

JENNIFER REUBEN (right),

Regional officer, Cairns

ABORIGINAL WOMAN from the **MARIAMOO CLAN GROUP** between Daly River, Northern Territory, and Port Keats (Wadeye), Northern Territory, and also a **TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER**

RENEE WOOD (left),

Regional officer (on secondment from another area of the department), Cairns

ABORIGINAL WOMAN from the **MANDABURRA CLAN GROUP** from the Innisfail area, North Queensland



Cairns regional office, Queensland

In the four years it's been open, the ORIC regional office in Cairns has been steadily building relationships with client corporations across a region that stretches as far north as the Torres Strait. The office has also benefitted from the contribution made by secondee Renee Wood who provided assistance on a part-time basis from early December 2015 to the end of January 2016.

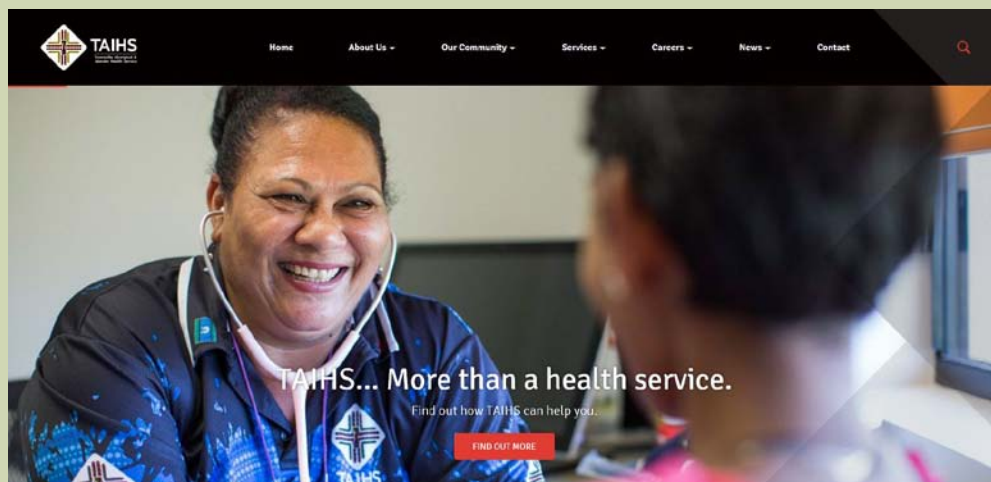
'My work is varied and demanding, particularly around reporting time,' said Jennifer. 'Each year I work hard to get in touch with every corporation in my area to make sure they're able to complete their reports and lodge on time.'

Some of the more varied work includes invitations to attend corporation meetings. For example, when the members of the Townsville Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Health Services—known as TAIHS—requested a general meeting to pass a number of resolutions to change their corporation rule book, they also wanted ORIC to attend.

Since transferring over to the CATSI Act in 2012, TAIHS has expanded its business with additional resources, new buildings and extra staff.

'There was a huge number of members at the general meeting and many questions were raised with the directors and also ORIC,' said Jennifer. 'I guided them on matters of governance. It was a very productive meeting. Most of the resolutions were passed, with two resolutions referred to the next general meeting.'

Jennifer will continue to work closely with the directors and provide support.



DAYNA LISTER (left),
Regional manager, Alice Springs
ARRERNTE/LURITJA WOMAN

GEORGE DONALDSON (right),
Regional officer, Alice Springs
WONGATHA MAN



Alice Springs regional office, Northern Territory

Over the five years since the Alice Springs regional office was established in 2011 it has grown in strength and capacity. Situated at the centre of ORIC's network of regional offices, it serves the lower half of the Northern Territory, taking in the Barkly region, central Australia and the whole of South Australia.

Covering this large remote area is not without its challenges but between them, Dayna and George manage the distances and provide face-to-face assistance as needed—from helping corporations with compliance matters to registering new groups.

In early 2016 a group of artists working in a small art centre under the auspices of Ngurratjuta/ Pmara Ntjarra Aboriginal Corporation decided the time was right to operate independently.

'My first visit to the Many Hands art centre was in June 2015 and since that time I've stayed in contact and got to know everyone quite well,' said Dayna. 'The artists are descendants of Albert Namatjira and all work in the distinctive Namatjira watercolour style.'

Over the following 12 months Dayna and George attended meetings, discussed with the artists the benefits of the CATSI Act and took them through the steps involved in registering.

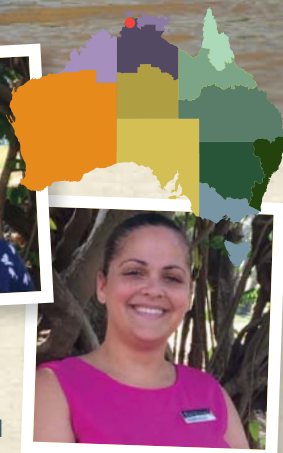
'The group was keen to be incorporated by 30 June 2016 to allow a seamless transition from Ngurratjuta,' said Dayna. 'In fact, we registered Iltja Ntjarra Aboriginal Corporation on 6 June 2016 so we achieved this goal with time to spare!'

In the Western Arrernte language 'iltja ntjarra' means 'many hands'.





HANNAH ROE,
Regional manager,
Darwin
YAWURU WOMAN



MARGETTA AVLONITIS,
Regional officer, Darwin
KUNGARAKAN and
WARRAMUNGA
(Northern Territory)
descent

Darwin regional office, Northern Territory

Since the Darwin regional office opened in 2013 it has firmly established itself as an energetic force in the Top End, providing practical hands-on assistance to a large number of corporations. Services range from offering corporate governance assistance to helping with reporting obligations.

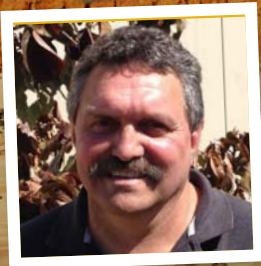
Over the past 18 months since Margetta joined ORIC, the Darwin office has been able to extend and strengthen its relationships with corporations, both near and far. 'With the two of us here we're now able to take a little more time with each corporation and also to travel further to the more remote areas,' said Hannah.

