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**MEDIA RELEASE  
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**A GROUP OF LOCAL INDIGENOUS LEADERS LOOK TO CORPORATE AUSTRALIA FOR  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Leading Australian organization, Jawun, has been at the forefront of Indigenous empowerment and capacity building in Australia for over 15 years and is looking to further expand their successful corporate partnership secondee program by this week launching a reverse secondee program.

Jawun supports nine Indigenous communities and seconds skilled people to work in those communities for periods of 6 weeks or more. The 'secondees' as they're called, are sourced from some of Australia's blue chip corporates, professional services firms and government departments to work on Indigenous-led priorities from within local Indigenous organisations.

In addition to delivering on their work brief, corporate secondees are often able to transfer skills to the Indigenous people they work with. This ranges from technical skills, like accounting or project management, to higher order negotiations skills, and the more basic everyday skills like time management and dressing professionally.

An independent impact evaluation on Jawun was conducted by KPMG in 2015 and Liz Forsyth, the Evaluation Lead, commented that the results were compelling and "offer strong insights into successful cross sector partnerships and Indigenous capacity building."

For many of the corporates involved in the Jawun program the idea of reversing the idea of a 'secondment' kept coming up. That is, instead of sending their corporate people to work in community, seconding staff from Indigenous organisations to come and work within a corporate environment.

Jawun CEO, Karyn Baylis, comments, "The idea makes such sense. We have been collaborating on the design of the 'reverse secondment' concept for the past year with Westpac, Qantas and The Commonwealth Bank."

A pilot is being run this year with three Indigenous participants, involving a six to twelve month corporate placement in an identified role. All three participants have reached positions of considerable authority and influence in their local communities and say they are ready to embrace this challenge.

"As many CEO's will attest, reaching the top of an organization can be a lonely place to be. Now consider for a minute, those in charge of running local Indigenous organisations, often in remote and highly disadvantaged communities. These

Indigenous CEO's play a critical role in delivering programs and services to local communities, often in complex and politically charged environments. Empowering these leaders with the skills and resources to do their jobs better; or providing alternative career paths so they can orbit between their local communities and the mainstream economy, is crucial and now presenting itself as a reality," Baylis concludes.

Andrea Mason is a Karonie and Ngaanyatjarra woman who is the CEO of the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Lands Women's Council. Originally founded to give a voice to women in this region, the NPY Women's Council is now a major provider of health and human services. Andrea has been the CEO of the organisation since 2009, and manages 100 staff who provide services across a 350,000 square kilometre area of Central Australia and help more than 3,000 women.

Andrea won the 2016 NT Telstra Business Woman of the Year Award and the 2017 NT Australian of the Year Award. For the past 2 years, Andrea has been using skilled secondees via Jawun to advance a number of initiatives and is absolutely committed to regional development, innovation and growth for her broader community.

Andrea says, "It's my view that the majority of Aboriginal women in CEO or GM roles in Australia are working in the health or community sector and prior to taking on executive roles they have long careers in government. We don't see ourselves as business leaders. We see ourselves as Aboriginal Managers of an organisation."

In March of this year, Andrea will be relocating to Sydney to work in the Business Banking Team at Westpac. Andrea will start with a customer project and participate in Westpac's exclusive Executive Leadership Program.

"I want to develop my business acumen. One thing I have learned is that building a sustainable financial model is not just about constantly attracting more money. It's about relationships, ideas, planning, gathering evidence and working with business leaders, creating a win-win environment for all stakeholders".

The other two candidates participating in the program come from the Inner Sydney Aboriginal community of La Perouse. Chris Ingrey is of Dharawal and Dhungutti descent who is the CEO of the La Perouse Aboriginal Land Council. When Chris became CEO in 2011, there were various management and governance issues and a high degree of community mistrust. Since then Chris and his team have increased the governance and leadership capacity of the organisation and developed benefits and services for the Aboriginal community. Chris has also utilised skilled secondees from Jawun to inject some corporate processes and approaches into the way La Perouse do business.

As Chris says, "It's important we built our relevance and trust with our community. We are accountable back to our people and future generations will rely on the decisions we make today. Our goal is to build a secure community that has limited

crisis, quality education opportunities, safe communities and a strong engagement in our local economy”.

However Chris acknowledges, “We can’t create businesses, expand our infrastructure and build new homes without the support of Government and Corporate Australia. For me personally, I want to get better at managing across these sectors.”

In a few weeks, Chris will be taking on the position of Industry Relations Manager in the Government, Industry and International Affairs department of Qantas. There he hopes to learn more about how to manage government relationships and influence decision makers.

Finally, Brad Cooke is a Bidjigal man who has been working for the past 7 years as the co-ordinator of Jawun’s secondment program for Redfern and LaPerouse. Brad is well-known in the community, previously working for Gadigal Information Services in Redfern and is a frequent presenter on Koori Radio as well as a sports commentator on NITV. For Brad it was a question of “what’s next?” a curiosity for opportunities that might lay outside his community.

In March, Brad will take on the position of Innovation Specialist at the Commonwealth Bank, first with the Emerging Technologies team, and then onto the CommSec Media team. He will be exposed to project management, design thinking and how to pitch ideas. Brad says “I wanted an opportunity that matches what I love and what I want to get better at. I feel very lucky to be part of this program.”

There’s a plethora of Indigenous leadership courses and programs supporting Indigenous university graduates and professionals, however, this new initiative from Jawun is unique in that it focusses on the hard-working and often overlooked Indigenous leaders who are managing grass-roots services for their communities. More importantly, the accelerated professional development of these individuals is linked to a broader program of capacity building and support which Jawun is currently delivering not only to the NPY Lands and Inner Sydney but to 7 other Indigenous communities around the country. Corporate Australia, in this case Westpac, Commonwealth Bank and Qantas, continue to innovate in recognition and support of our First Peoples.

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