

Case Study

Inner Sydney – ongoing benefits to the community



Background

Prior to Jawun's introduction to the communities of Redfern in 2010 and La Perouse in 2012, it was extremely rare for Inner Sydney Indigenous organisations to have access to corporate companies and senior members of government. The organisations' leaders had little confidence that their views would be heard, or that they would be able to gain valuable support from Australia's biggest companies.

From March 2010 to November 2015, approximately 200 secondees have been placed with 15 Indigenous organisations in Inner Sydney. These secondees have helped to strengthen individual and organisational capability, introduce better systems, plan for a successful future, and create new programs and business ventures to foster sustainability. During this six-year period where Indigenous leaders and their organisations have worked closely with trusted secondees, the confidence to speak to the 'bigger end of town' has grown. With this confidence came the desire to maintain a connection to past secondees, to engage with them more deeply and in an ongoing manner. In the last few years, opportunities to leverage and strengthen relationships with a growing pool of previous secondees (known as Jawun Alumni) have evolved in the form of volunteer and pro-bono work, board positions, financial sponsorship and mentoring. These relationships not only benefit Inner Sydney Indigenous organisations and their communities, they also provide meaningful opportunities for Jawun Alumni to continue to contribute to community.

Approach

Individuals are motivated to do a Jawun secondment for a variety of personal and professional development reasons, including the desire to understand more about Indigenous Australia and meet the challenge of an 'out of comfort zone' learning experience. What begins as a personal and individual experience for each secondee often sparks a process of long-term change – first attitudinal, then behavioural – which leads to action. The opportunities for individuals facilitated by Jawun result in an increasing pool of informed, engaged and interculturally competent people who go on to engage with Indigenous Australia in constructive ways that have a positive impact on society, industry or government.

The Inner Sydney region presents a unique secondment experience in that most secondees do not need to relocate to participate in the program. Following their secondments, many Inner Sydney secondees express a desire to stay connected with their host organisations, and see post-secondment engagement as a way to continue their contribution.

Opportunities for continued engagement for Jawun Alumni are communicated during the secondment, and secondees are encouraged, in the true nature of a partnership, to have conversations with their host organisations. Such conversations may lead to the following opportunities:

- Continuing to volunteer for the host organisation
- Becoming a member of the Board or sub-committee within the organisation
- Attending organisation functions and relevant community events
- Supporting the financial aspirations of the organisation
- Mentoring a Tranby Aboriginal College student

Outcomes

Inner Sydney organisations have benefited greatly from the willingness of secondees to remain engaged post secondment.

Tribal Warrior Association is an organisation which aims to promote Aboriginal culture through private charters and cruises on Sydney harbour. After his secondment, Bunnings Area Manager Patrick O'Hehir maintained a strong friendship with Tribal Warrior's CEO Shane Phillips, which led to Bunnings providing materials and manpower for the renovation and maintenance of Tribal Warrior's boat *Mari Nawi* in 2011. Patrick was able to support the organisation again in 2015, by providing materials to support a Jawun Alumni community day where the *Mari Nawi* was sanded and painted. Shane Phillips and the Tribal Warrior team are extremely grateful for Patrick's ongoing support: *'Patrick is a great fella. He did not hesitate to support when we asked him. Bunnings not only provided the materials, but also provided staff to teach our mentees how to sand, apply varnish and paint, and to lay the marine carpet.'*

The Babana Men's Group in Glebe aims to improve the lives of community members by addressing a range of issues, including men's health, family relationships, and drug and alcohol abuse. The organisation has maintained very strong relationships with three Jawun Alumni, including two former Babana secondees, James Mabbott from KPMG and James Scott-McKenzie from Woolworths Liquor Group. This outside support has allowed Babana to operate in a challenging funding environment.

James Mabbott, Head of KPMG Innovate, continues to support Babana by providing pro-bono financial advice and support. James also attends men's group meetings and volunteers at major Babana events. James explained, 'Since day one I've realised it's more than just getting up each day, going to work and going home again. Business doesn't live in isolation to the world. I wanted to stay connected to Babana, and show that people outside of the men's group care about them.'

James Scott-McKenzie, Liquor Licensing Specialist at Woolworths Liquor Group, continues to advise the Babana committee and is a regular attendee at Babana meetings and events. James explained, 'I am honoured to continue my relationship with Babana and gain a great deal of satisfaction from working with them. My secondment was a life changing experience and my ongoing relationship continues to have a profound impact on me and has been very graciously supported by the Woolworths Liquor Group. Most recently, we sponsored a Babana event at which they will provide Christmas presents and a BBQ lunch for school kids of the Sydney suburb of Waterloo. Many of these children would not receive presents if not for the work of Babana and the support of organisations like the Woolworths Liquor Group.'