Over 2015–16, the Darwin office has been involved in a number of transfers, such as with Nungalingya College Indigenous Corporation.

Due to the close and easy collaboration between the Darwin office and Nungalingya, the transition from the *Associations Act* (NT) to the CATSI Act went through without a hitch. 'We're confident that the members and directors know to contact us on any governance matter,' said Hannah. 'We have a very good relationship.'

In November 2015 Margetta with the Registrar attended the AGM of the Sunrise Health Service Aboriginal Corporation in Katherine. 'We were invited to talk about the processes involved in changing the rule book, so it could be in line with the corporation's expansion,' said Margetta. 'We also provided information about LawHelp.'

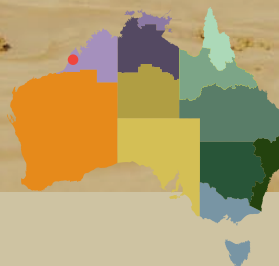
For the members it was a great opportunity to ask important questions about governance. 'For me it was a chance to meet with the members, directors and staff and establish a good working relationship,' said Margetta. 'We were also impressed with the corporation's work and what it has achieved, especially its healthy money story.'



SID MICHELS,
Regional officer, Broome
ALAWA AND NGALAKAN
(Northern Territory) descent



JILL RUDEFORTH,
Regional officer, Broome
YAWURU WOMAN



Broome regional office, Western Australia

Although the Broome regional office has been a single person operation since it opened in October 2013, it has managed nevertheless to serve corporations across the Kimberley (including around Broome, Derby and Kununurra). Corporations in the north western part of Australia rely on Sid for corporate governance assistance and are encouraged to contact him at any time.

'It's true to say calling in on corporations in my region involves a fair bit of planning and travelling but that's how it is in the west,' said Sid. 'I'm always pleased to help with corporate governance training, answer questions about compliance or, in the case of new groups, talk about the benefits of moving to the CATSI Act.'

In September 2015 Sid assisted the Maraltadj Family Aboriginal Corporation, a small tourist venture near Kalumburu in the Kimberley, to make changes to its rule book. The directors were anxious to ensure that the corporation remained family-owned and controlled.

'Together we decided the best and simplest option was to change the eligibility rules for members and directors,' said Sid. 'And while we were doing this we also reviewed and refreshed the entire rule book, which included updating to the new ORIC condensed version which is easier to understand and follow.'

To meet the challenge of covering such a large area, it's also necessary sometimes to think outside the box. Sid's answer has been to develop good working relationships with others working in the Kimberley, in particular colleagues within PM&C.

For example, Sid channelled governance information that he wanted to give to corporations around Halls Creek through PM&C officers working in Halls Creek. 'The arrangement has worked well. Because of the inter-government cooperation, corporations are able to access ORIC services without really any difficulty.'

Over the past three years the demand for ORIC services has rapidly grown and, as this is expected to continue, another staff member joined the office in June 2016. Jill Rudeforth is a welcome and much needed extra pair of hands.

In April 2016 Sid was appointed to the acting role of regional manager in the Darwin office while Hannah Roe is on extended leave.



Arthur Hyde,
Regional manager, Perth

Perth regional office, Western Australia

For over four years ORIC's Perth regional office has been supporting corporations within the Greater Western Australia region, taking in the Pilbara to the north west and including the Gascoyne, Murchison and Kalgoorlie areas to the north and east.

Over 2015–16, the Perth regional office lent corporate governance support to a diverse range of corporations, including the Nyoongar Wellbeing and Sports Aboriginal Corporation.

In February 2016 the organisation transferred its registration from the *Associations Incorporation Act 1987* (WA) to the CATSI Act.

Under its new registration, the Nyoongar Wellbeing and Sports Aboriginal Corporation continues to help the Nyoongar population with physical activity and healthy lifestyle programs. 'A particular focus is improving the physical and mental health of needy members of the Nyoongar community,' said Arthur.

Based in Perth, it was required by the Australian Government to transfer its registration to the CATSI Act because it received government funding of \$500,000 or more (see 'Strengthening organisational governance' page 23).

The transfer process began on 21 September 2015 with the Perth regional manager meeting with the corporation to outline the necessary steps. This was soon followed up with:

- drafting the corporation's new rule book based on the organisation's previous constitution
- assisting with calling a general meeting by ensuring that the meeting notice was correctly drafted
- attending the general meeting to assist with the process of passing the required special resolutions
- providing support after the general meeting to check that the correct documents were sent to the Commissioner for Consumer Protection (part of the Western Australian Department of Commerce) and to ORIC respectively so that the registration could proceed
- ensuring that all post registration requirements were met.

Nyoongar's CEO, Ms Karyn Lisignoli, embraced the transfer and was grateful to Arthur for streamlining the process and making it such a smooth transition to the CATSI Act.

'I will continue to provide support to the new corporation,' said Arthur. 'As soon as practical I'll offer governance training to the directors as this is all part of the post registration/transfer process.'

For a six week period in April and May 2016 ORIC officer Edison Hui acted as the Perth regional manager.

ORA: ORIC Recruitment Assistance—helping corporations to recruit senior staff

In 2015–16 a total of 10 job assistance requests for senior management positions were received through ORA and nine senior staff positions were filled.

The Registrar started the ORIC recruitment assistance (ORA) service six years ago in 2010 to help corporations fill their senior positions with suitable applicants.

ORA helps build capacity by supporting corporations to follow a clearly defined process with established guidelines. The service covers recruitment, appointment and retention of suitable senior staff. It also encourages best practice.

Working with ORA, corporations are guided through each stage in the recruitment process, including:

- developing a job description package
- advertising the position
- evaluating applicants
- setting up an interview process
- preparing the selection report.

