frances & Siggers 2009 5)

2. Providing opportunities for individuals or identified communities to participate in the workforce. For example, strategies include creating jobs that are identified as Indigenous positions, mandating that employers employ a certain number of Indigenous people or creating identified education opportunities.

This section details findings and evidence that support the first aspect.

3.1.1 There is a lack of cultural safety for Indigenous people in mainstream workplaces

A number of studies find that mainstream workplaces are not culturally safe environments for Indigenous employees and this is a significant barrier to workforce development (Day et al. 2004; Hutchins, Frances & Siggers 2009; Santoro & Reid 2006; Sheehan & Jansen 2006; Whiteside et al. 2006).

For example, a study that reported on the experiences of Indigenous teachers in the mainstream education system finds that Indigenous teachers were expected to be 'all things to all people' (Santoro & Reid 2006). Many interviewees reported that their non-Indigenous colleagues expected them to develop and implement all Indigenous curriculum, take responsibility for all Indigenous students' wellbeing and pastoral care, and bridge the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge in the workplace. These high expectations, additional responsibilities and inaccurate assumptions resulted in Indigenous teachers feeling misunderstood and oppressed in the workplace.

3.1.2 Indigenous people face culturally insensitive recruitment strategies

Some evidence indicates that cultural skills are not always recognised as competencies by employers (Day et al. 2004; Hutchins, Frances & Siggers 2009; Whiteside et al. 2006), which can deter Indigenous applicants from applying for positions because they believe they are unqualified to do the job.

A study by Day et al. (2004) that examined Indigenous employees' experiences of working for government agencies within the South Australian justice system also finds that poorly written position descriptions that are full of jargon, large interview panels comprised of all non-Indigenous people and inappropriate or patronising questions during the interview will serve as a barrier to Indigenous recruitment and retention.

3.1.3 Indigenous people experience poor induction processes and inadequate workplace support

Several studies highlight the lack of workplace support for Indigenous employees as a significant barrier to Indigenous workforce development (Aarluuk Consulting Inc 2009; Day et al. 2004; M. Ratima et al. 2007).

However, a number of specific strategies also emerged from the literature that would assist in addressing these barriers:

- Cultural awareness training (Day et al. 2004; Hutchins, Frances & Siggers 2009; Sheehan & Jansen 2006).
- Position descriptions that recognise cultural skills and life experience (Bartik, Dixon & Dart 2007; Day et al. 2004).
- Interview panels that include Indigenous people (Bartik, Dixon & Dart 2007).
- Flexible employment practices (Hutchins, Frances & Siggers 2009).

3.2 Making a contribution to community and kin is a key driver behind Indigenous career motivations and aspirations

It may also be worth noting at this juncture that the evidence indicates that Indigenous career aspirations are driven by a desire to contribute to the community and are typically chosen to promote the wellbeing of others or the next generation (Juntunen et al. 2001; M. Ratima et al. 2007; Santoro & Reid 2006).

For example, a recent study found that whilst many career aspirations were shared between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, Indigenous students felt significantly more confident in being able to make a contribution to society and their community than non-indigenous students (Craven et al. 2005, p.17), were more likely to be motivated to work for altruistic reasons rather than for financial rewards (p.22) and were more likely to return to their communities after undertaking post-school options (p.22).

Given these motivations and aspirations, it may be helpful to articulate the importance, value and relevance of a *housing* career to Indigenous community wellbeing in any workforce capacity building initiative.

3.3 The provision of targeted opportunities and support in the workplace is crucial to a successful Indigenous workforce capacity building strategy

3.3.1 Ongoing workplace support

Ongoing support from colleagues and employers, as well as upper management or the system more broadly has emerged as crucial to successfully recruiting and retaining Indigenous staff (Day et al. 2004; M. Ratima et al. 2007; Sheehan & Jansen 2006; Whiteside et al. 2006).

For example, a New Zealand paper that reports on the outcomes of a bicultural training program designed to increase the number of Maori healthcare professionals qualified to clinically supervise other Maori healthcare workers finds that both policy and managerial support is critical to the program's success. Sheehan and Jansen (2006) reason that Maori professionals have more roles and demands on them than their non-Indigenous counterparts and that delivering a bicultural program is often a challenge to the mainstream system, which can be exhausting if stakeholders and funders do not provide the required flexibility and support.

