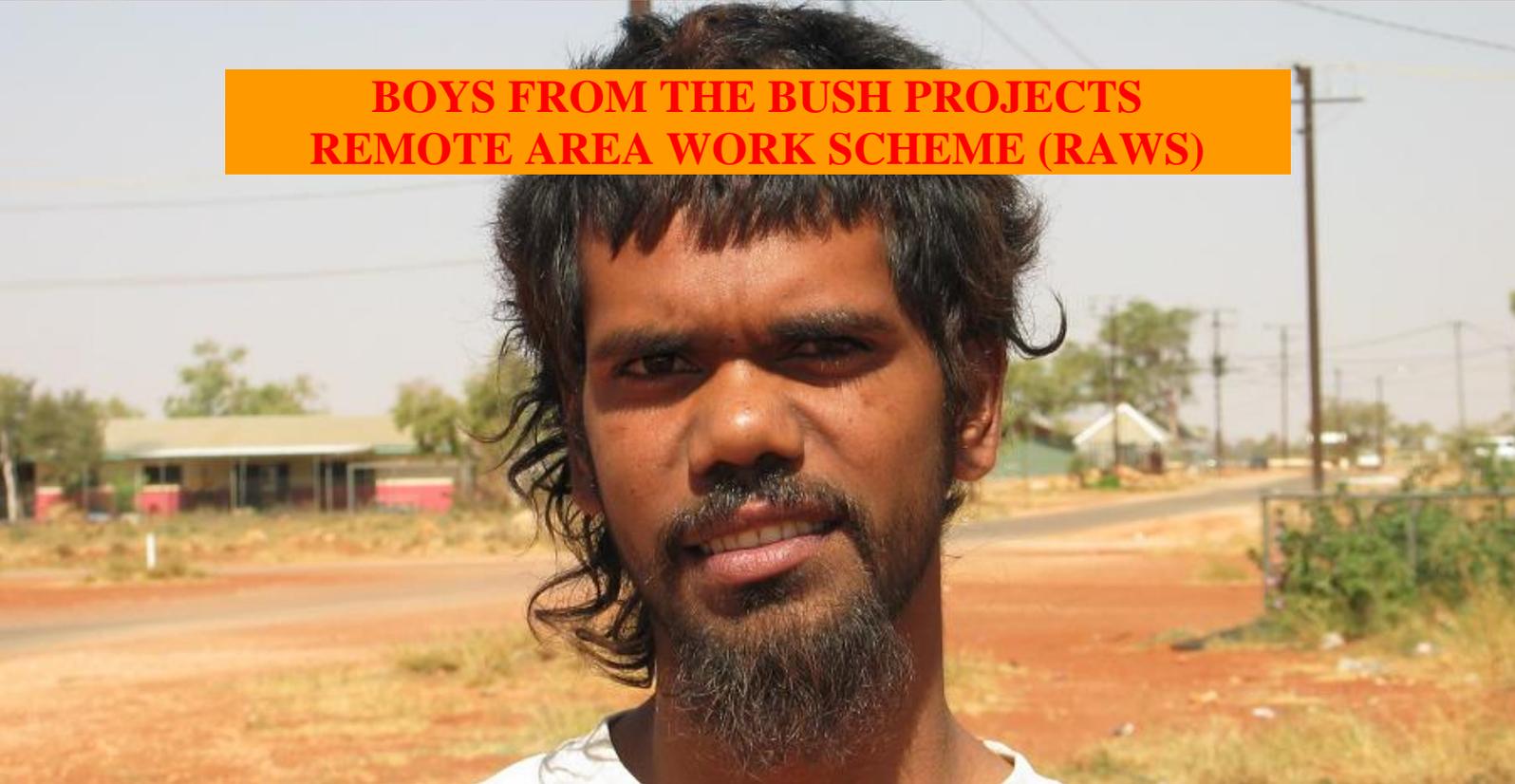




**BOYS FROM THE BUSH PROJECTS
REMOTE AREA WORK SCHEME (RAWS)**



**PROGRESS REPORT #3
8 MAY, 2010**

REMOTE AREA WORK SCHEME (RAWS) PROGRESS REPORT #3 8 May 2010

1. Executive Summary

Boys from the Bush Projects (BFTB Projects) - Remote Area Work Scheme (RAWS) commenced operation in late September, 2009, with the first Northern Territory recruitment drive. Work placements began on 11 November, 2009, with Rockdale Beef which is located outside of Narrandera, New South Wales. Since RAWS' implementation some of the key outcomes achieved to date are:

- * 14 young people have been placed in full time employment at Rockdale Beef.
- * 8 (57.1%) remain in the Scheme (not including those on leave).
- * 2 (14.2%) remain on leave, waiting to return to work.
- * 1 (7.1%) returned home without leave (to attend a funeral) and is now requesting to return to work.
- * 5 (35.7%) have passed the 13 weeks milestone.
- * 1 (7.1%) has passed the 26 week milestone.
- * 1 (7.1%) will pass the 26 week milestone on the 24 May, 2010.
- * Total gross earnings of all participants \$123,409.76 as of 14 May, 2010.
- * Total payments paid by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) to BFTB Projects as of 28 April, 2010, is \$115,620 or \$8,258 per participant.¹

These figures demonstrate that RAWS is a highly cost effective scheme for helping disadvantaged unemployed Indigenous youth. A conservative estimate is that the DEEWR investment in RAWS employees has already saved about 75 per cent of the CDEP expenditure payable if the RAWS recruits had stayed at home. Every day the RAWS recruits stay in work these savings accumulate dramatically.² In addition, the employment enables RAWS participants to make the transition from intergenerational welfare dependency to full employment in the mainstream Australian economy.

Mr Paul Troja who is the General Manager / Director of Rockdale Beef, has written a letter of support to Ms Barbara Livesey, Group Manager, Indigenous Strategies Group, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). He stated that he is pleased with the results thus far, and his company remains committed to the Scheme. See Appendix I for a copy of this letter.

Notwithstanding the support of Rockdale Beef, the Scheme has now reached a critical juncture. Two situations are impeding the further development of the Project:

- 1) Rockdale Beef refuses to employ local Aboriginal youths through RAWS, and there is no alternative local employment for the 10 local Aboriginal youths, as contracted by DEEWR.
- 2) Our view is that the efficiency and outcomes of RAWS will be enhanced if all participants are accommodated under the one roof with a live-in carer.

Section 2 and 3 of this report discusses these two issues in detail.

¹ This can be compared to \$73,000 pa / per CDEP position (Department of Environment budget report on Torres Strait Islands CDEP positions), or placing a young person in detention at \$567 per day or \$206,955 pa (Youth Affairs Network Qld).