The service is free to eligible corporations (although they must meet their own advertising costs). Corporations also remain responsible for all decisions, including the final selection of the successful candidate and negotiating a suitable salary package.

FIGURE 9: Number of job assistance requests received through ORA and senior positions filled from 2010–11 to 2015–16



Note: Not all recruitment activities end with filling of the position.



Corporation jobs

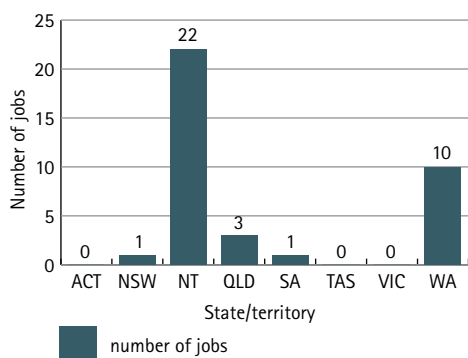
In 2015–16 there were 37 jobs advertised on the ORIC website

Since 2009 ORIC has offered corporations the chance to advertise their employment vacancies free of charge on the ORIC website.

Over the past seven years there have been in total 368 corporation jobs advertised on the website (including the 37 for 2015–16).



FIGURE 10: Corporation jobs advertised on the ORIC website by state/territory 2015–16



Handy recruitment guides

ORIC's series of short, handy recruitment guides further support corporations. Topics include:

- recruitment process
- how to draft a successful job ad
- how to draft selection criteria
- checklist for selecting suitable applicants
- sample interview questions.

Companionable to these are ORIC's employment guides on:

- managing performance
- grievance and dispute resolution
- termination of employment—small business employers
- termination of employment—larger employers.

Template employment contracts grouped by state and territory as well as summaries of employment conditions and information on relevant industry awards are also available. These documents were developed in 2010 in partnership with the Australian Government Solicitor and can be found on the ORIC website under 'Corporation jobs'.

LawHelp

In 2015–16 ORIC received 28 LawHelp applications in comparison to the 41 applications received last year. Of the 28 applications, 24 were approved by the LawHelp assessment panel and successfully referred to some of Australia's best law firms (this is the same number of referrals as last year).

LawHelp was started by the Registrar and a handful of volunteer lawyers in 2010. Its purpose was to give not-for-profit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations access to pro bono legal assistance.

Over the six years that the scheme has been running it has provided assistance on a range of legal matters, from basic tax issues to employment contracts, to interpreting the law.

There are a few matters however that it can't help with—for example, those already funded by government, such as native title, or legal action in any court or tribunal, or matters that could possibly conflict with the interests of the Australian Government.

LawHelp is also designed to help corporations only, not individuals.

In 2015 the scheme was extended to entities seeking assistance to transfer their registration to the CATSI Act. Until this change was made, only Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations registered under the CATSI Act were eligible to apply. Over 2015–16, eight organisations interested in transferring their registrations to the CATSI Act contacted LawHelp for advice.

As at 30 June 2016 there were 12 participating lawyers and law firms on the LawHelp panel:

- Allens
- Ashurst
- Australian Government Solicitor (AGS)
- Bradley Allen Love Lawyers
- Castledine Gregory Law & Mediation
- Clayton Utz
- DLA Piper Australia
- Herbert Smith Freehills
- HWL Ebsworth Lawyers
- Jackson McDonald Lawyers
- Minter Ellison
- Tress Cox Lawyers.

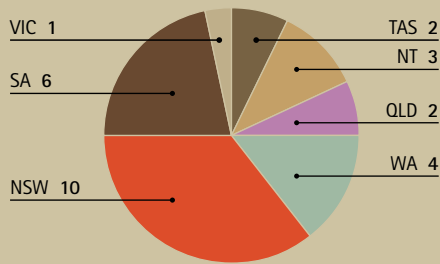
Eligible corporations and transferring entities can apply for legal assistance through LawHelp by sending their applications to ORIC's LawHelp secretariat for lodgment. Applications are then forwarded to the independent LawHelp assessment panel for action.

There are three independent lawyers who sit on the LawHelp assessment panel—the manager of pro bono services from the Australian Government Solicitor, a Victorian lawyer from the community services sector, and an Aboriginal lawyer with the Commonwealth Department of Health.



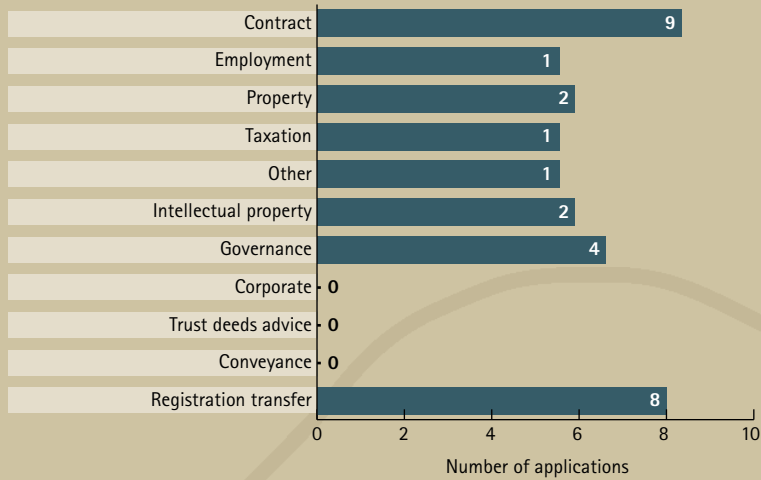
LawHelp

FIGURE 11: Number of LawHelp applications by state/territory 2015–16



Note: There were no applications from Australian Capital Territory.

FIGURE 12: Number of LawHelp applications by subject 2015–16





Australian Government
Office of the Registrar of
Indigenous Corporations

independentdirectory

matching skilled directors to
Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander corporations



SKILL *meets* **NEED**



<http://director.oric.gov.au>

Independent directory

Where skill meets need

ORIC's newest free service is an online matching system to help corporations choose an independent director that's right for them (that is, has suitable experience, knowledge and skills).