3.3.2 Mentoring and peer support

Mentorship and peer support that is facilitated by a supportive employer consistently emerge as strategies to successfully recruiting and retaining Indigenous employees (Day et al. 2004; M. Ratima et al. 2007; Santoro & Reid 2006; Sheehan & Jansen 2006). Sheehan and Jansen (2006) report that Maori role models are important for negotiating a viable path between Western and Maori ways of knowing and being in the world.

3.3.3 Indigenous leadership

The importance of Indigenous leadership is particularly emphasised in the work from New Zealand where the concept of 'by Maori for Maori' that is inherent in the Treaty of Waitangi, is understood to underpin good practice in health service delivery (Sheehan & Jansen 2006, p.592).

3.3.4 On-the-job training opportunities

On-the-job training and education is considered important to recruitment efforts because many Indigenous caregivers in rural or remote locations cannot leave their communities to engage in formal training programs and many are more likely to start training if they are assured of a position upon completion (Hutchins, Frances & Siggers 2009).

4 CONCLUSION: THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENCOURAGE THE PARTICIPATION AND SENIORITY OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN THE HOUSING SECTOR WORKFORCE

With its partners, AHURI seeks to achieve an increased number of Indigenous people participating in high quality, policy relevant research. We believe that Australia urgently needs more skilled, senior Indigenous housing policy makers, practitioners and researchers.

We also believe that the diverse careers in the housing workforce represent an opportunity for Indigenous people who seek to make a difference to their communities.

Housing is fundamentally connected to individual and family wellbeing and so better housing service delivery, policy and research will contribute to closing the gap in Indigenous health, education and employment outcomes.

That is why AHURI is initiating a program to increase the number, capacity and seniority of Indigenous people working across the Australian housing sector—from asset management to research—in the private, non-government and government sectors.

Housing research tells us there is room for improvement in many areas of Indigenous housing policy and practice, from home financing to social housing provision and management to dwelling maintenance to a shortfall in Indigenous academic housing authors.

These areas suggest an opportunity across the diverse array of professions implicated in the housing workforce, for example, building and maintenance, finance, service and support, academia and research, and design.

In this report, we found that the workforce capacity building research identifies two equally important aspects to building and retaining an Indigenous workforce.

- Changing mainstream systems and practices to create inclusive working environments. For example, provision of cultural awareness training for all employees or flexible employment practices that can accommodate kinship responsibilities.
- Providing targeted opportunities for workforce participation. For example, creating identified Indigenous positions, mandating employment targets or promoting specific education opportunities and pathways.

In addition, four workplace strategies are known to improve participation and seniority:

- Ongoing workplace support.
- Mentoring and peer support.
- Indigenous leadership.
- On-the-job training opportunities.

This background paper provides an initial overview of the housing workforce capacity issues and opportunities, and suggests some ways forward.