² We estimate the expenditure for six months to be \$32,000 for RAWS recruits who stayed at home on CDEP or welfare payments.



It concludes by noting that if DEEWR's objectives of employing local as well as remote area youths are to be met then the Narrandera group must be relocated to another abattoir that will employ local Aboriginal youths through RAWS. RAWS has negotiated this course of action pending DEEWR's approval to proceed. Also, RAWS will move to its next stage of development by placing most of the participants under one roof using the **Live-in Carer/Family Group Home Model**.

Section 4 of the report outlines the success of the newly implemented RAWS' savings scheme. An unexpected negative outcome is that it has made it easier for participants to return home for reasons that they would not normally return home. The savings scheme provides them with sufficient funds enabling them to return home on a whim.

Section 5 of the report outlines the success of the newly implemented RAWS 'Worker of the Month' award.



2. NEW AND IMPORTANT LESSONS ABOUT THE ACCOMMODATION SUPPORT MODEL

The Remote Area Work Scheme (RAWS) uses supervised accommodation in various forms.

The **Live-in Carer/Family Group Home Model** is used for younger participants and those who require greater support and supervision. This model has been highly effective. Pictured below (photograph #1) is the Family Group Home, situated a short distance from the main street in Narrandera. This home can only take in 6 participants (maximum 8), 2 in each room, plus the live-in carer



Photograph #1 – The Family Group Home at 26 Douglas Street, Narrandera, New South Wales

Photograph #2 (below left) shows two flats positioned on the southern side of town, a considerable distance from the Family Group Home, that have been rented by BFTB Projects using the **On-call/Visiting Supervisor Model**. Here there are very low levels of support and supervision; insufficient for the needs of most young people from remote communities. This model was used for groups in Wonthaggi and Cobram in Victoria, and Albany in Western Australia between 2006 and 2008.



Photograph #2 – Flats at 69 Melbourne Street, Narrandera



Photograph #3 – 23 Douglas Street, Narrandera

Photograph #3 (above right) shows a two bedroom house rented by BFTB Projects that is positioned directly opposite the Family Group Home using the **On-call/Visiting Supervisor Model**. The operation of this residence involves less support and supervision. It is suitable for



selected older participants. It has not been as effective in its over all functioning as the Family Group Home.

The history of supervised accommodation for remote area workers has had a mixed history. However, the **Live-in Carer/Family Group Home Model** has been very successful in Narrandera. The reason for its success is that it facilitates:

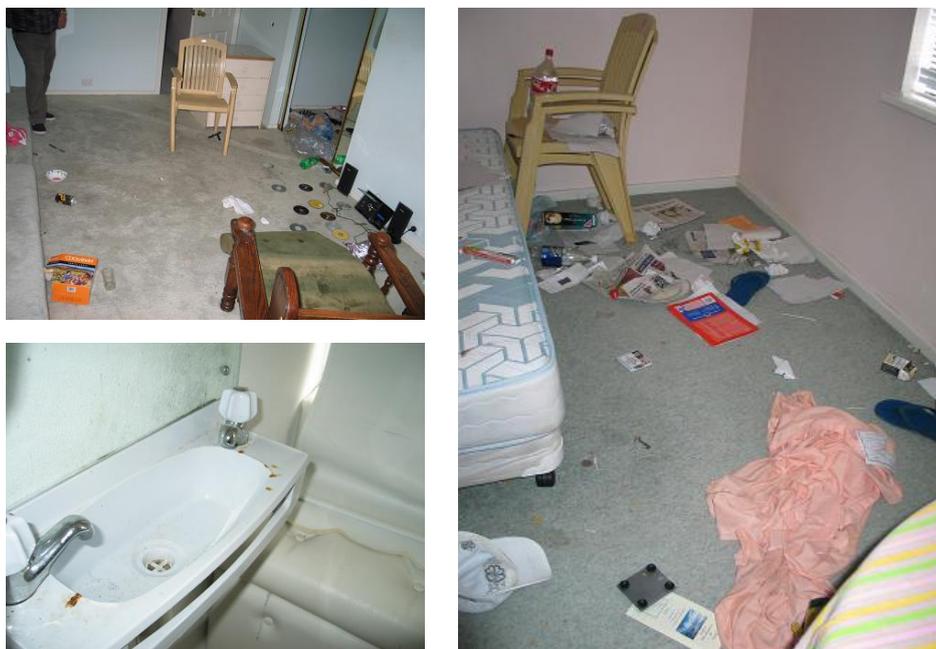
- 1) better care of the rental property,
- 2) the opportunity for participants to experience an improved standard of domestic hygiene and safety,
- 3) the protection of participants' personal belongings,
- 4) the ability to structure time and ensure good sleep hygiene for participants,
- 5) more effective control of drug and alcohol usage,
- 6) the provision of meals,
- 7) waking participants up in the morning, and
- 8) the ability to supervise participants' personal hygiene.

These facets of its operation will now be discussed in detail.

2.1 Better care of the rental property

RAWS places young people into suburban homes that are located as close as possible to the centre of town. However, the reality is that it is near impossible for a group of young Indigenous people to rent any decent rental property in the private market under their own name. Few landlords would agree to this given the significant risk factors involved concerning proper care and maintenance of the leased dwelling.

The pictures below show what can happen within a space of a few weeks when young people from remote communities are placed in a modern suburban home with insufficient supervision (Albany trial group, 2007). \$8,000 damage was done to carpet, doors, walls, blinds and vanity unit, within a few weeks. Note the empty cans and cask of alcohol lying on the floor. All of this occurred under the **On-call/Visiting Supervisor Model**. The question that needs to be answered is *where was the supervisor while this was occurring?*



Photograph #4 –68 Hare Street, Albany, Western Australia, February 2008



Part of the learning for boys from remote area communities is how to live in and look after a house. The reason why BFTB Projects is successful in obtaining rental houses for its target group, is because the houses or flats are leased by the BFTB Projects organisation, and the residents are provided with effective support and supervision.

2.2 The opportunity for participants to experience an improved standard of domestic hygiene and safety

Most RAWs' participants have not been taught basic standards of hygiene and home care. They have been born and raised in remote communities where domestic standards are akin to Third World conditions. This requires the RAWs' carer to be eternally vigilant and actively involved in nearly every facet of their domestic activities. Basically, the participants are doing what they have always done back home, and they continue to behave in this same way without too much consideration given to their new environment, or to the immediate or longer term consequences.

The following are some examples of behaviour that the carer must attend to, some of them regularly.