For some time the Registrar has recognised that more and more corporations want to appoint independent and qualified directors to their boards. This is especially true for corporations that run a range of activities, generate a high income and have a strong asset base.

Independent directors can bring specialist experience, knowledge and skills to a board.

In 2014 the Registrar entered into a partnership with the Business Council of Australia (BCA) to find an easy way for corporations to access suitably qualified candidates. The result was an online matching service, the *Independent directory*, which encourages direct engagement between corporations and suitable potential applicants.

The online service (accessible through the Registrar's website) was made live on 6 July 2015 and officially launched in Sydney on 21 October 2015 (see page 68).

In summary, the *Independent directory* is a free online service that gives:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations the chance to register their requirements for an independent director—for example, the particular skills they are seeking
- individuals the chance to register their interest in becoming an independent director, and to upload their qualifications, experience and skills.

Both corporations and candidates can choose how much information about themselves they wish to make public and at any time can edit what they post. When a potential match is found both the corporation and the candidate is automatically alerted and invited to initiate contact.

Training

In 2015–16 ORIC:

- provided corporate governance training to 865 people from 208 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations, organisations and new groups
- developed and successfully trialled a new two-day corporate governance workshop especially designed for directors and members of corporations in remote communities
- achieved over 88 per cent satisfaction rating from all those who completed an ORIC training course. Participants reported either a significant or very significant increase in their corporate governance knowledge.

Part of the Registrar's functions under section 658-1 of the CATSI Act is to provide public education programs to improve corporate governance standards among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations.

The Registrar's training programs not only increase corporate governance knowledge within corporations but also improve skill levels, efficiency and accountability.

Training calendar

Each year the Registrar publishes an online calendar showing the proposed dates and locations of Introduction to Corporate Governance (ICG) workshops and accredited training courses. The calendar comes out in May and lists the training dates, locations and venues for the following financial year. It's regularly updated and changes are made as necessary.

The screenshot shows the ORIC website's 'Training courses 2015-16' page. The header includes the Australian Government logo and navigation links like 'HOME', 'CATSI ACT', 'START A CORPORATION', 'RUN A CORPORATION', 'TRAINING', 'RESOURCES', and 'NEWS'. A search bar is also present. The main content area features a 'Browse Map of Australia' with a map of Australia and a list of training locations: Alice Springs, Cairns, Darwin, Horn Island, Longreach, Mililua, and Newman. There are also filters for 'Training by location', 'Training by course', and 'Training by date'. A sidebar on the left lists 'About our courses' including 'Introduction to Corporate Governance workshops', 'Two-day governance workshops', 'Building Strong Stores', 'Certificate IV in Business (Governance)', and 'Diploma of Business (Governance)'. A 'SEARCH FOR A CORPORATION' box is also visible.

Training courses for 2015–16 on the ORIC website

Types of training courses and workshops

The Registrar encourages eligible applicants to apply for corporate governance training and offers a range of choices. For example, ORIC offers residential and non-residential courses (part of its Managing in Two Worlds program) as well as workshops delivered in the community through its corporation-specific programs.

The Managing in Two Worlds program includes:

- ICG workshops held over three days
- Two-day corporate governance workshops (developed over 2015–16)
- Certificate IV in Business (Governance) delivered in four one-week blocks
- Diploma of Business (Governance) delivered in five one-week blocks.

CORPORATION-SPECIFIC TRAINING (CST)

is for individual corporations that request training especially tailored to their particular needs and circumstances.

CST workshops are usually held at a corporation's premises or a central venue within the community. The training is conducted over one or two days and can include:

- a **PRE-INCORPORATION DOORWAY (INCLUDING TRANSFERS AND AMALGAMATIONS)**: provides information on the requirements and processes for an organisation to become incorporated under the CATSI Act
- **RULE BOOK DESIGN AND RE-DESIGN**: helps new groups looking to register under the CATSI Act to develop a rule book or existing corporations to update and refresh their current rule book
- **SUPPORT AND MENTORING**: provides practical information in running a corporation, and often follows a special administration to help corporations avoid the problems that may have led to the special administration in the first place

- **BUILDING STRONG STORES (BSS)**: is a two-day program designed specifically for corporations that manage a community store
- **NATIVE TITLE MODULE**: assists corporations in the native title sector which face particular challenges and issues. The module is specifically for native title corporations and was further refined during 2015–16.

Introduction of the two-day governance workshop

In 2015–16 ORIC developed a new model of governance workshop to meet the training needs of corporations in remote regions. The Registrar understands that it's very difficult for members of corporations in these areas to attend the Introduction to Corporate Governance (ICG) workshops. The travel distances involved are too great and place an unreasonable burden on people from remote communities. Cultural/kinship issues and family commitments are also a consideration.

The new two-day governance workshop therefore is designed to take place in community. Feedback has indicated that this is the preferred option among people living remotely.

Trials of the new workshop conducted on Groote Eylandt, Northern Territory, and Karratha, Western Australia, were well received.

Overall training delivered

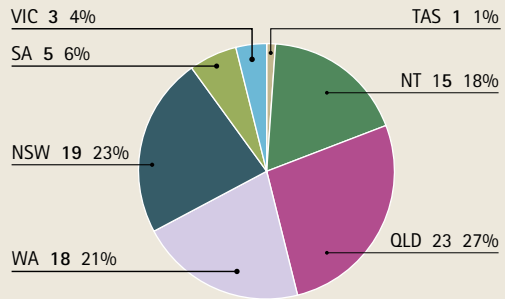
In 2015–16 ORIC exceeded its training targets for both the number of participants and corporations.

TABLE 14: Overall training delivered 2015–16

	TARGET	ACTUAL
Number of participants	750	865
Number of corporations	120	208
Participants that reported a significant or very significant increase in corporate governance knowledge	90%	88.15%

Note: Overall statistics are based on single counts of participants and corporations.