Further work is needed, for example, to scope the existing and potential Indigenous housing workforce and to understand how Indigenous motivations and aspirations can be supported to take advantage of this opportunity and contribute to closing the gap.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aarluk Consulting Inc. (2009) *Recruitment and Retention on Inuit Nurses in Nunavut*. Nunavut, Canada: Nunavut Tanngavik Inc.
- ABS. (2007) *Housing and Infrastructure in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities: Australia, 2006*. 4710.0. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- ABS. (2008) *Year Book Australia*. Number 90. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- ABS and AIHW. (2008) *The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*. ABS Catalogue No. 4704.0. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.
- AIHW. (2009) *Indigenous housing indicators 2007-08*. Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.
- Anderson, M. & Lavalley, B. (2007) The development of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis medical workforce. *Medical Journal of Australia*, 186(10), 539–540.
- Australian Government & NT Government. (2009) *Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program- Review of Program Performance*. Canberra: FaHCSIA.
- Bartik, W., Dixon, A. & Dart, K. (2007) Aboriginal child and adolescent mental health: a rural worker training model. *Australasian Psychiatry*, 15(2), 135–139.
- Birdsall-Jones, C. & Corunna, V. (2008) *The housing careers of Indigenous urban households*. AHURI Final Report No. 112. Melbourne: Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Western Australia Research Centre.
- Birdsall-Jones, C., Corunna, V., Turner, N., Smart, G. & Shaw, W. (2010) *Indigenous homelessness*. AHURI Final Report No. 143. Melbourne: Australian Housing and Urban research Institute. Western Australian Research Centre.
- COAG. (2009a) *National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation*. Canberra.
- COAG. (2009b) *National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing*. Canberra.
- Craven, R., Tucker, A., Munns, G., Hinkley, J., Marsh, H. & Simpson, K. (2005) *Indigenous students' aspirations: Dreams, perceptions and realities*. Canberra: Department of Education, Science and Training.
- Day, A., Giles, G., Marshall, B. & Sanderson, V. (2004) The Recruitment and Retention of Indigenous Criminal Justice Agency Staff in an Australian State. *International Journal of Offender Therapy & Comparative Criminology*, 48(3), 347–359.
- Donald, O. & Canty-Waldron, J. (2010) *Strategic Indigenous Housing Infrastructure Program (SIHIP) Post review Assessment (PRA)*. Canberra: Australian Government.
- FAHCSIA. (2010) *Indigenous home ownership issues paper*. Canberra: Australian Government.
- Fien, J., Charlesworth, E., Lee, G., Morris, D., Baker, D. & Grice, T. (2008) *Towards a design framework for remote Indigenous housing*. AHURI Final Report No.

114. Melbourne: Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, RMIT-NATSEM Research Centre.
- Flatau, P., Coleman, A., Memmott, P., Baulderstone, J. & Slatter, M. (2009) *Sustaining at-risk Indigenous tenancies: a review of Australian policy responses*. AHURI Final Report No. 138: Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Western Australia Research Centre, Queensland Research Centre and Southern Research Centre.
- Flatau, P., Cooper, L., McGrath, N., Edwards, D., Hart, A., Morris, M., et al. (2005) *Indigenous access to mainstream public and community housing*. AHURI Final Report No. 85. Melbourne: Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Western Australian and Southern Research Centre.
- Hall, J. & Berry, M. (2006) *Indigenous housing: assessing the long term costs and the optimal balance between recurrent and capital expenditure*. AHURI Final Report No. 93. Melbourne: Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, RMIT-NATSEM Research Centre.
- Hutchins, T., Frances, K. & Saggors, S. (2009) Improving the representation of Indigenous workers in the mainstream childcare workplace. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 34(1), 2–9.
- Juntunen, C. L., Barraclough, D. J., Broneck, C. L., Seibel, G. A., Winrow, S. A. & Morin, P. M. (2001) American Indian Perspectives on the Career Journey. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 48(3), 274.
- Long, S., Memmott, P. & Seelig, T. (2007) *An audit and review of Australian Indigenous housing research*. AHURI Final Report No. 102. Melbourne: AHURI.
- Memmott, P. (2003). Customary Aboriginal Behaviour Patterns and Housing Design. In P. Memmott (Ed.), *TAKE 2: Housing Design in Indigenous Australia* (pp. 26–39). Red Hill, ACT: The Royal Australian Institute of Architects.
- Memmott, P., Long, S. & Thomson, L. (2006) *Indigenous mobility in rural and remote Australia*. AHURI Final Report No. 90. Melbourne: Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Queensland Research Centre.
- Ratima, M., Brown, R., Garret, N., Wikaire, R., Ngawati, R., Aspin, C., et al. (2007) *Recruitment and retention of Maori in the health and disability workforce*. Auckland: AUT University.
- Ratima, M. M., Brown, R. M., Garrett, N. K. G., Wikaire, E. I., Ngawati, R. M., Aspin, C. S., et al. (2007) An Indigenous Medical Workforce: Strengthening Māori participation in the New Zealand health and disability workforce. *The Medical Journal of Australia*, 186(10), 541–543.
- Santoro, N. & Reid, J.-A. (2006) 'All things to all people': Indigenous teachers in the Australian teaching profession. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 29(3), 287-303.
- Sheehan, D. & Jansen, D. (2006) The development of a national bicultural and interprofessional programme in clinical teaching and supervision in New Zealand. *Journal of Interprofessional Care*, 20(6), 591–601.
- Short, P., Seelig, T., Warren, C., Susilawati, C. & Thompson, A. (2008) *Risk-assessment practices in the private rental sector: implications for low-income renters*. AHURI Final Report No. 117. Melbourne: Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Queensland Research Centre.

- Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health. (2004) *Cultural Respect Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health*. Canberra: AHMAC.
- Szava, A. & Moran, M. (2008) *Perceptions of Home Ownership Among IBA Home Loan Clients*. Alice Springs: Centre for Appropriate Technology and Indigenous Business Australia.
- Whiteside, M., Tsey, K., McCalman, J., Cadet-James, Y. & Wilson, A. (2006) Empowerment as a Framework for Indigenous Workforce Development and Organisational Change. *Australian Social Work*, 59(4), 422–434.

APPENDIX: SYNTHESIS OF EVIDENCE ON INDIGENOUS WORKFORCE CAPACITY BUILDING

Hutchins, T., Frances, K. & Siggers, S. (2009) Improving the representation of Indigenous workers in the mainstream childcare workplace. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 34(1), 2–9

This research examines the issue of Indigenous workforce recruitment and retention in the mainstream childcare industry. It identifies three strategies to overcoming shortages:

- The provision of culturally safe workplaces.
- Flexible employment practices.
- On-the-job, flexible training opportunities (Hutchins, Frances & Siggers 2009, p.3).

Hutchins, Frances and Siggers (2009) conducted a mixed method study, which included a quantitative analysis of the numbers of Indigenous childcare workers and the numbers of Indigenous children accessing childcare services. Focus groups and individual interviews were also conducted with Indigenous workers, service providers and community groups (p.4).

The authors find that there are significant Indigenous and non-Indigenous childcare workforce shortages across Australia and whilst there are strategic policies designed to address these shortages generally, there have been no Indigenous specific policies. The authors claim that this lack of policy reinforces a 'one size fits all' approach and fails to acknowledge cultural difference that is important to attracting and retaining Indigenous staff and providing quality care to Indigenous children (p.4).

This lack of cultural sensitivity was echoed in the interviews and focus groups where parents reported feeling shamed and disrespected in some instances when dealing with mainstream service providers and Indigenous workers reported a lack of 'cultural safety'³ in mainstream workplaces (p.5). For example, a number of interviewed workers reported being chastised for speaking in their own language and felt that this should be understood as adding value to the care of the children rather than being treated with suspicion (p.6).

The study finds that flexible employment practices that recognise Indigenous workers' kinship and family responsibilities and accommodate these needs assist in creating a culturally safe workplace. The authors observe that service providers who offered this flexibility were also able to attract and retain staff (p.6).

In addition to a culturally safe workplace and employment flexibility, on-the-job training that is culturally appropriate and recognises prior learning is critical to recruiting and retaining Indigenous staff (p.6).

On-the-job training is important because many Indigenous caregivers in rural or remote locations cannot leave their communities to engage in formal training programs and many are more likely to start training if they are assured of a position upon completion (p.6). Formal recognition of Indigenous knowledge and prior learning is also crucial because it values current competencies and is culturally sensitive (pp.6–7).

³ Cultural safety in the workplace refers to workers being able to express their identity, practice their culture and having their values respected without fear of ridicule, chastisement or prejudice (Hutchins, Frances & Siggers 2009, p.5).

Santoro, N. & Reid, J.-A. (2006) 'All things to all people': Indigenous teachers in the Australian teaching profession. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 29(3), 287–303

This study examines the career pathways of Australian Indigenous teachers over a four year period. Santoro and Reid (2006) find that unlike their non-Indigenous counterparts, Indigenous teachers are expected to be 'all things to all people'. This includes the expectation that they will bridge the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge in the workplace (p.293), take responsibility for developing and implementing Indigenous curriculum (p.293), and take complete responsibility for Indigenous students' wellbeing and pastoral care (p.294). These expectations and additional responsibilities often results in 'burnout', isolation and feelings of oppression (p.299).

