It was fantastic to be part of our employer partner, Programmed's recent announcement to commit 5,000 job opportunities to Indigenous Australians. It sets a new benchmark for Indigenous workplace participation and we hope other businesses can be inspired by it. Programmed is one of many businesses who have long standing partnerships with GenOne and their commitment to the VTEC program is what drives its success. This edition of our newsletter is filled with inspiring stories about how employment can be the catalyst for change in a person’s life and about the employer’s experience with VTEC. Please share this newsletter through your networks and encourage other businesses and job seekers to join us on this journey to end disparity through employment opportunities.

Sharon Jones
National Employment Manager
The Ability Options VTEC team was brought in by GenerationOne to work with the Menzies Group to fill the skills shortage in the Illawarra and the Sydney region and assist with the employment of local Aboriginal people. Ability Options VTEC led two Recruitment and Information sessions in Port Kembla which attracted 21 interested Aboriginal people.

“We enjoy close contact with the jobs providers, such as Ability Options as well as GenerationOne. I felt the recruitment session was a very successful start and we have placed six people who attended the session into work already.”

“Working alongside Ability Options VTEC for recruitment is a simple process that allows us access to a cross-section of the community. We understand that for our employment strategy to work, mutual trust and inclusion is important, and our new Aboriginal placements receive weekly contact with their VTEC jobs provider, Ability Options to ensure everything is going ok with their new job” said Martin Wardell, General Manager NSW Government Contract The Menzies Group are as diverse in their service offering as they are in their workforce needs to meet and exceed Government and commercial contract obligations and in 2016 The Menzies Group had their Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) endorsed by Reconciliation Australia.

“I believe this shows our firm commitment to the ATSI Community and we are fully committed to the implementation of our RAP. We require a large workforce with people skilled at multiple levels and our national workforce, 1.8% now identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, our CEO has given us a target of 8% by 2019.” said Mr Wardell.

To engage their workforce with the employment outcomes supported in their RAP, cultural awareness training is also being organised for employees across the organisation.

“We are planning cultural awareness training to help us build stronger relationships with local people as well as our management. These cultural awareness days will be led by the Indigenous community and will include field training to enrich staff and immerse them into having a better understanding of the Aboriginal culture” said Mr Wardell.

Menzies would like to be seen as an employer of choice as they are committed to supporting, training and ensuring ATSI people are placed into the right teams with all the resources they need to be successful.

“It’s a journey, it’s exciting and we highly value our relationship with GenerationOne, VTEC and job providers such as Ability Options. We need all our valued partnerships to be strong to ensure we reach our recruitment goals and support Aboriginal people into sustainable employment”. concluded Mr Wardell.

BRIDGING THE GAP FUTURENET EVENT

GenerationOne COO, Matt O’Sullivan was delighted to join Consult Australia’s FutureNet young professionals network as a guest speaker at their ‘Bridging the Gap’ breakfast on Friday, 10 March.

Matt spoke about the GenerationOne VTEC employment model and its ground breaking success at helping job-seekers and employers.
FRIENDSHIP GIVES STUDENTS HAND UP INTO EMPLOYMENT

Five individuals from the Indigenous Workstars VTEC program gained more than a career start and found a bond in each other alongside graduating from their traineeship earlier this month.

Besides forging their close knit bond, these five graduates have just completed traineeships in Bundaberg studying either conservation land management or construction with Reclink.

All five participants had multiple barriers and had been out of employment for over six months before gaining the support of the Indigenous Workstars VTEC program.

“All participants have formed a family-like bond which is great to see,” said Amanda Kirkwood from Indigenous Workstars.

“I genuinely appreciate being able to assist and support these wonderful candidates,” Miss Kirkwood said.

At one stage one of the participants injured himself and Miss Kirkwood explained “we were there to support and encourage his recovery and to return to work through VTEC.”

Miss Kirkwood and Jessica Taylor from Indigenous Workstars were able to assist participants into additional courses, programs and career support to ultimately strengthen their career pathway.

Indigenous Workstars VTEC mentors were there to support and guide the trainees every step of the way and ensured that each participant gained the support that they required whether it be at their workplace or elsewhere.

“I would like to thank Reclink on their engagement with Indigenous Workstars and VTEC and congratulate the trainees on their wonderful achievements!”

