



Media release

15 March 2010

Indigenous workers help build Woorabinda school

Woolam Constructions has recruited three indigenous workers from Woorabinda to help build a new library and administration block at the local state school.

Qualified carpenter Vernon Hill, apprentice Jymel Ryan and labourer Roger Knowles are working on the \$2 million Woorabinda State School project as part of Woolam's commitment to implement the Queensland government's Indigenous Employment Policy for Building and Civil Construction Projects (IEP 20% Policy).

Under the policy, 20 per cent of total labour hours on a project are to be completed by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers.

"We wanted to put more into the Woorabinda community than just a building," Woolam Constructions executive officer Scott Wedgwood said.

"When we heard about the IEP 20% Policy we saw that it opened new opportunities for us to recruit local workers and build up our connections in this community.

"The guys who are already on site have impressed us with the quality of their work and are willing to travel to where the jobs are in the region, which shows their desire for full-time employment.

"There are other projects coming up in Woorabinda and the surrounding area that we hope to win which would enable us to extend our connection with this community and allow our new workers to stay in town longer."

Mr Wedgwood said with the help of state government Indigenous Employment and Training Manager Dave Thompson, Woolam now had a database of other local indigenous people who are looking for work.

"We can pass this information on to our sub-contractors to make it easier for them to comply with the policy as well," Mr Wedgwood said.

"Working with the Woorabinda community has already been a great experience for us and we were also in position to support their Christmas Festival feasts by providing the fruit and vegetables."

Parliamentary Secretary for Employment and Economic Development Jan Jarratt said the building and civil construction industry could play a key role in tackling indigenous unemployment.

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