Santoro and Reid (2006) interviewed current and former Indigenous teachers from a range of rural, regional and metropolitan locations across Australia. They also established a longitudinal study with a small group of newly graduated (commenced employment 2004 and 2005) Indigenous teachers (p.292).

Many Indigenous teachers who took part in this study reported feeling overloaded and burdened by carrying such high expectations and additional responsibilities in the workplace (pp.293–299). As one interviewee explains:

there's the community expectation that you will look after all the Koori kids in the school and that you'll be the main link between the school and community ... a lot of teachers they can't handle it because they can't take their work home with them and they can't take their community with them to work ... If the community have an issue they will pounce on you at the school because you're the Aboriginal person and they think you will fix it. And if you can't fix it then you're the bad person in their eyes. (p.295)

They also reported feeling misunderstood and oppressed by their colleagues and education system (pp.298–299) with some reporting that they are identified by their race first, profession second, which assigns them to the position of 'the Indigenous teacher' rather than a teacher first and Indigenous colleague second (p.298).

Many interviewees also expressed frustration with non-Indigenous assumptions that Indigenous people are a homogenous group and therefore know everything about Indigenous culture. As one participant explains:

You shouldn't be teaching stuff that is significant if you don't know about it. I really found that the 'one size fits all' idea, that sort of goes against me as well because I should not be teaching unless I'm skilled and have the permission of local people ... I should not be teaching their culture unless they say, 'Yeah, you can teach it' type of thing. (p.297)

The authors link these working conditions to recruitment and retention issues and conclude by arguing for changes to the mainstream education system and culture (pp.299–301). They claim that the education of Indigenous students is the responsibility of *all* teachers and as such Indigenous pedagogies, history, culture and values need to be incorporated in all teacher education courses (p.299). The authors also highlight the importance of support for Indigenous teachers from their colleagues and school system (p.300).

Day, A., Giles, G., Marshall, B. & Sanderson, V. (2004) The Recruitment and Retention of Indigenous Criminal Justice Agency Staff in an Australian State. *International Journal of Offender Therapy & Comparative Criminology*, 48(3), 347–359

This study explores Indigenous employees' experiences of working for government agencies within the South Australian justice system. It draws out barriers to recruiting and retaining Indigenous staff members as well as some options for overcoming these barriers.

Day et al. (2004) conducted focus groups with 40 Indigenous employees and individual interviews with six employees who were rurally or remotely located, which represented over one third of Indigenous employees working in the criminal justice and emergency services in South Australia (p.350). The study was commissioned by the South Australian government.

The authors identify several barriers to successful *recruitment*, including:

- A lack of pro-active recruiting activities on the part of agencies (p.351).
- Poorly written position descriptions that did not recognise cultural skills as competencies or were full of jargon, which deterred Indigenous applicants because many felt they were not qualified to do the job (p.352).
- Large interview panels of all non-Indigenous people (p.352).
- Inappropriate or patronising questions at the interview (p.352).

The authors also identified barriers to *retaining* Indigenous staff, which include:

- Poor induction processes where little or no effort was made to accommodate or recognise cultural needs or practices. For example, one participant reported 'I had two days induction and that was it. It's a classic opportunity to link Aboriginal fellas with others. Why don't management support that?' (p.353).
- A general lack of cultural awareness training for non-Indigenous staff, which many participants reported, resulted in an onus on Indigenous staff members to educate their colleagues (p.353).
- Stressful or unrewarding elements of the position, including short-term contracts, low pay, lack of career opportunities, and an under-recognition of the fact that Indigenous employees often do not 'clock off' when they leave the office as members of the Indigenous community may place additional demands on these employees' time (p.353).
- Inadequate workplace support, resulting in higher stress levels and isolation (p.354).
- A significant level of racially demeaning behaviour from work colleagues (p.354).