Thank you to these employers who have recently committed jobs for Indigenous Australians through VTEC:
PROGRAMMED SETS GOAL OF 5,000 ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER JOBS

Programmed seeks a workforce that looks like the communities we work in. We want a workforce that reflects the diversity of society by culture, gender, age, sexual orientation and abilities. This means that we are attracting and developing the best people for our business from the entire population. We also know that a diverse team makes better informed decisions.

An important element of our diversity plan is our updated 10 year Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement and employment plan which we are pleased to have announced today with the support of the Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull and Mr Andrew Forest, Founder of GenerationOne.

We are pleased to announce that our diversity plan has set a target of placing into employment a further 5,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This will require us to invest in developing a larger pipeline of workforce ready Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates as well as developing new job opportunities with our customers. Elements of our plan include:

- a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education scholarships at schools where we support our scholarship holder with employment opportunities at the end of year 12;
- partnership with Clontarf Foundation supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education;
- commitments with GenerationOne, AFL SportsReady, Yarn’n and other community and employment partners;
- the development of prison to employment programs to facilitate the transition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners from jail to fulltime employment;
- procurement of services with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses such as Print Junction and Muru to develop further job opportunities;
- working directly with many Programmed customers across mining, manufacturing, transport and government to place Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into employment.

Programmed managing director, Chris Sutherland, said, ‘We are pleased to have the recognition of the Prime Minister and Andrew Forrest in support of our updated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement and employment plan. It is important that our workforce reflects the communities we operate in.’

Mr Forrest added: ‘Programmed’s 5,000 jobs for Indigenous people sets a new benchmark for the private sector and I am incredibly grateful and inspired by their pledge. I call on the Australian Government and business community to continue to reflect on their own capacity to increase Indigenous participation in the workforce. Employment is a fundamental part of closing the gap and every opportunity counts. We thank the Government for their continued support of Indigenous job seekers and employers through the VTEC program and the Employment Parity Initiative. Parity can be achieved in our generation if we do this together.’
VISIONSTREAM AND REAL FUTURES’ CULTURAL COMPETENCE TRAINING

Cultural competence training organisation Real Futures has been working with Visionstream, which is contracted to build infrastructure for the National Broadband Network (NBN) in the Kempsey region of NSW.

Real Futures has been providing cultural competence training for more than 50 staff at Visionstream in the office from Kempsey.

“We had staff learn about the respect for the land, sacred sites, scar trees, and about the culture in general”, she said.

“I think there was a deeper respect and understanding for Aboriginal people that came out of the training. A little was taught about the funeral processes and the family system, and how to work with Aboriginal people.”

Visionstream has also engaged Real Futures to source Aboriginal workers for its projects.

Real Futures managing director Wendy Yarnold said Visionstream approached the organisation through GenerationOne to employ trainees.

“We explained to them that there were actually loads of people who’d already completed their Certificate 3 because of the NSW Government roads project here,” she said.

“So we said, instead of trainees, how about two fully trained employees. They were happy with that and left it to us to interview and pick the guys for the job. They treated the boys from the get-go as just part of the team. They got company card and they were always treated with respect on the worksite.”

Visionstream also encouraged its subcontractors to employ local Aboriginal people and each of its staff was provided with an ‘Indigenous Pride’ high visibility work short, designed by Real Futures.

Visionstream also asked the community to nominate a project where it could “give back” and the chosen project – the Railway Bridge Park – has now been beautified.

Kempsey Shire Council supported the project for the popular area, which was in need of improvement. A picnic area was created in the park, landscaping was done and overgrowth was removed.

Ms Yarnold said she remembers the park as a family-friendly area and used it a number of times when she was younger.

“We used to have boat races and go fishing there but the walkway had become overgrown and there’s not much lighting so it’s has become a bit dangerous there,” she said.

“Visionstream came in with a heap of staff. They took three days to do all the beautifying. They had the council’s help and approval. We also had a local concreter who does Aboriginal art in concrete, so he got involved too. It’s much more family-friendly again now. The council says if it’s a space the community want to keep using, they’ll keep it nice for us.”
JOHN FIND HIS VOICE

John has been a Karen Sheldon Future Star since 2010. He has grown into a very ambitious young man, keen to try anything once. Karen Sheldon Training & Development feels very proud to have gone along with John on this journey through sustainable employment. John is now one of our best success stories as he is a true example of a young Indigenous man attempting to walk various paths, who discovered things about himself along the way. Ultimately, through these discoveries, he landed a job that truly suited him.

In his first round in the program, John says he did not take full advantage of our services, however, later on in the program he felt more inspired and connected to his mentors which helped him advance.

