



Aboriginal-owned contractor grows in leaps and bounds

Alex Tilbury

ONE of Queensland's largest indigenous companies is kicking goals in the area of mining recruitment, now targeting the gas sector.

Northern Project Contracting is an indigenous-owned company that started in north Queensland and specialises in contracting and training services for the mining and civil construction industries.

The company won the

2010 Queensland Sensis Social Responsibility Award at the Telstra Queensland Business Awards.

It was established in 2004 as a joint venture between the commercial arm of the Waanyi Nation Aboriginal Corporation and an experienced mining contractor.

Since 2008, when the indigenous company bought out its partner, NPC has grown rapidly

with offices in northern, southern and western Queensland.

NPC now employs 100 people, 80 per cent of whom are indigenous, and provides entry-level machine workers and also skilled workers to the mining industry.

"NPC's staff retention rate is double the industry average for indigenous workers, which is testament to its strong focus on understanding

indigenous culture while being commercially viable," said director Derek Flucker.

"We're expanding out into the gas projects in western Queensland, near Roma.

"Since we bought our partner two and a half years ago we're 100 per cent owned by the community.

"We don't rely on government money and

we're running our own commercial business."

Mr Flucker said the biggest challenge now is getting its staff into higher level management work.

"We've just started a program to attract school leavers to feed them through to university and train them as engineers."

www.northernprojectcontracting.com.au



MINING SUCCESS: Northern Project Contracting consultant Kerrie Foxwell with director Derek Flucker.