



Defence Indigenous Development Program - A Career Pathway Model that is Closing the Gap: Case Study

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Australia has promised to close the gap on health, education and employment but we are failing on six out of seven key measures.

In 2017 the United Nations described Australia's lack of progress on Closing the Gap as "woefully inadequate". When visiting Australia, UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Victoria Tauli-Corpuz said it was unacceptable that despite two decades of economic growth, Australia had not been able to improve the social disadvantage of its Indigenous population. (Bridget Brennan, ABC, Posted 11 Sep 2017)

This paper presents a case study for an Indigenous career pathway model that works and has already provided over 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders a meaningful career future within the Australian Defence Services.

For the past five years Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education in partnership with Australian Defence has delivered the Defence Indigenous Development Program in Darwin Northern Territory. I have held the role of Program Manager throughout this time responsible for designing and delivering these programs designed to establish or strengthen Indigenous careers within Defence services.

This case study will outline the elements of this successful career pathway program which include: mentoring, on the job training, strengthening LL&N capacity, career planning, cultural, and academic and defence studies. It will also draw on National and International research on effective engagement practices for clients from low socio- economic backgrounds.