At first, John was in various construction roles, learning new labouring skills such as building, painting, landscaping and civil works on different projects. Even though John had the work ethic and reliability, he had mixed success in these roles. John knew that there was a different path for him, as he began to lose his enthusiasm for his construction jobs. Throughout his employment journey he worked in jobs that he believed he should have, versus doing what he liked.

Once his landscaping role with SterlingNT came to a close, John sat down with his mentor and had a more open discussion about his hobbies and abilities, and aspirations. It turns out, John loves the media world and has a demonstrated aptitude towards music, games etc. KSTD got him an interview with Radio Larrakia and now, he has finished his 26 weeks with them, continuing his professional development in Broadcasting.

There is a lot to learn at Radio Larrakia, but John is keen and passionate. He is willing to put more effort into succeeding in this role, than ever before and his current employer acknowledges his true potential. We wish John the best of luck in pursuing his dreams at the radio station and we’ll be listening to him on-air with pride!

VTEC HOSPITALITY TAKES OFF IN KUNUNURRA WA

The VTEC program ‘Unlocking the Potential of Future Stars’ has become a reference to Indigenous employment in the hospitality industry in the Kimberley region of WA.

The program kicked off in February 2017 and involves a combination of life skills and hands-on activities such as career workshops and industry visits.

The first week on the program ended on a high note. After learning the art of professional coffee-making, participants all headed on an industry visit to see how things are done in the real world!

The photo features the VTEC participants on their first industry visit to the local tavern, where they were welcomed by the tavern manager, Michael, who took the participants on a tour ‘behind the scenes’.

The ‘behind the scenes’ tour included seeing how food is stored and preserved, how the chefs work on the food prep, as well as asking lots of questions regarding rewards and challenges in the hospitality industry. The first industry visit finished off with a get-together and all participants enjoying a delicious meal to celebrate what has been a fantastic week packed with new experiences!
Morris Corporation (Morris) have recently partnered with atWork Australia (Cannington Branch) and South Metropolitan TAFE (SMTAFE) to deliver a tailored VTEC Work Readiness Program for Indigenous Job Seekers.

The objective of a VTEC, is to provide a comprehensive pre-employment training program that empowers Indigenous job seekers to address their barriers to employment, build on their strengths, and provide employer-directed training that leads to a guaranteed job. VTEC assists Morris in training these potential candidates for remote FIFO job opportunities.

Morris are very proud to be a part of the GenerationOne movement. By providing real jobs for Indigenous Australians, we are committed to closing the gap through generational change. This approach is strongly aligned with the Morris commitment of “Real Communities, Real Outcomes” and we are excited at the future opportunities we will be able to offer with our partners.

Morris recently interviewed VTEC participant Omar Farrell and his supervisor Dwan Raimee...

Omar, How did you find the Work Readiness Program and was it helpful?
I found it quite interesting, especially how it was focused on helping us prepare for FIFO. I’ve had work in a remote location previously so I felt I was already prepared, but nevertheless it provided timely reminders and it was a great opportunity to meet other new indigenous team members.

What was your first interaction with Morris and what happened?
It was at Karntama Village Reception. I was met by the HSE who showed me around the camp and was taken through an induction. He was kind, courteous and professional.

What role have you taken on and are you enjoying your job?
I’ve been lucky enough to join the Christmas Creek Airport team full time here at Karntama. I’ve never worked in an airport before so it’s been very new and exciting to me. I’m loving it!

How has your experience with Morris been so far? (Going through the recruitment process, going to site, working with team mates etc.)
It’s been good. Like I mentioned before, I feel that I’ve been lucky enough to work in a role that is new to me and supported by many people.

Dwan, how has Omar’s performance been so far?
In a short amount of time, Omar had built a reputation of being a hard worker and a reliable team member around Karntama Village. Because of this, Omar came highly recommended by many people to initially join our onsite airport relief pool. Once here, Omar surpassed many of our expectations with his great aptitude with working with aircraft and attitude with customer service. When a full time role did become available, we felt that Omar was exactly the candidate we were looking for. Demonstrating on a daily basis the Morris’s Core values and the 3Bs with both internal and external customers; it has been an absolute pleasure to have Omar on-board with us.
FluidDrive STEERING VTEC PARTICIPANTS INTO JOBS.

