

# NPC Leads the Way in Indigenous Training & Skilling

The Mining Industry Skills Centre and Northern Project Contracting have worked together over the past year to implement and introduce a variety of training initiatives for the resources industry. In this edition of Torch, NPC spoke to us about the work they are doing for Indigenous training and skilling.



Northern Project Contracting (NPC), an Indigenous-owned and operated company provides contracting, training and labour hire services to the resources industry.

Beginning in 2004 as a company contracting services to OZ Minerals in Queensland's lower Gulf of Carpentaria, NPC has always had an overarching commitment to the social and economic prosperity of Indigenous Australians.

## INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC TRAINING FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

NPC's business operations have expanded from contracting to include recruitment, training and employment of Indigenous people at NPC or via its labour hire services. From August 2008, NPC has been operating the NPC Mobile Mining and Civil School which is designed to provide industry-specific training for Indigenous people seeking to enter the resources and civil construction industries.

The School has utilised the Skills Centre's training products – Work Readiness, Generic Induction (GI) and heavy equipment simulators

– to deliver pilot programs in Brisbane and Townsville. Eighty-six per cent of participants from these programs during 2008-2009 went on to receive work in the industry.

NPC ensures that jobs for participants have been identified prior to commencing a program.

## PROJECT CANARY

Through the leadership from its Board members and two Directors, Brad Foster and Derek Flucker, NPC is continuing to lead the way by including the industry-first, serious games-based simulator tool PROJECT CANARY as part of its training program.

The inclusion of PROJECT CANARY in the NPC programs will ensure the complete engagement of individuals, requiring them to put their skills and knowledge into use in real life scenarios. The result will be more efficient employees working to meet the industry's objective of zero harm.

As an employer of Indigenous Australians, NPC is aware of the additional training and mentoring required if Indigenous workers

from remote communities are to obtain the necessary skills to enter and then maintain their role in the resources workforce.

## FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES

Issues such as literacy, numeracy, separation from community and cultural differences cause NPC to employ Indigenous mentors in an attempt to help resolve the problems faced by Indigenous jobseekers. This initiative has made an impact in our program's effectiveness, enabling 13 out of the first 15 graduates to commence employment immediately following their course.

The Skills Centre recently signed a letter of intent with NPC to provide an ongoing framework for mutual cooperation and the sharing of knowledge and expertise in relation to the resources industry and Indigenous workforce management.

NPC is currently talking with interstate groups about transferring the program for companies interested in mining and construction training for Indigenous communities. NPC believes the success in Queensland is easily transferable to other communities, particularly in other states where there is a need for an Indigenous workforce.

While there has been a downturn in the industry there is still a requirement, usually through Native Title Agreements with Traditional Owners, to continue and maintain a percentage of Indigenous workers in the workforce.

NPC programs build employment pathways for companies who have these agreements with Traditional Owner groups.

## WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE SKILLS CENTRE

The continued efforts of NPC are an investment in the future of the industry and the people who keep the resources industry moving. The Skills Centre is pleased to be working with organisations such as NPC to ensure the sustainability of our industry for the future.