In addition to barriers, participants also identified a number of facilitators and strategies to successfully recruit and retain Indigenous staff members. The participants report that knowing an Indigenous person who already works at the agency and a less formal interview process with Indigenous people on the panel would assist recruitment efforts (pp.351-352). In addition, participants felt that a more proactive recruitment strategy where agencies visited schools, communities and colleges, and communicated that working for their agency would be of benefit to the community would also increase Indigenous recruitment numbers (p.352).

Cultural awareness training and strategies to change a largely oblivious and sometimes racist agency culture was touted as the most important facilitator to

retaining staff by participants (p.354). A mentoring system was also identified and supported by several participants.

Based on these findings, Day et al. (2004) make two key recommendations:

- To establish structures and procedures across the many justice agencies to ensure that effective measures such as cultural awareness training, a generic but comprehensive induction program, and grievance handling procedures were implemented (p.355).
- To establish appropriate and effective communication with Indigenous employees, their representatives, Indigenous communities, justice agencies and other stakeholders such as Indigenous community sector agencies (p.355).

Bartik, W., Dixon, A. & Dart, K. (2007) Aboriginal child and adolescent mental health: a rural worker training model. *Australasian Psychiatry*, 15(2), 135–139.

This paper presents the key findings from an evaluation of an Indigenous traineeship initiative designed to build the Indigenous workforce capacity in the NSW child and adolescent mental health sector.

The initiative is comprised of three main components: a mentoring program, academic study and employment (p.136). It was piloted in Tamworth as a response to the low numbers of clinically qualified Indigenous people working in the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) (p.135).

In designing the initiative, guidance was sought from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous service providers. The central concerns were that trainees were adequately supported in the workplace, that they received comprehensive training and supervision, that workloads were not excessive and that trainees had access to support from Indigenous workers (p.136).

Culturally appropriate position descriptions were created and potential boundary issues, such as the trainee working within their own community or gender issues, were also foreshadowed (p.136).

The employment component of the program began at the commencement of the traineeship and the trainee's job duties increased in scope and responsibility in accordance with their competencies and skills (p.136). Trainees received weekly supervision sessions, and an on-site supervisor who guided and supported their daily activities (p.137). A formal appraisal occurred quarterly for the first year and then bi-annually in the final two years (p.137).

The mentor component linked up trainees with other Indigenous workers and meetings took place weekly in the beginning of the program and then less frequently as required (p.137). Guidelines were developed in order to articulate this relationship, with clearly outlined roles and responsibilities for each party.

Trainees also completed a formal academic qualification and trainees could choose to enroll in an Indigenous specific or mainstream mental health academic program. The trainees were actively supported by their workplace in their academic studies and were given time off to attend course requirement and were remunerated for associated costs such as travel, accommodation and fees (p.137).

From some preliminary evaluations Bartik, Dixon and Dart (2007) conclude that the initiative is promising and has enjoyed some early success. In particular the trainees reported that good and accessible supervisory relationships had been beneficial (p.137). The trainees also reported that their greatest challenges involved balancing work and study demands, and becoming familiar with all of the policies and

procedures. Team members and managers reported some confusion about role definitions, although this may have been exacerbated by high staff turnover (p.138).

Based on this early feedback the authors find crucial elements of a successful program include:

- A structured learning program with clear objectives and clear lines of responsibility
- A commitment from all levels of management
- Ongoing support that is easily accessible for trainees and
- Open and regular communication between participating agencies (p.138).

Whiteside, M., Tsey, K., McCalman, J., Cadet-James, Y. & Wilson, A. (2006) Empowerment as a Framework for Indigenous Workforce Development and Organisational Change. *Australian Social Work*, 59(4), 422–434

This paper reports on an evaluation of a Family Wellbeing Empowerment program that was adapted for the workplace and delivered in two stages at the Cairns Region Department of Families (p.425). The program focuses on individual empowerment as a base to effect personal and structural change in the workplace (p.424).

The program aims to provide an opportunity for participants to build trusting relationships, to reflect on their personal needs and aspirations, and to develop life skills, strategies and support mechanisms to meet those needs (p.425). It also provided follow-up support that facilitated participants collectively addressing structural issues identified during the training (p.425). A total of 26 youth workers participated in the two stages of the program. Twenty-one of these were Indigenous and five were non-Indigenous (pp.426-427). Both a questionnaire and in-depth interview were used to collect feedback (p.427).

