



*If you are participating in the presentations this year, please provide a written report and a copy of your final report presentation by 31 October.  
If not, please provide a written report by 30 September.*

### ***Part 1 - Summary Details***

*Please use your TAB key to complete Parts 1 & 2.*

**CRDC Project Number:** CFOC1301

**Project Title:** Caring for our Country- Aboriginal trainees

**Project Commencement Date:** 21/2/2012    **Project Completion Date:** 22/2/2013

**CRDC Program:** 1. Human Capacity

### ***People & Community***

#### ***Part 2 – Contact Details***

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**Administrator:** Lynn Trindall  
**Organisation:** Narrabri Aboriginal Lands Council  
**Postal Address:** 96 Barwan St Narrabri NSW 2390  
**Ph:** 02 67924 228    **Fax:**    **E-mail:** narrabilalc@bigpond.com

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**Principal Researcher:** Sallyanne Knight  
**Organisation:** Warrenbri Farming partnership  
**Postal Address:** P.O. Box 476, Wee Waa NSW 2388  
**Ph:** 02 679255 133    **Fax:**    **E-mail:** pandsknight1@bigpond.com

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**Supervisor:** Lynn Trindall  
**Organisation:** Narrabri Aboriginal Lands Council  
**Postal Address:** 96 Barwan St Narrabri NSW 2390  
**Ph:** 02 67924 228    **Fax:**    **E-mail:** narrabilalc@bigpond.com

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**Signature of Research Provider Representative:**



## ***Part 2 – Final Report Executive Summary***

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A pilot project was initiated to employ 4 Aboriginal trainees to work on cotton farms in the Narrabri district. This pilot was funded through the Australian Government's Caring for Our Country Initiative supported by the Cotton Catchment Communities CRC and the Cotton Research and Development Corporation. For young people in the local Aboriginal community the traineeships offered the chance to gain skills and experience and a nationally recognised qualification in agriculture and in natural resource management, both industries with strong job demand.

Three of the trainees completed their traineeship and obtained a Certificate II in Rural Production. One trainee obtained full time employment on the farm he was hosted on throughout the program.

The trainees were employed by the Narrabri Local Aboriginal Land Council and supported by a Trainee Liaison Officer, Sally Knight also employed by the Narrabri Local Aboriginal Land Council. The project received tremendous support from many local companies and organisations including the three host farms, "Little Mollee" (Cotton Seed Distributors), the Australian Cotton Research Institute (NSW Department of Primary Industry) and the Plant Breeding Institute (University of Sydney) who mentored the trainees on farm four days per week reinforcing their TAFE training. Training was provided by the TAFE NSW New England Institute as part of a flexible program negotiated with host farm businesses to ensure trainees were in the workplace when they're needed most. Joblink Plus led the recruitment process in Narrabri and supplied the trainees uniforms and the Australian Business Ltd Apprenticeships Centre in Moree assisted with implementation of the traineeship program.

The Cotton Traineeship pilot not only increased the supply of skilled workers for the agricultural sector, it also improve natural resource management and on farm sustainability. The Trainees obtained skills and knowledge in natural resource management by working with Namoi Catchment Management Authority and other organisations who specialised in the planning and management of revegetation and rehabilitation strategies undertaken by trainees on- local cotton farms.

An evaluation of the pilot was undertaken by all trainees and project stakeholders who completed a SWOT analysis. In brief, the concept of the pilot was identified by most parties as a useful means to engage young Aboriginal people in agriculture. The strengths of the Aboriginal Traineeship Pilot can be first identified by the level of commitment from all parties involved. The Narrabri Local Aboriginal Land Council was identified as an excellent administrator of this type of project and their ability to support young Aboriginal people was recognised. The Host Farms on-board had the capacity to provide training on-farm tailored to the individual.



There is however, significant planning and preparation needed to ensure that momentum does not get lost and the right applicants are prepared for the year traineeship and pre-workplace training would assist with attendance and communication skills. Participants agreed that the opportunities for rural traineeships need to be identified and provided at the school level, as early as year 10. Ensuring that Trainees hold a current drivers license is essential. Throughout the traineeship communication between the trainees and host employees was difficult and an improvement could be for improved cultural understand for all parties involved.