FluidDrive Holdings is Australasia’s leading remanufactured vehicle transmission specialist, established 50 years ago, FluidDrive have been providing vehicle distributors and manufacturers in latest model transmissions throughout Australia, New Zealand, and Asia.

Based in Preston, FluidDrive have given employment opportunities to MEGT VTEC clients since September, 2015 by employing over 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into labouring roles.

Adrian Watts (Operations Manager) has been a dedicated employer and has provided flexible working and learning conditions to both experienced and inexperienced candidates.

Adrian stated that the relationship with MEGT VTEC developed when MEGT VTEC Marketer walked in off the street with a candidate and organised an interview in September 2015. The interview led to employment for the candidate and FluidDrive learned that MEGT VTEC provided support to the employer and the employee for 6 months to address any concerns or issues saving valuable work time. MEGT VTEC also pre-screened and put forward other Indigenous clients for future vacancies saving time in advertising and pre-screening candidates to suit the role.

MEGT VTEC SUPPORTED ME FOR SIX MONTHS, POPPING INTO WORK AND CHECKING IN TO SEE IF EVERYTHING WAS GOING WELL. IT’S GREAT TO HAVE THAT KIND OF SUPPORT TO MAKE SURE MY JOB IS SAFE AND THAT I CAN TALK ABOUT ANYTHING IF I NEED SUPPORT.

Of the clients employed since September 2015, five remain employed at FluidDrive and all are doing well. Adrian stated that the employment support program provided through VTEC was an excellent way to source suitable people and meet requirements. Adrian also stated that he believes in giving anyone a chance at employment regardless of race, age and / or experience.

Tyrone Sweeney was one of the first candidates placed at FluidDrive in September 2015. Tyrone stated “I have no plan on leaving, since I started at FluidDrive I have been guaranteed ongoing work, excellent incentives and opportunity to grow within the company. Prior to working at FluidDrive, I was a concrete polisher but the job was inconsistent and hours weren’t great. I needed to find something more sustainable. MEGT VTEC conducted some cold calling and before I knew it I had an interview at FluidDrive and a job. MEGT VTEC supported me for six months, popping into work and checking in to see if everything was going well. It’s great to have that kind of support to make sure my job is safe and that I can talk about anything if I need support”.

FluidDrive are a very fast paced busy company and all employees work hard and under time constraints. The employees and staff at FluidDrive have varying roles; some on forklift and others on tear down and the more seasoned staff are excellent mentors for new blokes coming in.

James Daniels commenced employment at FluidDrive in March 2016, formally he was doing odd jobs for a carpentry business however the employment was unreliable and inconsistent. James was not receiving enough work and found it hard to support his family. James met the MEGT VTEC Marketer at an information session at Salvation Army Plus and he commenced into the VTEC program. Marketer immediately worked with him and James attended two interviews. FluidDrive was one of them and he was very happy to find fulltime employment and a steady income. James stated that FluidDrive have been the best employer he has ever had and really enjoys working there. James appreciated the help from MEGT VTEC and the ongoing support, ‘Just knowing I could contact MEGT VTEC at any time to address any concerns was comforting, I needed this work and everything is still going strong’.

Gabriel Augustine had moved to Victoria in January 2016 and found it increasingly difficult to find work. He had connected to Jobactive provider and met MEGT VTEC Mentor on the 14th February 2017 at an information session. Mentor contacted Adrian at FluidDrive and organised an interview for him the next morning. Gabriel got the job and commenced on the 20th February on ‘tear down’ and is still amazed on how fast it all happened. Gabriel stated that he can now support his mum and brother and that both the staff and co-workers at FluidDrive are like family. ‘MEGT VTEC didn’t muck around and were very proactive in their help to find me work, they have been monitoring me since I started just to make sure everything is good and if I need any support, they are also working with my Jobactive to provide workwear and other work related financial support, I am really happy to have this level of support from them’.

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Michael Jones the youngest of the group was also recently employed at FluidDrive. Having only just left school with no previous work history except work experience in a bicycle shop, Michael was given an opportunity by Adrian to learn the trade and taken under the wing of his fellow workmates. Michael learned that his uncle (Tyrone Sweeney) was employed there also and reunited with him at the same time. Michael stated, FluidDrive have been very supportive and patient and he is happy that he has been given a chance to work. Michael said he now has a routine and is keeping out of mischief. Michael says, ‘MEGT VTEC worked hard to put me forward to the employer as I didn’t have much experience and needed someone to vouch for me. I need the support as this is all new to me and I can talk to my mentor if I am struggling with anything’.