Whiteside et al. (2006) find that overall participants enhanced their personal empowerment, which allowed them to exert more control over situations they confront in the workplace (p.427). This manifested as increased confidence and assertiveness (pp.427–428). The course also validated workers skills and knowledge, as one explained:

... the course says that my skills were very strong and allowed me to continue to use these skills. It clarified for me that my work practices are fair and respectful. (p.428)

Many participants also valued learning in a group environment because it allowed them to share and feel heard but also listen and learn from others' experiences (pp.429–431).

The authors also find that there was some evidence of structural improvements, however significant barriers remained. First, there was a clear commitment from senior management for the program. They demonstrated this commitment by visiting participants part way through the program and by providing additional funding when requested to continue the program (p.430).

Second, the participants also became aware that to affect change they would need to play a greater part in leadership roles. As one worker explains:

I got on the Disability Advocacy Rights and Action Board ... I've got some power to do things and challenge service providers and government departments so that each individual is valued as a human being. (p.431)

However, there was also evidence that structural issues persisted. At the core of these issues was the Indigenous experience of not being respected, valued as a team

member, and not having their skills and knowledge recognised (p.431). One non-Indigenous participant observed that until non-Indigenous people really hear and listen to the experiences of Indigenous people, cultural change will be difficult to achieve (p.431). Other barriers included job insecurity, inadequate role descriptions and bureaucratic inflexibility (p.432).

Ratima, M. M., Brown, R. M., Garrett, N. K. G., Wikaire, E. I., Ngawati, R. M., Aspin, C. S., et al. (2007) An Indigenous Medical Workforce: Strengthening Māori participation in the New Zealand health and disability workforce. *The Medical Journal of Australia*, 186(10), 541–543

This paper describes several recruitment and retention interventions that have been implemented in New Zealand to increase Maori participation rates in the health and disability workforce. Ratima et al. (2007) find that successful interventions include:

- Maori leadership in both intervention development and implementation.
- Maori mentorship and peer support.
- Consistent, long-term investment.
- Development of dual cultural and clinical competencies.
- Comprehensive support within study programs and in the transition periods between school, university and work (p.541).

Sheehan, D. & Jansen, D. (2006) The development of a national bicultural and interprofessional programme in clinical teaching and supervision in New Zealand. *Journal of Interprofessional Care*, 20(6), 591–601

This paper describes and reports on the outcomes of a bicultural training program designed to increase the number of Maori health care professionals qualified to supervise, train, teach and coach other Maori health professionals and workers (pp.591–592). The program was introduced because the mainstream Graduate Certificate of Clinical Teaching (GCCT) that had been operating for 10 years had failed to attract Maori practitioners and the concept of 'by Maori for Maori' that is inherent in the Treaty of Waitangi, is understood to underpin good practice in health service delivery (p.592). The program was a collaboration between mainstream education providers, the Maori Practitioners Association and other Maori health professional groups (p.593).

The program delivers the same content as the GCCT but uses Maori pedagogy to teach (p.591). The differences between mainstream and Maori delivery of content include:

- Teaching on a marae⁴, which demonstrates an endorsement of Maori world views, customs and values (p.592).
- A series of eight three-day, face-to-face teaching blocks, which includes communal sleeping and eating. This allows the group to form strong connections and bonds, work closely together and subsequently learn from one another's experiences (p.595).
- Access to teachers and elders from the marae as well as the mainstream, which offers a spiritual and emotional dimension to the course, resulting in a holistic learning and teaching experience (p.595).

In the evaluations Sheehan and Jansen (2006) found that:

⁴ *Marae* means a place to stand and is used in this context to refer to a Maori meeting place (595).

- All participants had become more involved in the provision of clinical supervision (p.596).
- The marae provided a culturally safe, non-threatening teaching and learning environment for the students, which allowed them to participate with more confidence (p.596).
- Participants reportedly developed a more strategic view of the health and education sectors, and a greater sense of the potential they had to influence policy and organisational frameworks (p.596).
- A number of participants reported that the qualification had had a positive impact on their career with some moving into new positions (p.597).

