

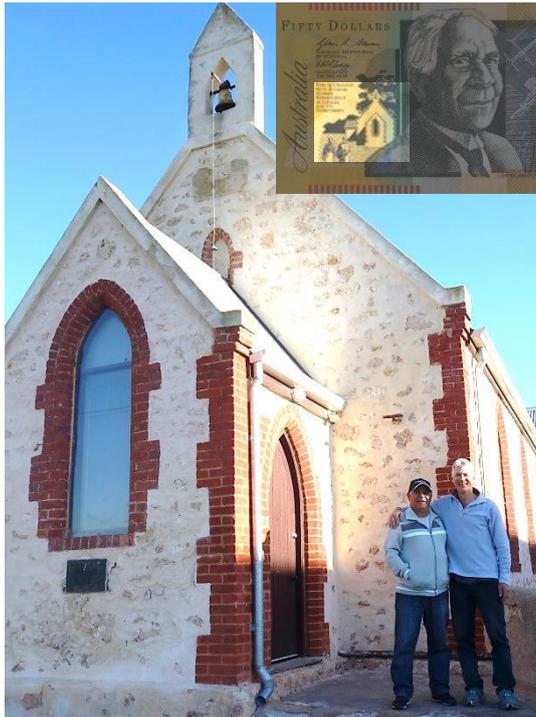
SA Government Case Study Three Organisational Development Strategies for the Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority

Michael Gibbs, Principal Adviser
Office for the Public Sector, Department for the Premier and Cabinet



Background

The Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority (NRA) is the peak Indigenous organisation in the Lower River Murray, Lakes and Coorong region of South Australia. The NRA represents more than 12 community organisations from a broad range of sectors, including community services, land care, traditional governance, eco-tourism and cultural education. As an umbrella organisation, the NRA has the potential to identify and share best practice, achieve economies of scale, create consistency and improve productivity for a diverse and highly mobile workforce and community. The NRA maintains a consistent commitment to reviewing its governance as its constituent organisations evolve through new commercial opportunities and relationships.



Clyde Rigney Snr, Raukkan Community Leader and Jawun secondee Michael Gibbs, outside the Raukkan church featured on the Australian \$50 note.

Approach

Michael's Jawun secondment focussed on organisational development and capability building. He initially spent time listening to and engaging with Ngarrindjeri elders and community members to hear about their stories and aspirations as a nation. This provided an orientation to the complexities, challenges and opportunities available to the Ngarrindjeri Nation. Michael then negotiated a series of linked strategies to build upon the Ngarrindjeri Nation's organisational capability. As the NRA's strategic thinking to date had been at the highest levels, Michael assisted the NRA to chart a pathway towards organisational growth that supports strong and robust operational management of all aspects of their day-to-day businesses and services.

Outcomes and Response

A critical project in securing the future of the Ngarrindjeri Nation was a strategy to recruit the NRA's new CEO. This included reviewing and re-defining the role and the design of an expression of interest process. Michael engaged with key Ngarrindjeri leaders to review and build on past processes and resources, as well as introduce new recruitment tools and systems. Eunice Ashton, NRA Chair, said she was pleased that "we now have a great recruitment strategy that we can learn from and apply again in the future".

Michael also assisted in developing a tool for the NRA to self-assess their Organisational Capability. This tool identified organisational health in six key areas to ensure that the NRA's resources, structures, systems, business/service planning and service delivery is well-aligned to its strategic direction. This is something that Eunice Ashton says will "help us think through where we need to go in terms of our own capacity". A second assessment tool was developed for external private and public sector organisations wishing to engage or partner with Ngarrindjeri. This tool built on the work already undertaken by the Ngarrindjeri Research, Policy and Planning Unit located at Flinders University, South Australia. The tool will drive more productive and sustainable partnerships and lead to a deeper understanding of the Ngarrindjeri Nation through the engagement and partnership process.

In keeping with the Jawun philosophy of skills transfer, Michael also used the opportunity to mentor a senior Ngarrindjeri leader. This proved to be a two-way experience of learning, development and cultural exchange.

Next Steps

Future rounds of secondees will continue to work on building common systems and processes to increase their organisational maturity, as identified through the Ngarrindjeri self-assessment tool. The external organisation assessment tool will be trialled and reviewed to measure its impact and its ability to leverage further improvements. The tool will allow external organisations to better understand how they can work with the Ngarrindjeri Nation in keeping with Ngarrindjeri values, laws, science and knowledge.



For further information on Jawun Secondment opportunities in SA Government go to the [OPS Jawun Website](#), phone 08 8303 2248, or e-mail DPCOPSLeadership@sa.gov.au