The overall aim “to be work ready” can be harnessed with further fine tuning. The nature of a pilot is to identify basically “what worked and what didn’t”. What has resulted is a number of partnerships committed to getting it right and making it work – this is the biggest legacy of the Aboriginal Traineeship Pilot Programme.

### ***Part 3 – Final Report Guide (due 31 October)***

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#### ***Background***

A pilot project was initiated to employ 4 Aboriginal trainees to works on cotton farms in the Narrabri district. Three of the trainees completed a Certificate II in Rural Production and upon completion of the program 1 trainee obtained full time employment within the cotton industry. For young people in the local Aboriginal community the traineeships offer the chance to gain skills and experience and a nationally recognised qualification in agriculture and in natural resource management, both industries with strong job demand.

#### ***Objectives***

##### **The following objective has been achieved:**

1. Four Aboriginal trainees were placed on local Host Farms in the Namoi including ACRI, Sydney University Wheat Breeding Institute and CSD “Little Mollee” Farm.
2. Three Aboriginal Trainees completed their Certificate II in Rural Production as of 27th November, 2012 and their Traineeship as of 22 February 2013
3. One Trainee obtained full time employment on a local cotton farm.
4. The Aboriginal trainees were involved in achieving the Landscape Scale Conservation targets (of the overall Caring for our country project) in the Namoi Catchment and completed the following 5 NRM modules in certificate course:



- Observe Environmental Work Practise's
  - Install, maintain and repair fencing
  - Recognise plants
  - Apply animal trapping
  - Implement revegetation works.
5. Conservation projects undertaken by the trainees are:
    - Biodiversity training by Phil Sparks and installing micro-bat and owlet boxed on local cotton farms with Namoi CMA.
    - The Dungalear Conservation Fencing Project at Walgett
    - Aquatic Revegetation and Rehabilitation river care between Boggabri and Narrabri with Millie Hobson, NSW DPI.
    - Propagation and plant ID Workshop with Steve Fields "Fields native Nursery"
  6. Steering Committee Meetings were held on 8th August, 2012 and 13th December, 2012. A final wrap up meeting was held on the 7th March 2013
  7. An SWOT Analysis was completed as a project evaluation (see attached)

### *Discussion*

An evaluation of the pilot was undertaken by all trainees and project stakeholders who completed a SWOT analysis. In brief, the concept of the pilot was identified by most parties as a useful means to engage young Aboriginal people in agriculture. The strengths of the Aboriginal Traineeship Pilot can be first identified by the level of commitment from all parties involved. The Narrabri Local Aboriginal Land Council was identified as an excellent administrator of this type of project and their ability to support young Aboriginal people was recognised. The Host Farms on-board had the capacity to provide training on-farm tailored to the individual. In order to manage WHS, it may be better for any future programs that the Narrabri LALC provide funding to the host farms for trainees to be employed by host farms, who are in effect responsible for their day to day safety.

There is however, significant planning and preparation needed to ensure that momentum does not get lost and the right applicants are prepared for the year traineeship and pre-workplace training would assist with attendance and communication skills. Participants agreed that the opportunities for rural traineeships need to be identified and provided at the school level, as early as year 10. Ensuring that Trainees hold a current drivers license is essential. Throughout the traineeship communication between the trainees and host employees was difficult and an improvement could be for improved cultural understand for all parties involved.



The following have been identified a way to improve guidance of employers and host farms of any future initiatives:

- Pre-employment programme for all potential trainees. Pre-Employment programme be run prior to engagement: Life skills, mentoring, work preparedness, including obligations and commitment are all vital.
- Performance Hurdles – challenges and solutions guide.
- Cultural Awareness Training, Cultural understanding is also important for the Host Farm's, Liaison role and educationalists. A cultural awareness programme should be implemented very early in the planning stages.
- Annual Leave Planning.

### *Conclusion*

The overall aim “to be work ready” can be harnessed with further fine tuning. The nature of a pilot is to identify basically “what worked and what didn't”. What has resulted is a number of partnerships committed to getting it right and making it work – this is the biggest legacy of the Aboriginal Traineeship Pilot Programme.