

TYRP (To Reach Your Potential):
**Building Foundation Life Skills and Core Competency for Jobs, Careers,
Community**

Submission to the
Forrest *Indigenous Jobs and Training Review*
TRYP/Habitat Personnel – Nowra and Canberra

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TRYP uses a military boot camp concept to facilitate the delivery of foundation life skills to Indigenous people that will help them succeed in any sphere of life or work. The model has been successfully piloted at Illaroo Farm on the Shoalhaven River. The demand for our work is enormous. The model needs to be expanded to create a monthly intake of 24 participants that runs for ten days in which participants gain a qualification as well as essential life skills and values – the first steps towards mentoring, job support and a vocation delivered through Habitat Personnel. There would be 200 plus participants a year and entry would be open to urban, regional and remote area Indigenous participants. The concept is to create a powerful ‘Indigenous youth force’ with sound values and capabilities that truly reach their full potential. The concept echoes President Kennedy’s Peace Corps and President Clinton’s Youth Force aimed at ensuring inner city young people could participate more readily in American work and life. We conservatively estimate this project will save government \$10 million a year in expenditure by keeping Indigenous young people away from police and corrections and moving them towards meaningful employment. We hope that the Forrest Review will get behind this important project. Before you read on listen to the experiences of two young people Arvi and Clifford who recently completed the TRYP program. These young men provide you with the greatest evidence of the worth of our project.

[*Arvi – Double click for link*](#)
[*Clifford – Double click for link*](#)

Australia’s Indigenous Pre-Employment Crisis: *TRYP* is an important initiative in the context of Australia’s Indigenous Pre-Employment Crisis. The key dimensions of the crisis are well known: low year 9-12 Indigenous school retention and a low level of non-school qualifications by Indigenous people.¹ The lack of conventional education and training often makes it difficult for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to meet employment requirements. This in turn creates a lack of confidence and practical experience for many Indigenous people applying for jobs. However even when Year 12 is completed in many cases young people lack confidence and core competencies. The *TRYP* experience creates much needed foundation life skills that will help each participant to succeed in life and work. The youthfulness of Aboriginal Australia is a major asset. In the context of an aging general population, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people should be a major force for good in the nation as well as taking advantage of employment opportunities as Australia’s economy and society changes over the 21st century. *TRYP will help* all Indigenous participants realise their potential as personal achievers, family members, community builders and national role models and practical doers.

Evolution: Warrant Officer Class One Col Watego is a proud Bundjalung and Torres Strait Islander man with a distinguished 39 year career in the Australian military. Having been a Chief

¹ The median age of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is 21 compared to 38 for the general population. 36% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are aged 0-14 compared to 19 per cent in the general population. 50 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are staying to Year 12 compared to over 80 per cent for non-Indigenous Australians. Only 40 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander have non-school qualification as opposed to 60 per cent of non-Indigenous Australians.

Instructor/Regimental Sergeant Major, Col Watego has worked with many young men and women over his career. In particular, Col Watego has trained, developed and mentored a number of Australian Indigenous men and women who have now gained employment in the Australian Defence Force. The model used in this arena has the same potential to expand to a wide range of vocational areas and opportunities. The key focus of this model is to provide pre-employment training for Indigenous young men and women to gain meaningful employment.

To Reach Your Potential (TYRP): Since 2006 TRYP has empowered Indigenous youth to succeed by exposing them to physically and mentally challenging activities in a controlled environment. It develops leadership and teambuilding qualities. The practical tasks that participants are challenged with include: learning how to live in the bush, rafting, night hiking and climbing and a range of community development activities. Over a ten day period the TRYP program not only delivers foundational life skills but also formal vocational training certification and competencies. TRYP's *core goal* is *"To be the best person we possibly can be."* **Ethos:** *"Respect, Attitude, Behaviour and Commitment."* **Values:** *"Leadership, Teamwork, Courage, Integrity and Initiative."* **Mission:** *"To empower TRYP participants to reach their potential and effect change in themselves, their families, their workplace, and their Community through the participation in physically and mentally challenging activities in a controlled environment – To Mentor and Teach whilst Challenge."* **Vision:** *"To empower TRYP Participants - To Reach Your Potential."* **Outcomes:** *"To Empower Individuals, Families and Communities."*

Beyond the Initial Boot Camp: The first contact and camp are very important in gaining rapport and confidence in participants. For many this first camp is a life changing experience. But, as in the military, updates, ongoing mentoring, skill development are also important. Through its partnership with other agencies TRYP creates the basis for a highly personalised career and personal development process.

Supporting the Model: A core TRYP foundation grant needs to be established to ensure that the program can continue to develop and expand. Currently TRYP functions on one-off funding attached to each participant but also a large level of voluntary support for Col Watego and his team of trainers and supporters. Our proposal to the Federal government is for a one-off foundation grant of \$10 million which would be invested in trust in perpetuity and the interest would then provide the basis for core salaries and infrastructure to ensure that foundation life skill coaching and ongoing mentoring was available to an initial group of 200 Indigenous young people each year. No further call would be made on Federal government funding for the core TRYP program funding. *Even with conservative estimates in one year TYRP would repay this \$10 million investment back² and every year following the Federal government would continue to gain 100 per cent on its initial investment. In anybody's terms this is a sound and prosperous investment.*

Partners: TRYP partners include Habitat Personnel in Nowra and Canberra, South West Sydney Institute of TAFE, Inspire Community Services, Juvenile Justice Organisations and Police.

The Bigger Picture of Conquering Aboriginal Employment: Habitat Personnel in Nowra and Canberra believe that TRYP is an essential part of the task of conquering Aboriginal unemployment and under employment and this is indicative of its wholistic approach to job training and placement.

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² The bare bone costs of Indigenous incarceration alone were estimated to be \$107,360 per inmate per annum in 2011-12, full costs in 2013 are estimated to be north of \$200,000.
http://www.apf.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate_Committees?url=legcon_ctte/justice_reinv_estmest/report/index.htm