Project Summary

Funding Details: Funded $60,452 by NSW Department for Women under the Department's Large Grants Program

Project Partners: UOW EEO Unit and Illawarra Aboriginal Employment Promotion Committee, a subcommittee of the Illawarra Area Consultative Committee

Project Period: February - December 2000

Project Description:

The aim of this project was to work cooperatively with local Aboriginal women and local Aboriginal networks to improve employment opportunities for Aboriginal women at the University of Wollongong. The project had two arms. The first included activities with local women including a work experience program and the second included developing a framework of programs that will support ongoing employment for Aboriginal women at the University of Wollongong.

Through this project, the University has been able to develop a strong relationship with a number of individuals and organisations from within the local Aboriginal community and these relationships are the major success of the project. The University has established a reputation of not wanting to be involved in local Aboriginal politics, but certainly wanting to support employment and education opportunities for all members of the local Aboriginal community. The WOW Aboriginal Women project has provided the platform for building a long term relationship with the local Aboriginal community. A Certificate of Appreciation was received by the EEO Unit from the Wodi Wodi Elders Corporation for work on this project.

A summary of the project outcomes is provided below. Reference should be made to the Final Report for a full description of the project and its outcomes.
WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

- 10 of the 11 women who commenced the work experience program completed the program with an overall 73% attendance average.
- Work experience "participants overwhelmingly believed that this program has been beneficial to them personally."  
- 55% of the participants have consequently taken employment or education paths at the University of Wollongong (2 participants gained employment at the University of Wollongong, 2 enrolled in an undergraduate degrees, 1 continued her undergraduate studies and 1 enrolled in a higher degree).

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

- Racist attitudes were identified as being part of the organisation's culture, however strategies were identified to support reconciliation and change current attitudes.

IMPROVED KNOWLEDGE OF CAMPUS LIFE IN THE LOCAL ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY

- A working relationship was established with Illawarra Aboriginal Employment Promotion Committee and ongoing relationships have been developed with the community representatives on the WOW Aboriginal Women Steering Committee.
- Members of the local Aboriginal community were invited and attended events held at the University during the project. For many, it was their first visit on campus.
- The EEO Unit received a Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of their commitment to work opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women from the Wodi Wodi Elders Corporation at the conclusion of the work experience program.
- "Word of mouth" network was utilised through the work experience trainees.

DEVELOPMENT OF FRAMEWORK FOR ONGOING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR ABORIGINAL WOMEN

- The University of Wollongong Aboriginal Employment Strategy has been completed.
- 21 Aboriginal positions are being negotiated through GATE: Generating Advantage through Employment as part of the implementation of the University of Wollongong Aboriginal Employment Strategy.

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• Brochures have been developed to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to apply for positions at the University of Wollongong.

• An application for external funding is under consideration for a second work experience program, similar to the *WOW Aboriginal Women* program, and for establishment of an employment information network from regional employers directly to local Aboriginal organisations.

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