- Participants leaving the home with stoves, lights, heaters, televisions and air conditioner left on.
- Fridge and freezer doors left open.
- Perishable food items left out exposed to the elements, flies and ants.
- Taps, including hot water taps, left running.
- Sinks piled up with dirty dishes.
- Greasy pots, pans and dishes washed with cold water and without detergent.
- Whistling kettles left boiling on stoves, ignored by all.
- Food left to burn on the stove.
- Participants discarding all waste material where they sit or stand, rather than place it in the bin.
- Serving themselves large amounts of food, eating only a portion, and throwing the remainder away.
- Going down the main street to buy a serve of hot chips just before dinner is served, and then being unable to eat their dinner.
- At work boys will throw freshly made cut sandwiches of cold meat, cheese, tomato and salad in the bin in favour of purchasing deep fried potato chips.
- Rubbish bins are not emptied, unless they told to do so.
- Dirty hands wiped on chairs, lounge suits and walls.
- Urinating out the back or off the veranda.
- Socks never washed; when dirty they are simply thrown away.
- Mattresses, pillows and quilts used without covers.
- Sheets, blankets never washed unless they are told to do so.
- Blankets used in and out of the house in place of warmer clothing.
- Clothing left strewn around the house and yard.
- Recently purchased expensive new clothes and shoes left out in the open exposed to the elements.
- The same clothes worn for a week or more without being washed.
- Placing clothes in a washing machine without washing powder.
- Standing under a hot shower for over half an hour, only to still reek of body odour a short time later because they don't scrub themselves.
- Playing loud music in the middle of the night.
- Drunken family members ringing up participants in the middle of the night waking them up from their sleep.



- Family members ringing participants calling them back home to attend each and every funeral or to visit ailing family members in hospital.
- Night shift workers will wake up in the morning and immediately start watching videos and remain watching videos until its time to go to work, day in and day out.
- Regularly breaking things due to their carelessness, or inability to read instructions, with no thought of repair or knowledge of repair.
- No notion of thrift or budgeting within their means – regardless of income it is always feast followed by famine.
- Personal items such as wallets and key cards regularly lost.
- No inclination to greet visitors or expressing gratitude for assistance given.
- Stealing people’s personal items.

Under the **Live-in Carer/Family Group Home Model** good hygiene and home care standards can be maintained, while the participants acquire the essential skills to maintain a home in a respectable condition. This could not be achieved under the **On-call/Visiting Supervisor Model**, as shown in the photograph #4 above, and as testified by the collapse of the Wonthaggi work group in 2009, due to, amongst other things, a number of homes rented for participants being reduced to rack and ruin.

Many of these above listed behaviours continue to be acted out by the participants living in the flats at 69 Melbourne Street, Narrandera. Of the 14 young people that have joined the Scheme thus far, only 2 were considered responsible enough to live in the flats where there can only be limited levels of support and supervision provided.

2.3 The protection of participants’ personal belongings

When individuals join a group they feel less responsible for their actions than they do when they are alone. This recognition is supported by substantial research of group dynamics. Darley and Latane³ were among the first to describe how in groups, the pressure to perform does not focus on any particular participants. Instead, the responsibility to perform is shared among all the participants and their sense of responsibility decreases in proportion to the size of the group. This process of diffusing responsibility has also been identified as a possible factor in a number of other group phenomena, including de-individuation, social loafing, and moral disengagement.⁴

These group phenomena hold individuals back in a number of other ways. RAWs shows that Aboriginal participants enjoy the opportunity to be the beneficiary of their own labour – to purchase things for themselves knowing that it will not be taken from them, used or consumed by others without their permission. As one participant from the community of Ali Curung said:

“I like it down here. I like the work and I like the money. My family will not ask me for my money and I own my own stuff, nobody touches it, ... it’s good.”

³ Darley, J., & Latane, B. (1968). Bystander intervention in emergence: Diffusion of responsibility. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol.8, 377-383.

⁴ Forsyth, D.R., Zyniewski, L.E. & Giammanco, C.A. (2002). Responsibility Diffusion in Cooperative Collectives. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, Vol.28, No.1, 54-65.



When the Family Group Home was first set up, a number of participants living in the home complained about others stealing their drinks and confectionary that they had placed in the fridge. This led to the purchase of a second smaller fridge for private items, not to be touched by others. This proved to work very well, as testified by one of the participants from the community of Santa Teresa:

“I like the fellas here because they respect my things; they don’t steal my stuff – they ask. This is good because I show them my respect as well for their stuff. This doesn’t happen at home.”

One of the participants from the community of Titjikala, now living in his own flat in Narrandera, and supported by the **On-call/Visiting Supervisor Model** with no live-in carer, reinforcing the same point, had this to say;

“I don’t want anyone from my community down here with me. They won’t keep my flat clean; they will just mess it up and eat all my food.”



2.4 The ability to structure time and ensure good sleep hygiene for participants

The ability to structure time and ensure good sleep and hygiene is absolutely crucial for most participants, to enable them to maintain their employment.

2.4.1 Time structure

One of the tacit skills required by a successful worker is **time structure**. Work in mainstream society requires order and structure. Most work involves starting and finishing at a set time, with lunch and tea breaks at set intervals. For daytime workers, it means getting up early in the morning in time to prepare oneself for the working day, including travelling time. This preparation involves showering, dressing, preparing and eating breakfast and cleaning up.

Most young people from remote communities are not used to order and time structure. The task of getting up early in the morning requires going to sleep earlier, and this is something that is difficult for these young people. They are more used to staying up until the early hours of the morning watching videos, or roaming the streets at night and sleeping during the day. Even after several months in the Scheme, many participants will still sleep in their work clothes and try to get up minutes before the work bus leaves, leaving no time to shower or eat breakfast.

This lack of order and structure also helps explain why so many participants are so forgetful of their necessities every morning, such as their knives, entry passes, and completing their timesheets.

This structuring or restructuring of time begins immediately participants arrive in the Scheme. Under the support and supervision provided by the **Live-in Carer/Family Group Home Model**, the transition is nearly complete in a relatively short space of time. Whereas the changes that occur under the **On-call/Visiting Supervisor Model** are less and more difficult to obtain.



2.4.2 Sleep hygiene

Most people need 8 hours of undisturbed sleep. Not getting enough undisturbed sleep can have a profound effect on the daily mental and physical well being of people. Under the **On-call/Visiting Supervisor Model**, used in the trial groups, a number of participants were not getting enough sleep. There was also an increase in the number of sick days, and many participants were regularly late for work.

People who consistently fail to get enough sleep are at an increased risk of chronic disease. Treating sleep as a priority, rather than something that is squeezed in between walking the streets or watching videos all night, is an important step in preventing a number of behavioural problems and medical conditions.