More broadly, Sheehan and Jensen (2006) have identified five principles or lessons that can be drawn from this program:

1. Role models are important. In order to overcome difficulties associated with 'walking in two worlds' or negotiating a viable path between Western and Maori ways of knowing and being in the world, students greatly benefited from learning from community members who have walked this path before (p.598).
2. *Bicultural* means changing the assumptions of the mainstream or dominant culture and involves valuing Indigenous knowledge by incorporating it into the content and pedagogy of a program (p.599).
3. Place matters. Changing the physical place where a program is taught significantly changes the feel of the teaching and learning process. It can also be used to validate and recognise Indigenous knowledge, values and cultural practices (p.599).
4. Language matters. Language is an expression of culture and Indigenous language needs to be incorporated into any bicultural program (p.599).
5. Policy and managerial support is important. The authors note that Maori professionals have more roles and demands on them than their non-Indigenous counterparts (p.597) and that delivering a bicultural program is often a challenge to the mainstream system, which can be exhausting if stakeholders and funders do not provide the required flexibility and support (p.599).

Aarluk Consulting Inc. (2009) *Recruitment and Retention of Inuit Nurses in Nunavut*. Nunavut, Canada: Nunavut Tanngavik Inc.

Aarluk Consulting Inc. (2009) conducted interviews and focus groups with stakeholders in order to identify barriers to recruitment of Indigenous nurses and challenges faced by Indigenous students enrolled in nursing studies (p.iv). The research was commissioned by the Nunavut Department of Health and Social Services in response to low, unrepresentative numbers of Indigenous people in the Canadian nursing workforce (pp.2–3).

The study finds four key barriers to the recruitment of Indigenous Canadians into nursing careers.

- Quality of primary and secondary education. The authors find that many Inuit school leavers do not have an adequate level of maths, science or English to enter nursing courses (p.18). This was attributed to:
 - A lack of capacity, infrastructure and resources to support the development of these skills to an adequate level.
 - A curriculum that does not reflect or support Indigenous culture and society (e.g. all content is taught in English).

- A lack of career counselling.
 - A lack of interest from Indigenous students.
- A lack of promotion of health careers among Indigenous youth. There is a lack of role models for young people, which reinforces the idea that nursing positions are held by non-Indigenous people (p.18).
- Alternative pathways are inadequately funded. Foundation programs targeted at Indigenous youth provide a pathway into nursing by providing a 10 month foundation course as a precursor to a mainstream nursing course. Increased funding would increase opportunities for a greater number of youth (p.19).
- Inadequate recruitment strategies. For example many informants noted that there was no budget for student recruitment and that such a program could be successful in strengthening linkages between secondary schools and workplaces, and promoting health careers to Indigenous youth (p.19).

Challenges and barriers to the retention of Indigenous nursing students have been identified as follows:

- Indigenous people tend to have children at a younger age and familial responsibilities can disrupt a higher education career (p.19).
- Low skill levels attributed to a poorer quality of secondary education can result in a more stressful university experience (p.20).
- Despite identified, government financial supports, many Indigenous students continue to struggle financially whilst studying. This study suggests that this may be associated with increased family responsibilities that compete with part-time work opportunities (p.20).
- Students often travel far from their home communities and can face long periods of homesickness and loneliness that may contribute to higher non- completion rates (p.20).

Finally, several challenges and barriers have been identified to the retention of Indigenous nurses that do not apply to non-Indigenous nurses to the same degree:

- Community members will often contact Indigenous nurses after hours for assistance or advice (p.22).
- Indigenous nurses can be expected to translate for community members whilst also carrying out their full workload (p.22).
- Community members can put additional pressure of Indigenous nurses by expecting differential treatment (p.22).

**Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute
Research Synthesis Service**

Level 1 114 Flinders Street, Melbourne Victoria 3000

Phone +61 3 9660 2300 Fax +61 3 9663 5488

Email information@ahuri.edu.au Web www.ahuri.edu.au