



# **Keep Your Culture Keep Your Job**

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# Introduction

In this presentation I will be providing information on 3 areas relating to the 'Keep Your Culture, Keep Your Job' resource:

- The background to how and why the resource was developed
- A description of the conceptual framework underpinning the content of the resource
- And the applications of the resource for Indigenous students and correctional educators working with Indigenous colleagues

# Introduction

This presentation focuses on describing the 'Keep Your Culture, Keep Your Job' resource:

- From the perspective of having been a member of the working party
- The working party consisted of mostly Indigenous prison and education personnel
- This presentation has been created with the advice and endorsement of the EVTU Indigenous Education Coordinator and the author of the resource

# Prison Demographics

The Department Of Corrective Services, Education and Vocational Training Unit (EVTU) provides adult Basic education and vocational training to a prison Population that typically:

- serves short sentences (58-60% of offenders serve sentences less than 1 yr)
- Consists of a high percentage of Indigenous people (43%)
- Does not have a history of stable employment

# Student Demographics

The EVTU currently provides vocational training and education services to a student population housed in the 12 state prisons.

- 38% of the whole prison population voluntarily participates in education and training
- 39% of this student population is Indigenous
- Culturally relevant education and training approaches and teaching material is central to EVTU services

# Philosophical Underpinnings

We aim to provide a transformative curriculum that addresses the real educational, vocational and life skill needs of our particular student population:

- This approach overtly connects ABE with vocational and life skills development
- The Gaining Access To Employment (GATE) course provides a perfect vehicle for this



# Aim of the of 'Keep Your Culture, Keep Your Job' Resource

The aim of KYC KYJ is to encourage students to consciously discuss, identify and determine how to balance family obligations with workplace expectations through:

- Group discussion and individual activities
- Conscious examination of personal, cultural values and considering other personal and cultural value systems
- Combining this understanding in the context of employment in prison and post release

# Activities And Learning Outcomes

KYC KYJ resource addresses the following Learning Outcomes:

- *Develop personal management abilities* by examining personal cultural values and attitudes and those of an employment context
- *Develop learning and work skills* by identifying personal and career aspirations
- *Develop career building strategies* by exploring skills and goals
- *Develop and implement an individual pathway plan and transition portfolio*

## How The Need Was Identified

In mid 2005 a partnership between the Roebourne Regional Prison administration, the EVTU and a local CDEP program saw the creation of the DECCA project that incorporated:

- Community work aimed at renovating DECCA Station located outside Karratha
- Pre release vocational training provide by the DCS RTO and the local TAFE College

# Training Leading to Employment

The training offered at DECCA Station includes TAFE and ASETS courses that in combination are recognised and valued by Pilbara Iron. Post release employment in the mining industry over the last 10 months includes:

- 9 employment placements in the mining and construction industry areas
- 6 employment placements in other related industries including hospitality and asset maintenance

# How The Need Was Identified

At the beginning of the DECCA Project a key Indigenous staff person at Roebourne Regional Prison identified the following issues that would need to be addressed for students to successfully engage in the work, complete tasks and consider post release employment as an option:

- Providing practical work that produces real outcomes
- Work related, culturally sensitive training delivery and assessment approaches
- Acknowledgement of family and cultural obligations and how to manage those whilst working upon release

# Getting Started

The need to create the content material was addressed by:

- Forming a working party consisting of EVTU Indigenous and non Indigenous education staff, to manage the project
- Engaging an Indigenous Educator and Consultant to conceptualise and write the resource material: Scott Fatanowna

# Resource Development

The process of developing KYC KYJ involved:

- Meeting with Scott Fatanowna to plan the content of the GATE unit
- Mapping the key concepts identified by Indigenous staff and Scott to a GATE unit 'Introduction to Career Development'
- Drafting a Facilitator's Guide, Student Workbook and associated activity sheets

# Consultation And Feedback Along The Way

Key Indigenous stakeholders provided idea and feedback during the drafting and editing process:

- The EVTU Indigenous Education Coordinator
- Indigenous Education Workers (AEWs) across adult prisons
- WADET Indigenous VTE staff and management
- Indigenous prison staff

## The 3<sup>rd</sup> Space in KYC KYJ

“There is an overlapping space between two cultures that exists when individuals, ideas and structures meet and try to interact.

The space in which two cultures can co-exist can become something new.

The individual, the people or the structure can change eventually becoming a way of thinking, acting and behaving that is empowering.”  
(Fatanowna 2006, p.9)

# The 3<sup>rd</sup> Space In Practice

Whilst participating in the development of the KYC KYJ material an Indigenous colleague and I discovered a framework within which we could:

- Discuss how to manage workplace expectations and duties alongside her family obligations – eg attending funerals and having extended periods of absence from work
- Determine when we were operating in a 3<sup>rd</sup> space to get things done and when we were not, and why

DVD Rose Walley 7.52 -13.30 - 6 mins

# Summary

The Keep Your Culture Keep Your Job GATE unit focuses on a journey that raises cultural consciousness regarding the balance between Employment expectations and family obligations for Indigenous students

It was developed by Indigenous educators for Indigenous students

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Space concept is applicable in any social/cultural environment and is a tool that can Promote greater understanding and tolerance of difference