A lack of sleep which occurs regularly is associated with long term health consequences, including chronic medical conditions like depression, anxiety, and mental distress. Research has also revealed that sleep deprivation is associated with increase blood pressure, impaired control of blood glucose, increased inflammation, cardiovascular disease, and stroke. It is also linked with hypertension, diabetes, obesity, lack of exercise and overeating.⁵

Considering the many potential adverse health effects of insufficient sleep, it is not surprising that poor sleep is associated with lower life expectancy. Data from large cross-sectional epidemiological studies, reveal that sleeping five hours or less per night increased mortality risk from all causes by roughly 15 percent.⁶



Photograph #6 – Residents of the Family Group Home with 2 participants in each room.

Under the **Live-in Carer/Family Group Home Model**, carers can effectively ensure that all participants do receive their 8 hours of undisturbed sleep by regulating movement, visitors, TV/DVD usage, mobile phone usage, curfews, lights out, control of drugs and alcohol, and by limiting the number of participants per room to two.

⁵ Strine, T. and Chapman, D. (2005). Associations of frequent sleep insufficiency with health-related quality of life and health behaviours. *Sleep Medicine*, Vol. 6, Issue 1, 23-27

⁶ Daniel F. Kripke, MD; Lawrence Garfinkel, MA; Deborah L. Wingard, PhD; Melville R. Klauber, PhD; Matthew R. Marler, PhD (2002). Mortality association with sleep duration and insomnia. *Archives of General psychology*, Vol.59, No.2, 131-136.



2.5 More effective control of drugs and alcohol

Jarvis Johnson, aged 17, from Ali Curung has this to say about the drinking in his home community:

“There is too much drinking back home, too much violence, too much fighting for wife. It wasn’t like this before. It’s just getting worse and worse. Too much teenagers drinking, sniffing glues and paints, doing break and enter the shop, and the bakery, and the school, and the office, and steal the government cars. They go crazy.”

Jarvis went on to say:

“Ali Curung people drink 24/7; non-stop. Most Ali Curung people now live in Tennant Creek because they love the alcohol more than they love life, and their family. Their family don’t want to know them now. They live on the streets begging for money, no job, living on grog.”

Anton McMillan, aged 17, from Santa Teresa says: *“I like it down here; it’s different to back home; away from the noise from the drunks.”*

Many of the Scheme’s participants have a history of regular drug and alcohol use. They are not only strongly attracted to alcohol, but they are more likely to turn violent when intoxicated.

Mark Goldman, a psychologist at the University of South Florida and his colleagues, have done extensive research in relation to the expectations of college problem drinkers and even adolescents. Goldman and his colleagues found they could predict the likelihood that adolescents would develop drinking problems on the basis of their expectations about alcohol - *before they had begun drinking*. Furthermore, even elementary school children have distinct beliefs about how alcohol will affect them.^{7 8}

The RAWS’ approach confronts and interrupts the pro alcohol culture that exists in many remote areas. It ensures that participants take responsibility for their actions. This is an important consideration because in remote Aboriginal communities, drinkers are often forgiven for the dreadful things they do to their victims. Family and community members forgive these perpetrators because they were under the influence of alcohol at the time. They are therefore perceived to be unaware or unable to control their behaviour. The perpetrator’s offensive behaviour is excused whilst simultaneously reinforcing the abrogation of individual responsibility at the expense of the victims. Frequently these victims are the most vulnerable members of the community, the aged, women, young people and children.

Virgil Downs, aged 17, from Ali Curung comments on RAWS’ prohibition of drugs and alcohol:

“It’s good you stop them drinking. They can’t control it. They don’t know what they are getting into. You are the one looking after us. If they drink they will come home drunk. Then they will say “you hate me, why you want to kick me out”, and they will start to fight. But there is a good reason to kick them out.”

Embedded in Virgil’s statement is the notion that once *they* start drinking, *they* lose self control, and *they* are not aware that *they* have lost control. Stanton Peele makes the important points that rats can be bred to drink large quantities of alcohol. But rats do not have values and cultures that contravene the urge to drink excessively. While human beings clearly differ in how their bodies process and respond to alcohol, these differences do not translate into alcoholism independent of individual needs, options, and values.⁹

⁷ Christiansen, B.A. and Goldman, M.S. (1985). The differential development of adolescent alcohol expectancies may predict adult alcoholism. *Addictive Behaviour*, Vol.10, Issue 3, 299-306.

⁸ Brown, S.A., Creamer, V.A. and Stetson, B.A. (1987). Adolescent Alcohol Expectancies in Relation to Personal and Parental Drinking Patterns. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, Vol.96, Issue No.2, 117-121.

⁹ Peele, S (1990). Second Thoughts About a Gene for Alcoholism. *The Atlantic Monthly*, August 1990, 52-58.



Addictive drinking is one of a range of dependencies that people may acquire whilst attempting to artificially regulate their sense of themselves and their world. Some people become compulsively enmeshed in destructive drinking. They pursue sensations that they are progressively less able to attain through any other means. And yet we cannot take the power, and the seeming inevitability of this self-destructiveness, for proof that it is encoded in the genes.

Mitchell Mahoney, aged 21, is from Alpururulam. Mitchell decided to leave the Scheme; to stay working for Rockdale Beef and find his own accommodation in Narrandera. His sole reason for leaving the Scheme was so that he could be free to drink as he pleases.

After he left, Mitchell immediately began drinking heavily and was seen drinking all weekend, every weekend. When drunk he would turn violent. When he sobered up the following morning, he would invariably apologise to his victims for his violent acts. Was Mitchell's drinking out of control? One thing for sure, come Monday morning, Mitchell made sure he was always sober. To do otherwise would risk instant dismissal from his job. This is a concrete example of *Misery rising to meet the means available for its alleviation*.¹⁰

The **Live-in Carer/Family Group Home Model** can effectively prevent drugs and alcohol from taking hold of the group. It enables

- control of who enters and leaves the home,
- control of the visitors to the home,
- observing those under the influence of drugs and alcohol, and dealing with them according to established procedure,
- responding in an appropriate manner to the signs of participants planning to engage in drug and alcohol usage,
- responding in an appropriate manner to movement around the home late in the evening or early hours of the morning; times when participants are more likely to sneak off for a drinking session, or to return home after a drinking session, and carers are able to regularly articulate the prohibition rules, provide information, and counsel participants on drug and alcohol issues in a most timely and efficient manner.

These activities can not be carried out under the **On-call/Visiting Supervisor Model**, and therefore the model is unable to prevent drugs and alcohol from taking hold of the group.

¹⁰ *Free to Choose* by Theodore Dalrymple. City Journal, Autumn, 1996, published by Manhattan Institute.



2.6 The provision of meals

The **Live-in Carer/Family Group Home Model** allows for the provision of meals to all participants. There are a number of reasons why it is best that RAWS' provides meals to participants, rather than participants being responsible for providing their own meals. These reasons are discussed below.