Also, recently employed, Kalvin Ewart had been seeking assistance from MEGT VTEC to help find work. Kalvin attended MEGT VTEC office frequently demonstrating a keen thirst to find employment. MEGT VTEC learned that FluidDrive were looking to put on another bloke and Kalvin was put forward. Kalvin stated that he is now considering saving money to move out of home and that the staff and other workmates have been very supportive in teaching him how to do the job. Kalvin also stated he was grateful for all the help MEGT VTEC gave him to find work, organise work uniform and the ongoing chats to help him work through any other concerns he has.

MEGT VTEC and FluidDrive continue to have a great working relationship with consistent contact to check on the boys as well as providing support to the employer as required. Adrian is currently considering another candidate of two recently interviewed to add to the team.

MEGT VTEC value the willingness of this employer in understanding the needs and complexities of their employees and are very happy to acknowledge the dedication of this employer to provide ongoing employment opportunities to our VTEC candidates.

Cont.

Fortescue Metals Group (Fortescue) has welcomed its second ore carrier, ‘FMG Grace’ into Port Hedland. Mr Andrew Forrest, Fortescue Founder and Chairman, was joined by Nicola and Grace Forrest, the ship’s namesake, as well as ten VTEC trainees to celebrate the milestone.

Through VTEC, Fortescue is committed to empowering generational change through training and employment opportunities, with 30 per cent of the current cohort being women, while Grace Forrest is a strong advocate for women’s rights throughout the world and is a co-founder of The Walk Free Foundation.

“It was great to be a part of the ceremony that also recognised International Women’s Day and the 2017 theme ‘Empower a woman, empower a nation’. Gender equality is a core priority for Fortescue, evident through its gender balanced board and the number of women in leadership roles throughout the company,” Grace Forrest said.

“Family is at the heart of Fortescue’s values and we were honoured to be joined today by the current group of VTEC trainees, who are a very important part of our Fortescue family. The trainees are about to begin the next phase of their Fortescue journey as they start their employment at Christmas Creek next month,” Mr Forrest said.

“...GENDER EQUALITY IS A CORE PRIORIT FOR FORTESCUE,...”
VTEC’s Great Program Builds Strong Community Partnerships

We are so proud of the relationship that VTEC has developed with the Dubbo community.

Over the past few months, VTEC have been working with the Dubbo Community Corrections Office to fill a trainee position for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Administration Assistant. VTEC Case Manager, Anna Rindfleish, struck gold when she was appointed to mentor Sedia Towney-Elemes. Anna, who had been working with Sedia for a few months before the position was advertised, said she knew instantly that Sedia would be a suitable fit for the position. After submitting her application, Sedia was invited to attend an interview and was then offered the Administration Assistant position by Angus Renshaw, Manager of Dubbo Community Corrections Office. The relationship between VTEC and Dubbo Community Corrections Office is very strong and will only continue to grow and we can’t wait to see what doors will be opened for our clients in the future.

Job Seeker Joins Maxima VTEC Team

Rebekah Carr commenced into the VTEC program over six months ago after ceasing work as laboratory technician. Rebekah found herself out of work with an idea to work for the community in an administrative capacity. We recognised her potential immediately and engaged into assisting with the Indigenous employment program which soon developed into being engaged into the VTEC program. Bek has gone from strength to strength and with support and training she has become a highly valued much respected member of the Maxima team. Bek is now involved in Group Training operations and is proving to be one of the next generation of Maxima stars.

Well done Rebekah, you emulate our values, you assist us to become the best at what we do, act with integrity and pride and you most certainly enjoy helping others achieve. We are very proud of you. Thank you for being a part of our team.

“MAXIMA IS AN AMAZING COMMUNITY TO BECOME A PART OF AND I FEEL VERY BLESSED TO HAVE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO FURTHER DEVELOP MY CAREER WITH SUCH AN INCREDIBLE GROUP OF PEOPLE.”
Changing Lives Through Employment

Vocational Training and Employment Centres (VTECs) have successfully placed over 5,000 Indigenous people into work already. 24 VTECs are located across the country. VTECs are fully funded by the Australian Government and are based upon the GenerationOne employment model. Whether you are an Indigenous person looking for work or are an employer looking for staff that have been trained to your requirements, VTECs are for you.

For further information visit www.vtec.org.au

Supported by

The VTEC initiative is funded by the Australian Government and is based on the GenerationOne employment model.