FIGURE 13: Training workshops and courses by state/territory 2015–16



Introduction to Corporate Governance (ICG)

The purpose of an ICG is to explain key concepts and principles of good corporate governance to the members and staff of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations. Participants are aware that they must complete an ICG before they can apply to do the accredited Certificate IV in Business (Governance).

ORIC delivered eight ICG workshops across Australia in 2015–16. A total of 219 people, representing 85 corporations, participated.



Role playing in many hats. Part of an ICG in November 2015 in Port Lincoln, South Australia

TABLE 15: ICG workshops 2015–16

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	NUMBER OF CORPORATIONS
Jul 2015	Alice Springs, NT	43	14
Aug 2015	Newman, WA	16	6
Sept 2015	Horn Island, QLD	13	5
Nov 2015	Port Lincoln, SA	8	6
Mar 2016	Cairns, QLD	60	26
Apr 2016	Perth, WA	34	13
May 2016	Mildura, VIC	14	6
Jun 2016	Tamworth, NSW	31	9
Total		219	85

Two-day governance workshop

As mentioned earlier, the two-day governance workshop is designed to cater to the needs of people in remote communities. It's essentially the same as an ICG but it's spread across two rather than three days, and incorporates greater awareness of cultural protocols.



Following successful trials, ORIC will roll out a program of two-day governance workshops in 2016–17.

Certificate IV in Business Governance

Part of a national accredited training package, the Certificate IV in Business (Governance) is for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who want to build on their corporate governance knowledge and management skills.

Although ORIC did not run a Certificate IV in Business (Governance) course over 2015–16, it plans to run one in 2016–17, starting in February 2017.

Diploma of Business (Governance)

Also part of ORIC's national accredited training package, the Diploma of Business (Governance) is intended for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who want to enhance and extend their corporate governance knowledge and management skills. Potential and existing corporation directors who have completed the Certificate IV in Business (Governance) are encouraged to apply.

In 2015–16, ORIC ran one Diploma of Business (Governance) course.

The course is deliberately designed to give participants the benefit of face-to-face tuition in five one-week residential blocks, spread across several months. Support from family and the community is essential as participants must not only spend time away from home but also complete course assignments in between study blocks.

To be accepted on to the course, it is important participants are committed to learning, willing to participate in group activities, and like sharing their knowledge and experience. Topics covered include:

- financial management
- understanding the role and responsibilities of directors
- maintaining and protecting culture
- communicating with the community
- policy development and strategic planning.

In ORIC's 2015–16 course, four of the study blocks were in Darwin and one was in Sydney. The Sydney location was chosen so students could enjoy such highlights as a visit to the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence (NCIE) in Redfern, and a tour of the South Sydney Rabbitohs' training facilities with former National Rugby League (NRL) star and charity ambassador for Souths Cares, Beau Champion.

The course drew participants from the Australian Capital Territory, the Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania. Fourteen students from 11 different Aboriginal corporations across Australia started the course and all 14 graduated.

TABLE 16: Diploma of Business (Governance) 2015

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER OF STUDENTS GRADUATED	NUMBER OF CORPORATIONS
Block 1: 22–26 June 2015	Darwin, NT	14	11
Block 2: 27–31 July 2015	Darwin, NT		
Block 3: 31 Aug– 4 Sept 2015	Darwin, NT		
Block 4: 12–16 Oct 2015	Sydney, NSW		
Block 5: 16–20 Nov 2015	Darwin, NT		



The Diploma of Business (Governance). In his address the Registrar said, 'My office wants to see Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations succeed as effective, sustainable and accountable organisations with good, capable leaders at their helm. Today's ceremony recognises a small group who has shown real commitment. Each person has strived to get the most out of a tough course and now joins a growing number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people working hard to make their corporations and communities stronger.'



The graduation ceremony was held in Darwin on 20 November 2015.



Above: At the training facilities at the South Sydney Rabbitohs.



Right: Former Rabbitoh, Beau Champion, giving a tour of the football club's training facilities.



CASE STUDY: Diploma of Business (Governance)

To further enrich the learning experience of the 14 students on the Diploma of Business (Governance) course 2015–16, ORIC held the fourth of the five study blocks in Sydney.

'We wanted to expose the students to some real life examples of good corporate governance in action,' the Registrar said.

The students visited the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence in Redfern (NCIE) where they saw first-hand how to make high quality programs. They also saw and appreciated the role that culture plays in engaging with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

On the following day, retired NRL star and Souths Cares ambassador, Beau Champion, took the students on a tour of the South Sydney Rabbitohs' headquarters and training facilities in Redfern. As he showed them around, Beau spoke about leadership, identity, decision making and resilience. Both the tour and the talk were major highlights. The students came away with a clear sense of the dedication and responsibility involved in becoming a successful NRL team player but also a leader and quality person in life.

A presentation by Commonwealth Bank senior executive, Philip McCabe, from the bank's Indigenous unit capped off the Sydney high points. The informal presentation, which showed good corporate governance models at work in the bank, sparked a lively discussion.

Each of the students thoroughly enjoyed the Sydney study block and said they gained invaluable insights from interacting with a range of different professional people. Following such positive feedback ORIC will try to include an interactive learning block when it next offers its Diploma of Business (Governance) course.

'I'm convinced that the interactive learning model fosters positive development,' said the Registrar. 'For this reason I'd like us to continue with it.'



Course work in progress



During the course, participants worked on a range of projects and activities as a whole group and in smaller groups.

The graduation ceremony for the Diploma of Business (Governance) students was held in Darwin on 20 November 2015. Ms Bilawara Lee, a Larrakia elder, conducted the welcome to country ceremony, *One Mob Different Country* provided the dancing while singer Ms Ali Mills performed two solos (*Arafura Pearl* and *Waltjim Bat Matilda*).