Photograph #6 – Residents of the Family Group Home seated around the dining table eating their evening meal

2.6.1 Participants do not know how to cook

Very few participants know how to cook, and they are not that interested in learning how to cook. Even those with some cooking experience only know how to cook the most basic food. The **Live-in Carer/Family Group Home Model** ensures that those who do not know how to cook receive a good breakfast, lunch and dinner every day of the week.

In addition to not knowing how to cook, many participants also lack the most basic knowledge of food storage, food freshness, food nutrition, washing dishes, and using a knife and folk. Nor do they have the knowledge or self-discipline to shop on a budget within their means. The **Live-in Carer/Family Group Home Model** can more effectively address these issues through ongoing training provided by the resident carer.¹¹

2.6.2 Participants will live on fast food or regularly eat out

All workers at Rockdale Beef are expected to work hard. When you work hard all day, the last thing young people want to do when they come home from work, is to start preparing meals. The temptation is then to go and buy fast food or eat out. Fast foods may not be that nutritional, but they are convenient. This habit is not unique to our client group. Teenagers experiencing independence for the first time are often lured by the ease of takeaways.

This is also what happens in their communities. In the evenings, families flock to the community takeaway shop to buy the usual fried chicken and chips, soft drink and smokes. What makes this behaviour particularly unhealthy is that community members unlike RAWS participants, are not burning off the sugars and fats by working or some other physical activity. Most are on welfare or CDEP.

¹¹ An attempt was made to formalise this skills training by engaging a qualified Cook to come into the Family Group Home to teach the participants about food preparation and how to cook some simple tasty nutritional meals. Recipes were written up, ingredients were purchased, particular utensils and aprons were organised. Unfortunately, all the participants ran off as soon as the cook arrived, "because", they said, "he looked gay". Needless to say, the cook never returned. This is just one of the endless frustrations that must be endured when working with this target group.



Living on takeaways or regularly eating out will also entice young people regularly on the streets, day and night. This will increase the likelihood of these young people coming into contact, and 'hanging out' with, the more unsavoury members of the local community. Providing meals for everyone in the home minimises these risks.

2.6.3 Carers can more effectively monitor and manage participants' diets

Many of the young people in RAWs are going through a growth spurt. Their rapid height and weight gain requires that they consume additional calories, more than during any other period in life. In addition, they need more of several specific minerals and vitamins, including calcium, iron, and vitamins A, B₂, C and D. There is also a greater need for protein than there is during childhood. If the body does not receive this nutrition, full growth and good health will not be achieved.

Bad nutrition can have a significant impact on their ability to operate productively throughout the day, and consequently it will negatively impact on their work performance and employment security. Left to their own devices, most participants will live on fast food purchased from the shop, just like they do at home.

An additional health issue is that a number of participants have a tendency to gulp down their food as quickly as possible, which is particularly bad for their digestion. This is due to the considerable competition for food in their home community. Slow eaters will usually miss out or have their meal taken from them by others.

With participants housed under the one roof, their diets and eating habits can be more effectively monitored and managed. The kitchen can also be used as a training tool. The cook can teach interested participants the skill of food preparation and cooking.

2.6.4 Sharing a meal promotes constructive social interaction

Providing meals to participants also promotes social interaction between the carer and participants. Bringing the entire group together for meals, creates the ideal opportunity for the carer to observe the behaviour of all participants and their relationships with each other. It also offers the opportunity for the carer to interact with participants outside of the work environment. This enables the carer to establish a more effective relationship with participants by providing an opportunity to share information, stories, experiences, ideas and views. This is very important aspect of building positive relationships between all household occupants. If the carer does not understand his clients and does not understand what is going on, his ability to manage the behaviour of participants is severely limited.

2.7 Waking participants up in the morning

It can be an on going battle to get some participants up every morning for work. Feelings of sickness or injuries sustained from the previous day are common excuses. This is to be expected from young people with a weak work ethic, and who are not in the habit of getting up early in the morning. The carer must have the skills to effectively deal with this ongoing issue.

In Narrandera, RAWs' participants are never late for work. This is because the carer wakes everyone up at exactly 4:30am every morning. They have their breakfast, and their lunch is prepared. They all board the bus at 5:00am and arrive at Rockdale Beef at 5:30am. If an individual does not board the bus it is because they are genuinely unwell, in which case they are told to see a doctor during the day and then to return home. This level of efficiency and effectiveness could never be achieved with the **On-call/Visiting Supervisor Model**, where participants are living by themselves.



2.8 Personal hygiene

Rarely do participants arrive at the Scheme with soap and a towel. Many have not been taught how to scrub themselves when washing. When showering, they simply stand under the hot water. In fact, participants spend more money on perfumed body sprays than they do on soap.

On one occasion, the shift supervisor threatened to send one participant home because of his bad breath. Here again, rarely would a participant arrive in the Scheme with a toothbrush and toothpaste. It is also apparent that most of them have not been taught about oral hygiene and how to use a toothbrush properly. Looking at their teeth, it can be seen that many participants have extremely poor dental health. This is a consequence of:

- little or no oral hygiene practices;
- drinking and eating copious amounts of soft drink and confectionary which is high in sugar that causes tooth decay;
- eating highly processed foods which are often high in sugar that causes tooth decay;
- an inability or unwillingness to access dental care; and
- low fluoride intake in some areas of the Northern Territory.

Good oral health is important for good health in general. Dental decay and periodontal (gum) disease can cause pain and tooth loss. One study carried out in the Northern Territory revealed that fewer than 5 per cent of pre-school aged Indigenous children brush their teeth regularly.

Poor oral health can also contribute to a number of medical conditions and make them worse, as illustrated by the diagram below.¹²



According to Dooland (1998), the economic cost of dental decay in Australia is of the same order as heart disease and diabetes.¹³ The **Live-in Carer/Family Group Home Model** can effectively provide the necessary support and supervision, to ensure that participants maintain a good standard of personal hygiene, whereas the **On-call/Visiting Supervisor Model** can not effectively deal with this issue.

¹² Northern Territory Government: Department of Health and Families: Bush Book Vol 2, Ch 3: Food and Nutrition: Oral Health.

¹³ Dooland, M. (1998), The cessation of the Commonwealth Dental Health Program, *New Doctor*, Winter 1998, 4-8.



3. PROBLEMS & SOLUTIONS

Between the 11 November, 2009, and 14 May, 2010, (26 weeks) 14 young people had been placed into fulltime employment at Rockdale Beef, with 8 (57.1%) presently in the Scheme, 2 (14.2%) on leave waiting to return to work, and 1 (7.1%) returned home without leave (to attend a funeral) and is now requested to return to work.