Following his secondment in Cape York, former Qantas employee Tom Hughes became a member of the Jawun Alumni committee and was introduced to Babana as part of an Inner Sydney induction. He was immediately taken by the Babana Chairperson Mark Spinks' story and passion, and offered to return as a volunteer. Since that day in 2013, Tom has volunteered at events for Babana, and even coordinated their annual Mental Health Awareness Day in 2014. Tom explained, 'I really resonate with what Babana is doing for community and wanted to do my little bit to keep helping the members. There's a feeling of belonging and non-judgmental behaviour in the group. I'm happy to give the benefit of my experience, and help others find that sense of belonging.'

Board membership is another great way for past secondees to stay connected, benefitting both the secondee and the host organisation. Bernadette Munro from Westpac completed her secondment with the Aboriginal Housing Company (AHC). AHC aims to provide affordable housing in the area of Redfern known as The Block. AHC's General Manager Lani Tuitavake and CEO Mick Mundine were immediately impressed with Bernadette's personality, drive and passion to engage further with the Indigenous community of Redfern, and offered her a spot on their board. Lani said 'Bernadette has brought professionalism. She has been a great asset to the Housing Company and brings real financial experience to the Board, something we have not had previously.'

Similarly, Jaimes Adlington from Westpac was offered a position on the board of his host organisation, Tranby Aboriginal College, following his secondment in 2013. Jaimes's secondment brief was to improve the college's financial accounting practices and he went above and beyond to deliver on the project. Tranby CEO Belinda Russon soon realised that Jaimes's skills in financial management would be of great value to Tranby and the board. 'At the end of 5 weeks, Jaimes's commitment was evident and the directors accepted his nomination to the board. The board now rely

on his financial knowledge and expertise to prepare them to make crucial decisions that benefit our organisation. The other board members have a lot of respect for him. It works so well.'

Norton Rose Fulbright, one of Inner Sydney's newest corporate partners, has worked hard to support the Inner Sydney region with pro-bono legal advice and support. Organisations to receive such support include Eastern Zone Gujaga Aboriginal Corporation (Childcare Centre), the La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council, and the recently successful Redfern All Blacks, who won the 2015 Koori Knockout football carnival. Norton Rose Fulbright have engaged their 'summer clerks' to work with the Redfern All Blacks football committee to plan ahead for the hosting role for the 2016 Koori Knockout carnival. La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council CEO, Chris Ingrey appreciates the support, 'we are grateful for the legal advice and expertise we receive from Norton Rose Fulbright. They have provided legal advice on a number of issues, and to receive top legal advice without having to spend large sums of money is a real bonus for the community.'

The Inner Sydney region has also benefited from the generosity of secondees and their respective companies by way of donations, in-kind support, and volunteering at events. For example:

- Gadigal Information Services enlists ex-secondees to volunteer on the day of its annual Yabun Festival
- The La Perouse community hosts their end-of-year Christmas celebration Carols By The Sea, and is supported financially by the Commonwealth Bank, and other Jawun partners
- Jawun partner Downer provided sponsorship to the La Perouse community to attend the Koori Knockout in Dubbo

Another major avenue for ex-secondees to engage with Inner Sydney's Indigenous community is via the Tranby Aboriginal College mentoring program. Former Jawun secondees have the opportunity to mentor a Tranby student taking part in the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Advocacy course. This not only increases Tranby's ability to attract quality students, but also allows ex-secondees to engage on a more personal level with the community.

Tranby CEO Belinda Russon has high praise for the Jawun Alumni mentors and what their involvement means to her students. 'Student feedback is at an all-time high. Students have valued the contact with the mentors. It is something we are considering rolling out across all courses, so that all of our students have access to this wonderful program. The mentors provide an opportunity for our students to converse with people who work in different professional environments. It gives the students confidence to communicate on many levels, and I just know it works.'

Next Steps

The Inner Sydney Regional Director will continue to encourage organisations to provide opportunities for secondees to stay engaged post secondment, whether it be via sitting on boards and committees, or volunteering at events. It is through these kinds of initiatives that relationships will continue to grow between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people involved in the Jawun program.

The Jawun Alumni committee is also an avenue for Inner Sydney organisations to seek support. Tom Hughes, former Jawun Alumni committee representative, explained, 'It's up to the organisations in Sydney to utilise the resources of past secondees via the Alumni committee. There are other former secondees willing to do what I have done to connect to their local community.'

Discussions have also commenced with a Jawun corporate partner to establish a mentoring program with emerging Indigenous leaders in Inner Sydney, to build their individual capabilities and confidence, and support their journey as future leaders.

This ongoing capability build across all areas of Jawun's Indigenous partner organisations will assist their ability to secure funding, access external sponsors and philanthropic foundations, as well as enlist very capable volunteers to support programs, events and the organisations as a whole.