In congratulating the students the Registrar said, 'I know that the Diploma of Business (Governance) is a demanding course and you should each feel proud you stayed with it, even when the going was tough. You can now take what you have learned to benefit your communities and corporations.'

Susan Betts, a director from the Warnu-Manda Aboriginal Corporation based in Port Lincoln, South Australia, who also runs her own business said, 'Our corporation is about healing and connecting our people back to country. I enjoy helping to run the corporation. I feel fantastic that I have completed the Diploma of Business (Governance).'

In his address the Registrar said, 'My office wants to see Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations succeed as effective, sustainable and accountable organisations with good, capable leaders at their helm. Today's ceremony recognises a small group who has shown real commitment. Each person has strived to get the most out of a tough course and now joins a growing number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people working hard to make their corporations and communities stronger.'

Corporation-specific training (CST)

In 2015–16 ORIC delivered 72 separate CST workshops for 112 different corporations which attracted altogether 632 participants. The governance topic most often requested and consequently delivered at the workshops was 'the roles, responsibilities and legal duties of directors'. This was the same as for 2014–15.

The greatest number of workshops (27 per cent) were conducted in Queensland, followed by New South Wales (23 per cent) and Western Australia (21 per cent).



Learning about corporate governance in Tamworth, June 2016.



TABLE 17: CST workshops 2015-16

DATE	LOCATION	STATE	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	NUMBER OF CORPORATIONS
Jul 2015	Cairns	QLD	6	1
Jul 2015	Armidale	NSW	6	1
Jul 2015	Bairnsdale	VIC	12	1
Jul 2015	Townsville	QLD	9	1
Aug 2015	Cardiff	NSW	6	1
Aug 2015	Dareton	VIC	8	1
Aug 2015	Taree	NSW	7	1
Aug 2015	Guda Guda Community	WA	4	1
Sept 2015	Poruma Island	QLD	16	14
Sept 2015	Gunbalanya	NT	6	1
Sept 2015	Ramingining	NT	13	1
Sept 2015	Bunbury	WA	6	1
Sept 2015	Indulkana	SA	3	1
Sept 2015	Cessnock	NSW	7	1
Oct 2015	Broadwater	NSW	4	1
Oct 2015	Katoomba	NSW	8	1
Oct 2015	Port Augusta	SA	9	1
Oct 2015	South Hedland	WA	6	1
Nov 2015	Gunnedah	NSW	6	1
Nov 2015	Coffs Harbour	NSW	8	1
Nov 2015	Kyogle	NSW	4	1
Nov 2015	Maryborough	QLD	3	1
Nov 2015	Mooroolbool	QLD	3	1
Dec 2015	Rockhampton	QLD	5	1
Dec 2015	Hopevale	QLD	5	1
Dec 2015	Armidale	NSW	4	1
Dec 2015	Karratha	WA	12	1
Jan 2016	Brisbane	QLD	6	1
Jan 2016	Innisfail	QLD	7	1
Jan 2016	Eden	NSW	7	1
Feb 2016	Geraldton	WA	10	1
Feb 2016	Groote Eylandt	NT	13	2
Feb 2016	Broome	WA	10	1
Feb 2016	Maningrida	NT	10	1
Feb 2016	Charters Towers	QLD	5	1
Feb 2016	Broome	WA	9	1
Feb 2016	Gulliver	QLD	5	1
Feb 2016	Gulliver	QLD	3	1
Feb 2016	Santa Teresa	NT	5	1
Feb 2016	Townsville	QLD	7	1
Feb 2016	Wyndham	WA	5	1

DATE	LOCATION	STATE	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	NUMBER OF CORPORATIONS
Feb 2016	Fitzroy Crossing	WA	22	1
Mar 2016	Daly River	NT	3	1
Mar 2016	Karratha	WA	29	6
Mar 2016	Kununurra	WA	6	1
Mar 2016	Minyerri	NT	17	1
Mar 2016	Ellalong	NSW	2	1
Mar 2016	Alice Springs	NT	12	1
Marc 2016	Fregon	SA	12	1
Apr 2016	Wodonga	VIC	6	1
Apr 2016	Port Hedland	WA	6	1
Apr 2016	Devonport	Tas	6	1
Apr 2016	Kempsey	NSW	8	1
Apr 2016	Townsville	QLD	10	1
April 2016	Townsville	QLD	6	1
Apr 2016	Caboolture	QLD	7	1
Apr 2016	Chinchilla	QLD	20	1
May 2016	Cairns	QLD	36	12
May 2016	Yarrabah	QLD	5	1
May 2016	Mornington Island	QLD	8	1
May 2016	Mount Gambier	SA	4	1
May 2016	Karratha	WA	30	3
May 2016	Mount Liebig	NT	3	1
Jun 2016	Albury	NSW	7	1
Jun 2016	Cairns	QLD	20	9
Jun 2016	Broome	WA	8	1
Jun 2016	Bowraville	NSW	5	1
Jun 2016	Kalgoorlie	WA	2	1
Jun 2016	Caroona	NSW	4	1
Jun 2016	Port Hedland	WA	15	1
Jun 2016	Ramingining	NT	13	1
Jun 2016	Lajamanu	NT	12	1
TOTAL			632	112

Partnerships

In 2015–16 ORIC maintained training partnerships with:

- State Government of New South Wales
- State Government of Western Australia
- Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre (AILC).

Information and resources

To help new groups starting corporations under the CATSI Act and to support existing clients, the Registrar produces a variety of helpful publications and resources.

Website

The first stop for most clients is the Registrar's website www.oric.gov.au. It's the face of ORIC.

There are a number of resources and services available on the ORIC website designed to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations and groups, and to provide a free platform for sharing information and good news stories.

At its most fundamental level, the website is a central repository supporting the regulatory framework of the CATSI Act. It contains a wealth of information and houses essential tools, such as the public Register of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporations, the Register of Disqualified Officers, and a link to a secure companion site that allows corporations to lodge reports and forms electronically.