However, despite this success, for several months, RAWS has been trying to grapple with two problems:

- 1) Rockdale Beef will not employ local Aboriginal youths through RAWS, and there is a lack of alternative local employment.
- 2) Supervising house leases scattered across Narrandera has proved to be of high risk and unsustainable.

Rockdale Beef management consider local Aboriginal youth unemployment as largely **voluntary unemployment** and therefore not eligible to take part in the RAWS program. The view is that local Indigenous young people are unemployed as a result of their own behaviour. The Plant Manager candidly told RAWS “*they have had their chance*”. Meaning that the company has taken on local Aboriginals in the past, and it did not work out. The company is very wary about employing local Indigenous young people and has completely ruled out their participation in the RAWS program.

Australian Contracting Solutions (Rockdale Beef’s contracted employment agency) have reported to RAWS on severe conflicts with some local Aboriginal employees and of the steadfast and earnest desire to never revisit those dreadful times.

Rockdale Beef perceives that many Aboriginal youths living in remote communities are unemployed as a result of **structural unemployment**. That is to say; there are not enough jobs in the local labour market for everyone who wants one. For this reason the company has agreed to employ these young people through RAWS sight unseen.

The disparity between the local and remote northern labour market is undeniable. But this is not the issue here. The issue is that Rockdale Beef is unwilling to offer any special concession to local Aboriginal people and their family members, due to the past behaviour of some members of the local Aboriginal community. Nor are they willing to employ local Aboriginal youths on the basis of merit, who then become participants of RAWS, if this has been prearranged.

A proposal to bring in some Aboriginal youths from remote areas of New South Wales was presented to Rockdale Beef, but this was also rejected on the grounds that these remote areas of New South Wales, are not as remote as communities in the Northern Territory.

The point was made by BFTB Projects’ spokesperson, that a cursory glance at the NSW youth justice statistics shows that many NSW Indigenous youths are at risk like so many young people in remote communities. Their predicament is not their creation, or within their control.¹⁴ But this argument also failed to get the desired response from Rockdale Beef.

¹⁴ Figures from the NSW Department of Juvenile Justice reveal that Indigenous crime statistics in places like Walgett, Bourke, Wilcannia, and Dareton are comparable to places like Aurukun on Cape York, and Wadeye in the Northern Territory. Research showed that almost all juvenile detainees had used alcohol (97%) and cannabis (94%), while half had used amphetamines (50%) and one in three had used ecstasy at some stage in their lives. Nearly one in three juvenile offenders were regular poly-substance users in the six months prior to detention. A study of juveniles incarcerated in Australian detention centres found that violent abuse was most frequently reported (36%) followed by emotional abuse (27%) and neglect (18%). When combined, almost half the young people (46%) reported experiencing at least one of these types of abuse in their lifetime. When neglect or abuse did occur, it was most likely to be by a parent or guardian, followed by a sibling. The experiences of neglect and abuse also appeared to be linked to both drug use and crime. The average age for leaving school was 14. More than 80 per cent had not attended school in the six months before they were incarcerated. More than 90% had been suspended from school.



DEEWR has a commitment to employ local as well as remote area youth. As part of its contract with RAWs it has directed RAWs to place local Aboriginal youths into alternative employment. However, this does not take into account several important factors:

- 1) No local jobs vacancies for 10 unskilled youths exist outside of Rockdale Beef. Direct approaches have been made to all three local piggeries, the local sawmill, local potato growers, and a number of other smaller business with no success.
- 2) RAWs is designed to provide user pays, off site support and supervision to young people far from their family and home community. Local Indigenous youth will not voluntarily commit to move from home to pay for accommodation nor with a total prohibition on drug and alcohol use, and where freedom of movement in space and time is restricted.
- 3) Peer or mutual support is a critical structural component of RAWs success¹⁵. In social psychology there is a body of knowledge about what makes for an effective group, and its potential to serve as a mutual aid system, which is separate to those interactions with the various surrounding social systems; described as task-type behaviours. This has been recognised as a crucial factor for RAWs participants, and it is one of the primary structural components of the Scheme. These mutual aid systems include; sharing information, the dialectical process, discussing taboo areas, the all in the same boat phenomenon, developing a universal perspective, mutual support, mutual demand, individual problem solving, and rehearsal. If local Indigenous young people were not required to function within the RAWs peer support mechanism then many divisions would arise, possibly undermining the integrity of the whole project.¹⁶
- 4) RAWs' participants are discouraged from associating with those who may distract them from their responsibilities to their employer. In the case of local youths, if necessary they would need to be discouraged from socializing with particular members of their family, and perhaps certain local Aboriginal organisations, that will distract them from their responsibilities to their employer.

Related to these issues as we have demonstrated in Section 2 of this report the **Live-in Carer/Family Group Home Model** has proven itself to be a very effective mechanism of RAWs. In the future RAWs will acquire or lease a single dwelling that can accommodate a full group of participants under the one roof i.e. between 15 and 20 participants.

¹⁵ This was recognised as an important factor at the time the Scheme was being first conceptualised back in 1999. In the author's 2005 report on the original trial, it was maintained: "To help balance this need for a prolonged exposure to new patterns of behaviour and genuine pleas of homesickness, participants will be given the opportunity to be placed along with a family member or friend. These small peer groups will share a common identity, language, lifestyle and needs and provide each other with mutual support. This mutual support during difficult times is an important ingredient to a successful work placement." The mechanics of what occurs is to make the distinction between task behaviour and maintenance behaviour used in group work theory. This theory purports that most group activities could be classified as either task behaviours, which are those behaviours directed towards the accomplishment of tasks, or maintenance behaviours which are those behaviours that are directed towards facilitating and providing emotional support to each other. Maintenance behaviours include mutual aid behaviours.

¹⁶ The likely consequences would be the creation of a two class system, or an us and them division. This division would be based not only on place of birth, but possibly on other sub culture characteristics. As one participant has already pointed out; "*If they are not working with us, it's like letting any local person come and live with us. They got their own place, they don't need our place.*" Who then, is going to say to this young person that he has no say in who comes and lives with him in the house he considers partly his? After all, these young people are the tenants. They pay the rent from their own earnings.



Solutions

RAWS can solve the problems of local employment and the need to maximise the benefits of the Live-in Carer/Family Group Home Model as follows. Progress Report #1 flagged the idea of setting up a second group for local participants, as a solution to Rockdale Beef's refusal to employ local Aboriginal youths through RAWS. To ensure the success of this solution the group would need to be set up outside Narrandera and at a different abattoir. The likelihood that the Narrandera group may need to be relocated to another abattoir has been mentioned to Rockdale Beef. The company is not pleased with this prospect, but it remains firm in its decision not to employ Indigenous youths from New South Wales through RAWS. Despite our good relations with Rockdale Beef we need to resolve this stalemate.

