

Case Study

Supporting the Merger to Create Kaiela Institute



Background

The review of the Koori Resource and Information Centre (KRIC) by Alan Tudge and Co., recommended that KRIC and the Kaiela Planning Council (KPC) merge to form the Kaiela Institute. The focus of the merger was to reduce costs, increase the rate of change, increase research and analytical capacity, strengthen governance and branding, and sharpen the scope of work undertaken by the Kaiela Institute. The merger happened with the assistance of a Jawun secondee from Wesfarmers in October 2010 through to January 2011.

Approach

Wesfarmers were approached by Jawun to ascertain the appetite for providing a longer-term secondee outside of the typical structured rounds. The nature of the merger was very detailed and required more significant time than the standard four week structured secondment round could provide.

Wesfarmers found within their Coles division an excellent candidate, Alison Tehan, with strong knowledge about administrative processes and procedures, change management, and project management. As a bonus, Alison was from the local area (Euroa), and would be based there for the secondment.

Alison utilized the 6 week part-time model of engagement offered in the Goulburn Murray, where the secondee would spend three full days out of five in Shepparton, with the days as determined by the nature of the work and the Kaiela Planning Council CEO.

The key objective of the secondees work was to identify the complexities of the merger and implement actions needed to facilitate the merger. For example, administrative requirements such as bank accounts, incorporation status, and employment contracts, as well as logistical and future actions for consideration.

Outcomes

The secondment brief changed over the course of the secondment, primarily as the direction and scope of what was required for the original brief was not fully understood by the indigenous partner organisations. KRIC and KPC had little idea of the scope of a merger, what was required, who would do what, and likely hurdles. There was theoretical understanding of the process, yet no practical understanding of the scope. There was significant learning by both the secondee and the indigenous organisations.

The outcomes that the secondee achieved included:

- Vision, mission, values for new Kaiela Institute
- Position descriptions for CEO, and other required positions. An excellent CEO was found with the help of Jawun.
- Base employment contracts and employment packs
- Steps to prepare for incorporation: tax file number, bank account, policy & procedures, administration processes, ABN, insurance, preliminary governance structure
- Actions and project plan for outstanding and priority items for the successful merger post-secondment

At an organisational level, Alison's experience and achievements while on secondment have been shared company-wide to inspire others and demonstrate Coles' commitment to indigenous communities.

Alison spoke of the value added to her professional development:

"The secondment provided me with a greater perspective and awareness of NGO's, and how to work with them in the future. I gained greater awareness and understanding of Aboriginal cultural and contemporary history, and the challenges faced in a professional environment, and broadened my thinking and awareness of other professions, academics, and community leaders. Most importantly, I know I am contributing to a broader cultural shift and encouraging debate between my peers".

Alison Tehan, Wesfarmers

Value was achieved for the Kaiela Institute with renewed engagement and support from the University of Melbourne and other key stakeholders. Such value will manifest in the achievement of the Kaiela Institute's long terms goals, and increased legitimacy and credibility to corporate stakeholders. The new CEO of the Kaiela Institute said of Alison's secondment:

"Indigenous social entrepreneurs now have greater confidence in articulating their ambition for a better future. Jawun secondees provide the professional expertise to actually deliver against this ambition. Alison was a classic example".

Stephen Iles, CEO Kaiela Institute

Next Steps

With the renewal of Jawun's secondment program in the Goulburn-Murray region, specifically Shepparton, extra work is being put into communicating the value of the program to both corporate and indigenous organisation partners. The 3 month placement of the Wesfarmers secondee to the Kaiela Institute outlined in this case study demonstrates that value to both indigenous and corporate partners alike.