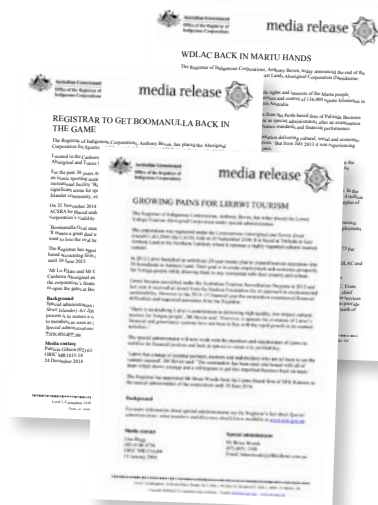
Over 2015–16 every effort was made to improve the visual appeal and easy use of the website in keeping with Commonwealth standards for accessibility. As most corporations, particularly those in remote locations, rely on ORIC's website for up-to-date information and resources, maintaining the website to a high standard was a priority.

This year the Registrar added to the range of 'free services' accessible through the ORIC website, the *Independent directory*. This new online service, devised by the Registrar's office, puts corporations in touch with qualified independent candidates to serve on their boards. The service went live on 6 July 2015 and was officially launched on 21 October 2015 (see pages 51 and 68).

Media releases

The Registrar's practice is to issue regular media releases on significant developments or events affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations. These media releases are sent to journalists, stakeholders and interested parties.

Over 2015–16 the Registrar issued 25 media releases which are available on the ORIC website.



The *Independent directory* which encourages direct engagement between corporations and potential candidates.

Fact sheets

The Registrar also produces a range of popular fact sheets which are updated as required. Each gives a quick overview of a particular topic but shouldn't be regarded as a substitute for legal advice. Clients who are after more detail are advised to look at the CATSI Act or consult a lawyer. Current titles are:

- Amalgamation—information for existing corporations
- A corporation's rule book: what you need to know (updated October 2015)
- Becoming a corporation member
- Complaints involving corporations
- Contact person and secretaries
- Corporation size and reporting
- Dispute resolution
- Disqualification from managing corporations under the CATSI Act (updated October 2015)
- Duties of directors and other officers
- Information sheet for PBCs
- Lodge online
- Meetings for directors (new title published June 2016)
- Minutes of meetings (new title published June 2016)
- Meetings for members (new title published June 2016)
- Members' rights
- Register of members and former members
- Related party financial benefits (updated March 2016)
- Special administrations: what funding agencies, creditors and employees should know (updated June 2016)
- Special administrations: what members and directors should know (updated June 2016)
- The CATSI Act and the Corporations Act—some differences (updated May 2016)
- What the CATSI Act means for funding bodies

In the Registrar's effort to ensure that corporations have the right skills and knowledge to operate effectively and efficiently, three new fact sheets were produced during the year and six existing fact sheets were updated, as indicated above.



Spotlight on

Over the years 'spotlight on' has become a familiar colourful feature on the Registrar's homepage. Its purpose is to draw attention to the various activities and achievements of corporations registered under the CATSI Act. A new 'spotlight on' is published on the first working day of each month. While the Registrar actively encourages corporations to send in their own ideas and stories, ORIC staff also assist with writing articles and gathering photographs.



July 2015

Weaving grass into gold
Dugalunji Aboriginal Corporation



August 2015

Driving on
Ngarliyarndu Bindirri Aboriginal Corporation



September 2015

More than a helping hand
Aboriginal Associations Management Centre



October 2015

Looking back to go forward
Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages



November 2015

Practical help puts lives back on track
Nguumambiny Indigenous Corporation



December 2015

Where accreditation is due
Ord Valley Aboriginal Health Service Aboriginal Corporation



January 2016

Commercially engaged

Ingkerreke Commercial Pty Ltd (a division of Ingkerreke Outstations Resources Services Aboriginal Corporation)



February 2016

Living legacy in watercolours

Ngurratjuta Iltja Ntjarra—Many Hands art centre (operated by Ngurratjuta/Pmara Ntjarra Aboriginal Corporation)



March 2016

Switch from grid to solar

Pilbara Meta Maya Regional Aboriginal Corporation



April 2016

Innovative natural resource management

Arafura Swamp Rangers Aboriginal Corporation



May 2016

The Sunrise Way

Sunrise Health Service Aboriginal Corporation



June 2016

Minimbah school back better than ever

Minimbah Pre-school, Primary School Aboriginal Corporation

ORIC Oracle newsletter

The *ORIC Oracle* newsletter is for all registered corporations, stakeholders and interested people (general subscribers).

It's published four times a year (in August, November, February and May), and is distributed both electronically and by post, as preferred by recipients.

Each edition adopts a different theme. Over 2015–16 these were: 'Does your rule book need a spring clean?' (August 2015), 'Complaints and how to manage them' (November 2015), 'Independent directors: can add a skill set' (February 2016) and 'Selecting senior staff' (May 2016).

The *ORIC Oracle* newsletter communicates practical information to corporations (its target audience) in a pictorially attractive, easy-to-read magazine style. It also includes important compliance prompts, such as reminding corporations about key dates to hold their annual general meetings and to lodge their annual general reports.

Over 2015–16 the number of subscribers rose slightly and a few more corporations chose to receive the *ORIC Oracle* by electronic means.

Both html and pdf versions of each edition are available at www.oric.gov.au under 'News'.

Statistics and analysis

One of the Registrar's core activities is the regular compilation and distribution of statistical information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations—for example:

- complaints involving corporations—issued six-monthly
- corporations entering external administration—issued annually
- top 500 corporations—issued annually.

All reports are available on www.oric.gov.au.



The top 500 report

The seventh report in the top 500 series, *The top 500 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations 2013–14*, was released in December 2015.

Like its predecessors, the seventh top 500 report collates and compares data provided by corporations as part of their annual reporting.