RAWS firm position is that DEEWR's requirement for the inclusion of 10 local Aboriginal youths can only be achieved by relocating the group to another community with a large abattoir, willing to take local or regional youths. Or, if they are unwilling to take local youths, then there must be other types of local employment that will employ local youths through RAWS.

In addition to opportunities for group employment, the choice of location would also need to be governed by the availability of a large building that could accommodate between 15 and 20 participants with a live-in carer or carers. There are usually several large properties available for sale or lease in regional country towns.



4. CREATING A SAVINGS CULTURE

Ensuring that RAWs participants save their income is an add on advantage of the whole scheme.

A special bank account for all participants has been implemented. It is a simple system that operates on a purely voluntary basis. It begins with letting new arrivals know of the saving service; a service that operates free of charge that can assist them to save if and when they need this sort of assistance.

Each participant receives a small red bank book. Each payday they are asked to make a deposit. It is up to them to decide how much they want to put in, although RAWs actively encourages them to put in as much as possible each week. The deposit is then recorded in their book along with signatures and an official stamp printed over the signatures.

Date	Amount Deposited	Bank Deposit Receipt No.	Running Total	Depositor's Signature	Supervisor's Signature
19/3/10	\$200		\$200	[Stamp]	[Stamp]
1/4/10	\$100		\$300	[Stamp]	[Stamp]
9/4/10	Withdrawal \$35 to pay for bus expense		\$265		
16/4/10	\$200		\$465	[Stamp]	[Stamp]
23/4/10	\$100		\$565	[Stamp]	[Stamp]
29/4/10	Withdrawal \$65 for personal stamp/donations		\$500		
30/4/10	\$100		\$600	[Stamp]	[Stamp]
7/5/10	\$100		\$700	[Stamp]	[Stamp]

Printed with the permission of Virgil Downs

The cash is then deposited into a special account managed by BFTB Projects. The bank deposit receipt is then given to the member who places it into a small envelope fixed in the back inside over of the bank book.

Commonwealth Bank
Commonwealth Bank of Australia
AGBY 48 123 123 124
Branch: NARRANDERA
BSB: 2583

Deposit Receipt

Date: 10/05/2010
Time: 12:41:49
WS ID: W41
Teller ID: 50
Account Number: *****4213

Cash/Transfer: \$100.00
Cheques/Merchant Summaries: \$0.00
TOTAL DEPOSITED: \$100.00

The bank books are held in the office of the carer where they can be looked at by their owners at any time.

When it comes to withdrawals, the owner can ask for a withdrawal of any amount of money in his account at any time. However, there are a number of gates in which the owner must pass in



order to make a withdrawal. The first gate is that only an authorised person can access the account. The second gate is that there is no key card attached to this account, so withdrawals can only be made by authorised persons, at the bank, during business hours. It is the third gate that provides the real effectiveness of the system. It is the job of the RAWs authorised person to enquire into the reason for the withdrawal, and therefore the opportunity to counsel the young person on the appropriateness or the necessity of the withdrawal. The final decision, however, rests with the young person.

The following are some comments made by RAWs' participants about the money management system.

Anton McMillan, 17 years old, from Santa Teresa: *"It's good cause when you save and you can't get it out. It's good cause you can use it for emergency use."* What Anton did not mention is how his mother has access to his bank account and periodically withdrawals money from his account without his permission. Whereas, money placed into the RAWs participant bank account is fully protected from any unauthorised access.

Virgil Downs, aged 18, from Ali Curung: *"It's really good how we can save every Friday, to save up for a car or something. You can only get it out if you need it. You can't get it out for junk food or something. If you need it for something important you can."*

Kenneth Philomac, aged 22, from Alpururulam: *"It's a good idea because if we go somewhere to other towns we know we always have some money to spend. It's a better way of saving, got the choices of what you can put in and not always easy to get it out and it's probably easy for us to save for something good for ourselves like motor bike or car."*

Travis Mahoney, aged 16, from Alpururulam: *"It's all right eh, good because you can put money away and don't have to spend it on anything. The book is good."*

The system not only assists participants to save a portion of their income, it also serves as a budgeting mechanism of sorts. This can be seen in the above comments by participants. Take for example the \$35 withdrawn by Virgil on 4 April, 2010 (as shown in the above bank book). This was the Easter weekend, and because all Rockdale Beef workers are self employed contractors, they do not receive any holiday pay. Thus they all received a small pay for this particular week. In Virgil's case he did not have enough money to cover all his expenses (rent, utilities, transport and food). It was mutually agreed to cover the short fall by money from his savings account.

On the 28 April, 2010, Virgil wanted to buy some personal items and was \$65 short. He requested and received a withdrawal from his savings account on the understanding that he continues to make his regular \$100 deposit every week. There were a number of other occasions when Virgil requested a withdrawal, but his requests were withdrawn when they were subjected to scrutiny.

There is however an unexpected spin off from this banking system. Most participants now have sufficient money in their account to return home even for unnecessary reasons, and with little thought to the cost of their return. This has happened on three occasions to date. On one occasion, the participant returned home using his savings, to attend a funeral, without first obtaining leave from Rockdale Beef, and is now in a position where he wants to return, but Rockdale Beef refuses to take him back. Without this banking system most participants would not have saved any money, and therefore they would be unable to return home without the full assistance of their family, or to call upon DEEWR for their free flight to return home.

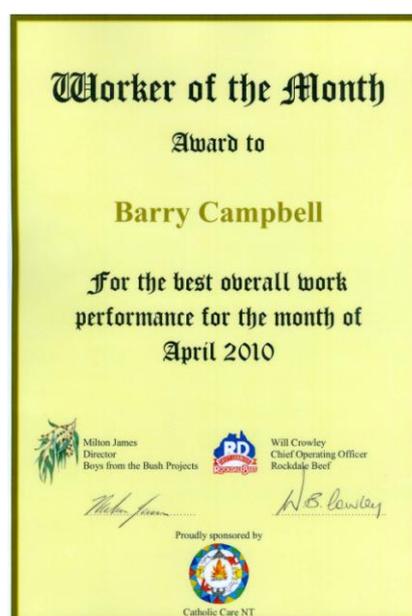


5. SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 'WORKER OF THE MONTH' AWARD

RAWS promotes these ordinary young people who take pride in work, especially hard physical work, and doing well. Similarly, with Rockdale Beef, good labourers are well respected, well rewarded, and highly prized people. RAWS promotes the best as role models to other participants, potential participants and their families. They are taught to take pride in being a meat process worker, and they are told that there is no pride in being dependent on welfare or a participant in a welfare program.

