



ORATSIC's vision

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people securing strong and viable futures through good governance of their corporations.

Balgo landscape (WA)



Anthony Beven
Registrar

Meet Anthony Beven, the new Registrar

The Registrar's office is made up of talented and devoted staff working hard to deliver quality services for our corporations and their communities—I am delighted to be working with them. I have inherited an organisation with a strong and sharing spirit that was nurtured under the leadership and vision of Laura Beacroft. Her farewell message to you reflects her focus on improving the way directors and staff of corporations carry out business and deliver services.

I was previously the Regional Commissioner for the Australian Securities and Investments Commission in South Australia and before that in the Northern Territory. I was also a national advisor in Consumer Protection, especially on issues facing Indigenous and regional consumers. I have also been the Registrar of Companies in Papua New Guinea and founding Chairman of the Papua New Guinea

Securities Commission as well as the Papua New Guinea Accounting Standards Board.

I look forward to meeting all of you and working with you over the next three years to support our vision. In the next edition of *The Oracle* I will be setting out our short and long term priorities and providing some further direction on what I would like to achieve as Registrar. I have been meeting with our key stakeholders and corporations and will continue to do so over the next year to hear their views on how to improve what we do. On behalf of myself and all my staff, I'd like to wish all of you and your families a healthy, happy and prosperous 2008.

Anthony Beven
Registrar of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporations



Diploma in Business (Governance) pilot

The Registrar, Anthony Beven, and the Director of Governance and Compliance Training, Kerrie Nelson, attended the launch of the pilot Diploma in Business (Governance) program in the Melbourne Town Hall on 14 November 2007.

Fifteen participants from around Australia attended and were congratulated for their commitment by the Hon. Richard Wynne, Victorian Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, who launched the pilot program. All participants have already successfully completed the Certificate IV in Business (Governance).

The pilot program is part of the partnership arrangements ORATSIC has with Aboriginal Affairs Victoria and Consumer Affairs Victoria. ORATSIC panel members, Swinburne University and Horizons Education & Development, have worked together to develop the curriculum in line with the *Managing in Two Worlds* competencies and to deliver the program.

As part of the partnership arrangements ORATSIC funds six of the participants to complete the diploma. They come from the Torres Strait, Nhulunbuy, Kalgoorlie and Tasmania.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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Good governance awareness and rule book redesign in the East Kimberley

Over the past few months ORATSIC has been working closely with corporations in the four communities located where the Kimberley and Tanami Desert meet, about 700 km north west of Uluru.

We held rule book redesign workshops in Balgo, Bililuna and Ringer Soak to help the corporations meet their needs under the new CATSI Act.

A rule book redesign workshop had been held in Mulan earlier in the year and the Mulan Aboriginal Corporation was ready to adopt its new rules. ORATSIC was invited to help facilitate its annual general meeting and adopt its new rule book.



ORATSIC staff with corporation members at a good governance workshop in WA.

The communities and corporations we worked with were:

- BALGO** > Wirrimanu Aboriginal Corporation
- MULAN** > Mulan Aboriginal Corporation
- BILILUNA** > Mindibungu Aboriginal Corporation
- RINGER SOAK** > Kundat Djaru Aboriginal Corporation
Kundat Djaru Community Store Aboriginal Corporation
Yaruman Art and Culture Aboriginal Corporation

The workshops helped people decide the important things they wanted to achieve—both for their corporations and their communities. As always, once issues are defined, it is easier to find options to make things work better for everyone and reflect this in the redesign of their corporations' rules.

The message we got from the communities and their corporations was that the sessions were very helpful.

If your corporation would like to talk to us about redesigning your rule book to best meet your needs under the CATSI Act, please call ORATSIC on 1800 622 431 or email info@oratsic.gov.au



Farewell Laura

Over the five years I have been the Registrar I met many of you, which has been a special privilege for me. I know that some of the best community based organisations in Australia and the world are run by

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, with great support from staff and others.

All of you know that one of the biggest challenges facing your corporations from within your communities is arguing instead of working together. So many people I have spoken to say that if there is one thing that they wish for, it is for good problem solving between people involved with their corporations. ORATSIC's very own calendar girl, Mary G, has raised it with me too. So my final request, on behalf of all those who raised it with me—don't argue but instead work out a way to solve disagreements.

Disagreements that don't get solved can completely ruin an organisation. Unless the disagreement is corporation business why bring it inside the corporation at all?

Of course there are plenty of examples of corporations solving problems. Every director and especially the chairperson and staff have to support good problem solving. Get your directors and staff to talk about how to manage disagreements better and try some of their ideas out to see if they work. Tell everyone when they start with the corporation that they need to set a good problem solving example and do some training so that people have the skills and the right attitude to do it well.

Under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006* (CATSI Act) corporations must have rules on how to resolve disagreements in their rule book. It is also a good idea to put these rules in employment contracts and codes of conduct for the directors and staff. Some corporations go an extra step and pick out special members who are fair and well respected by everyone, to keep a special eye on disagreements and work out early what the corporation can do to manage it well.

If some people involved with the corporation don't have a good attitude and make disagreements worse, then they need to be voted out or not employed. Even one person can spoil the best efforts of many. ORATSIC can help with more information about this challenge.

So go well all you wonderful people, working in wonderful organisations. Keep your governance strong. ORATSIC can help and the CATSI Act gives you plenty of guidance and also space to have very successful corporations. You can be sure I will be a champion for well governed Indigenous corporations, wherever I go from here.

Best wishes
Laura Beacroft
Registrar 2002–07

Have you lodged your annual returns for 2006–07?

All corporations were required to send the following documents to the Registrar by 31 December 2007:

1. statement of compliance
2. current list of members
3. audited financial statements OR an application for exemption.

If you haven't sent in your annual returns yet, please do it now.