Key findings were:

- The combined income of the top 500 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations for 2013–14 was \$1.74 billion (compared to \$1.71 billion in 2012–13, an increase of 1.9 per cent—behind nominal growth in GDP of 2.5 per cent in 2013–14).
- The average annual growth rate of corporation income over the last decade was 9.5 per cent.
- In comparison to 2012–13 the average income of the top 500 corporations in 2013–14 increased from \$3.42 million to \$3.48 million.

The featured case study was Ingkerreke Outstations Resource Services Aboriginal Corporation, based in Alice Springs, Northern Territory. This corporation looks after 50 outstations and homelands across central Australia, providing housing, and municipal and essential services. In 2004 it set up Ingkerreke Commercial mainly to make money. The aim was to generate an income in order to allow for better services to be provided for the people on the homelands. It was a bold idea but one that worked. Today Ingkerreke Commercial is a well-established construction, metal fabrication and maintenance enterprise offering training and employment opportunities to local Aboriginal men and women. This corporation is one of 201 in the top 500 that improved its ranking (based on income) in 2013–14.





Professor Marcia Langton AM and Mr Russell Taylor, keynote speakers at the inaugural conference. Photo courtesy of Simon Fox, Deakin University.



ORIC's Christian Lugnan with panel member Ellery Blackman. Photo courtesy of Simon Fox, Deakin University.

Events

The Registrar and his staff also presented at various forums and events throughout the year, most notably:

- Indigenous Accounting and Business Conference at the RACV City Club in Melbourne on 2–3 September 2015
- Independent*directory* launch at the EY Centre in Sydney on 21 October 2015
- NSW Prescribed Body Corporate and Traditional Owner corporation workshop on 22 May 2016
- National Native Title Conference at the Darwin Convention Centre on 1–3 June 2016

Indigenous Accounting and Business Conference

On 2–3 September 2015 the Deakin Business School held the inaugural Indigenous Accounting and Business Conference in Melbourne. The theme was 'accounting as a tool of empowerment for Indigenous success' and its purpose was to encourage accountancy as a first choice profession. The number of trained accountants among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has always been low due to historical, cultural and social barriers.

There were a number of keynote speakers, including Professor Marcia Langton, one of Australia's leading Aboriginal scholars and Foundation Chair in Australian Indigenous Studies at the University of Melbourne, and Russell Taylor, Principal of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS).

ORIC regional manager and certified practising accountant (CPA), Christian Lugnan, also addressed the conference. Christian spoke about his own personal experience as an Aboriginal man with extensive experience in accountancy and business.

'The conference was a fantastic opportunity to meet with like-minded people who have an interest in accounting and want to see more people get involved,' said Christian. 'It was a great opportunity to discuss ways to increase access and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have a level of interest in the profession and want to take the next step.'

Over 100 delegates attended, including many Indigenous people or their representatives from New Zealand, Canada and the United States.

Official launch of the Independent *directory*

The Independent *directory* is the result of a joint initiative between the Registrar and the Business Council of Australia (BCA) to boost the governance and effectiveness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations (see page 51).

The Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Senator Nigel Scullion, officially launched the new service with Michael Rose, Managing Partner, Allens and Chairman of the BCA Indigenous Engagement Taskforce. The function was held at the EY Centre in Sydney on 21 October 2015 and was well attended by representatives from corporations, individuals currently serving as independent directors, stakeholders in the Indigenous sector, and many representatives from BCA member companies looking to support their staff take on independent director roles.

In collaboration with the BCA, the Registrar's office devised the online matching system which allows corporations looking for suitably qualified independent directors to connect with possible candidates.



Uncle Chicka Dixon performed the welcome to country.



The official launch of the Independent *directory* was held at the EY Centre in Sydney on 21 October 2015.



After introductions Donna Ah Chee, Bernie Yates, Graham Paterson and Bill Gray AM spoke about their experiences as an independent director and a CEO reporting to an independent director.



The Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Senator Nigel Scullion, officially launched the Independent *directory*, which is a response to the need for corporations to have a simple way to find suitably qualified independent directors to serve on their boards.



Senior managers from EY discuss the directory with the Registrar. 'Independent directors can bring a range of benefits to corporations, such as filling a specific skills gap on a board, helping to build capacity, developing stronger external relationships, and assisting in matters where other directors may be conflicted,' said the Registrar.

NSW Prescribed Body Corporate and Traditional Owner corporation workshop

In May 2016 the Registrar was invited by NTSCORP to present at the NSW Prescribed Body Corporation and Traditional Owner Corporation Workshop held in Tweed Heads, NSW.

Held over two days, the workshop was very well attended by corporation directors. The workshop focused on governance training, corporate administration procedures, management of native title benefits, compliance with the CATSI Act, financial administration and structuring entities.

The Registrar provided a range of statistical information about the native title sector gathered through corporation reports to ORIC.

National Native Title Conference

The Registrar attended the annual National Native Title Conference which this year was held at the Darwin Convention Centre on 1–3 June 2016. The theme was 'strong culture, strong country, strong future'.

The conference was co-convened by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and the Northern Land Council (NLC). The hosts were the Larrakia people, Darwin's traditional owners.

Building on last year's presentation (independence in the boardroom) the Registrar spoke about the importance of linking skilled people from the private sector with corporations looking for suitably qualified independent directors, not only to improve their governance standards but also to drive innovation and to help harness business opportunities.

Following his address the Registrar turned to a panel of four currently serving independent directors who he had invited to accompany him on the stage. As well as taking questions from the audience they discussed their first-hand experiences. Questions ranged from skills needed for the role, benefits for corporations, and lessons learnt on the way. The session was positively received by everyone who came.

By regularly attending the native title conference the Registrar capitalises on sharing information and also benefits from the networking opportunities that the event affords.



The Registrar addressing the native title conference at the Darwin Convention Centre backed by a panel of current independent directors, comprising (left to right) Bernie Yates, Graham Paterson, Rick Callaghan and Priscilla Collins.