To this end the designated 'Worker of the Month' award is a positive reward, recognizing a worker's achievements in the workplace and their contribution to Rockdale Beef, RAWS, and society in general. The award consists of a certificate signed by Rockdale Beef's Chief Operating Officer and the Director of BFTB Projects.

The certificate is given to the recipient at a ceremonial dinner held in a local restaurant, and attended by the entire group. For the majority of participants this is the first time they have ever dined at a restaurant, other than KFC or McDonalds. To ensure that the entire group attends the dinner, BFTB Projects has agreed to subsidize part of the cost with assistance from Job Services Australia service providers.



This recognition is ultimately aimed at maximizing motivation and retention. People who feel appreciated are more positive about themselves, and are more likely to maintain their commitment. People with positive self-esteem are potentially the best employees.

The primary selection for the award is carried out by the Rockdale Beef's Chief Operating Officer, with the Director of BFTB Projects holding the power of veto. Care is taken to ensure the award is not a popularity or take turns contest. Nor is it designed to pacify participants. Nor is it about "brown nosing", or being the boss's "pet", or "must be your turn", as what often happens with these types of awards. Such perceptions would diminish the recognition power of the award. The award is a serious endeavor to identify and reward real achievement. To this end, we strive to make it a cherished form of recognition.

The criterion for selection is made clear, fair, consistent, and measurable. Participants need to see that each person who makes the same or a similar achievement has an equal likelihood of



receiving recognition for his efforts. We are mindful to avoid giving out the award seldomly so that it does not negatively impact on the majority of the participants. Regular recognition through this award and reward process, provides an on going incentive for all workers to improve their performance. Each worker has a realistic opportunity to receive this award and they strive to receive this recognition.

Furthermore, neither BFTB Projects nor Rockdale Beef believes their job of creating a motivated and rewarding work environment for employees is complete with this award. It is not a substitute for day to day positive recognition, reasonable pay and benefits, company sponsored activities and events, and a general environment of appreciation. Nor is it assumed that “one size fits all” when they provide employee recognition, and what people will find rewarding through the recognition of their employer and fellow workers.



Appendix I



ROCKDALE BEEF PTY. LTD.

(A.C.N. 003 789 991) - Incorporated in N.S.W. (A.B.N. 37 003 789 991)
As Manager for and on behalf of Rockdale Beef Partnership

Regulator Road,
Yanco, N.S.W. 2703
AUSTRALIA
Phone: (02) 6951 1199

P.O Box 42,
Yanco, N.S.W. 2703
AUSTRALIA
Facsimile: (02) 6953 5397



10 May 2010

Barbara Livesey
Group Manager
Indigenous Strategies Group
GPO Box 9880
CANBERRA, ACT, 2601

Dear Ms Livesey,

Re: Boys From The Bush Projects at Rockdale Beef

Rockdale Beef commenced the Remote Area Work Scheme, under the Boys from the Bush Projects (BFTB), in November 2009.

The Scheme at Rockdale Beef is largely based on equality in the workplace – the workers under the BFTB, are treated in the same way as any other workers, such as the way they are engaged (as contractors), the way they are paid (piece rates) and the way services and amenities are shared.

The BFTB workers all interact with the rest of the workforce, either at their workstation, during their breaks, or, as I understand, away from the workplace. We have found that, in general, the BFTB workers are willing workers, who have some defined personal targets in life, and that a stable job is part of that target equation.

Rockdale Beef has identified a number of aspects of the program that are instrumental to success. In particular, the “away-from-work” support, we believe, delivers an excellent approach to managing the participants’ lives beyond the workplace. This support has also carried into aspects of work life.

The Courier Bus has ensured that the workers get to work on-time every day, and that they leave in an orderly manner. As a result of co-habiting, the BFTB Workers absenteeism has been minimal.

Rockdale Beef has also attempted to use the pastoral care aspects of the program to assist with workplace skill development and productivity. By discussing these issues away from work, and creating a suitably challenging environment in the workplace, the BFTB workers have adopted a positive work ethic.

The payment system used at Rockdale Beef is based on piece rates, or, the more produced, the more the workers are paid. Initially, workers are paid on an hourly basis. As skills develop, the workers are included in a “pool” payment system based on volume produced. If workers choose to progress their skill levels, they can achieve higher pay rates again. To date, the program has delivered three workers who have chosen to develop their skills as learners – one of which was recently recognized as a skilled “Slicer”. As the program progresses, we

REGISTERED OFFICE:

Level 20, BT Tower, 1 Market Street, Sydney, N.S.W. 2000, AUSTRALIA. Phone: (02) 9283 6333





ROCKDALE BEEF PTY. LTD.

(A.C.N. 003 789 991) - Incorporated in N.S.W. (A.B.N. 37 003 789 991)
As Manager for and on behalf of Rockdale Beef Partnership

Regulator Road,
Yanco, N.S.W. 2703
AUSTRALIA
Phone: (02) 6951 1199

P.O Box 42,
Yanco, N.S.W. 2703
AUSTRALIA
Facsimile: (02) 6953 5397



expect more workers from the BFTB program to progress in skill level, and subsequent take-home pay.

The Pool payment system also generates a sense of teamwork. We find that this teamwork fits very well with the BFTB Workers. Milton James (and Lorraine Watson) have been particularly receptive to the BFTB workers needs, and also assisting Rockdale Beef with overcoming issues that have arisen from the program.

The BFTB Workers appear to have developed a new relationship in the local community, becoming involved in a range of social and sporting activities. I note the relationship with the local Aboriginal community. Initially, Milton established open communications with the Wagga Wagga Aboriginal Land Council representatives (which included delegations from Rockdale Beef) to ensure a smooth settling-in process.

There have been some moments of frustration, angst or misunderstanding, but these issues have all been dealt with in a sensible and timely manner. In a nutshell, the program management has been excellent.

The BFTB Newsletter is a great way of sharing the successes of the program with all workers at Rockdale Beef. This eagerly awaited publication by all Rockdale Beef workers is seen as another important part of this program, providing positive enforcement for the BFTB workers in the workplace.

The BFTB program has delivered essential workers to Rockdale Beef, at the same time as providing opportunities for some of the most disadvantaged Australians. Rockdale Beef considers the outcome to be a win-win situation.

Since the commencement of the program at Rockdale, a total of fourteen workers have been introduced. Eight workers remain working at Rockdale.

Rockdale Beef remains committed to the BFTB Remote Area Work Scheme.

Yours Sincerely,

Paul Troja
General Manager / Director

"A great program that works"

CC: Lynne Stevenson
Branch Manager
Indigenous Employment Programs

Milton James
Boys from the Bush Projects

REGISTERED OFFICE:

Level 20, BT Tower, 1 Market Street, Sydney, N.S.W. 2000, AUSTRALIA. Phone: (02) 9283 6333

