The Way Ahead for Aboriginal People (TWAAP) Mentoring Program

Program Guidelines
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1. **Background**

*The Way Ahead for Aboriginal* People mentoring program began in August 2004 to improve the retention and successful completion of Aboriginal people undertaking apprenticeships and traineeships in NSW.

The NSW Department of Education and Communities, State Training Services, Aboriginal Services funds the program. The program provides a unique service supporting retention and completion outcomes for Aboriginal people undertaking vocational education through an apprenticeship or traineeship pathway in NSW.

The *Way Ahead for Aboriginal People* mentoring program is a **FREE** service that can be voluntary requested by an Aboriginal learner to assist them in their apprenticeship or traineeship, or by an employer of an Aboriginal learner.

* Aboriginal includes Torres Strait Islanders

2. **The Way Ahead for Aboriginal People Mentoring Program**

*Way Ahead for Aboriginal People* mentoring program assists Aboriginal learners throughout the term of their apprenticeship or traineeship with the objective of the Aboriginal learner completing their workplace training and gaining a Nationally Recognised Qualification. Other benefits for the Aboriginal learner may include life skill development which can be used throughout their working career.

State Training Services, Aboriginal Services allocates a suitable Aboriginal Mentor who guides and supports the Aboriginal learner throughout to completion of their chosen vocation. The mentoring can also assist the Aboriginal learner to cope with the personal, social and cultural pressures that could occur during their apprenticeship or traineeship.

*Way Ahead for Aboriginal People* mentoring program has a co-ordinating committee to support and provide advice on the progress and performance of *Way Ahead for Aboriginal People* mentoring program.

The committee will meet regularly to ensure:

- The objective and purpose of the program remains current and relevant
- The outcomes are being achieved
- Review guidelines and operational procedures
- Review program financial reports

State Training Services, Aboriginal Services will appoint a program coordinator, who is responsible for:

- Coordinating the program on a state-wide basis
- Ensuring state-wide coverage by mentors
- Matching the Aboriginal learner with a suitable mentor
- Reporting on mentor feedback data and reports
- Mentor supervision
- Overseeing mentor invoicing and payments, operational processes and procedures
3. Mentoring Approach

The mentoring approach can be defined as an enhanced mentoring service. It facilitates mentoring support for those who need it and over time will strongly encourage Aboriginal learners to take full control and responsibility for their mentoring.

The approach recognises that many Aboriginal people live and work between cross cultural or multicultural lifestyles and that they may need to be assisted by culturally sensitive mentors. The program provides Aboriginal learners with an Aboriginal mentor who is recognised and accepted by the Aboriginal community.

4. Mentoring Purpose

The purpose of The Way Ahead for Aboriginal People mentoring program is to achieve the best possible retention and completion outcomes for Aboriginal people undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship.

The goal is to keep Aboriginal learners on their vocational pathway to the completion of their formal accredited training. The mentoring will assist and encourage an environment where all learners can achieve their personal best and develop to their full potential.

The Way Ahead for Aboriginal People mentoring program will encourage learners to expand their skills in dealing with different situations. By being exposed to this process, learners are likely to adopt more flexible and innovative ways of working, therefore improving their organisation and performance skills.

5. Mentoring Aims

Mentoring will provide a service that:

- Ensures Aboriginal learners are involved in a process that identifies, in advance, challenges that could have an impact on retention in their training and/or employment.
- Assist in identifying solutions and plans to prevent and overcome challenges
- Provides learners with a role model who can assist to achieve their employment goals
- Fosters organisational learning and strengthens the desired learner’s behaviours
- Supports existing Aboriginal learners to be role models for new apprentices and trainees
- Assists learners to increase self-awareness of their strengths and weaknesses
- Enables learners to identify options for development and career progression
- Assists learners to develop new skills and insights
- Increases the learner’s confidence, happiness, self-esteem, enthusiasm and commitment
- Facilitates team work and mutual support
- Assists in breaking down the barriers between Aboriginal learner’s, their employer and workplace
6   Key to Success

Mentoring works best when the mentor and learner both contribute to the process. The learner should eventually take the lead and assume responsibility; however the mentor must initially drive it. Both parties must take the mentoring role seriously and be prepared to give the time commitment and involvement for success.

From the Aboriginal learner’s viewpoint, The Way Ahead for Aboriginal People mentoring program is a strongly supported voluntary program. State Training Services, Aboriginal Services is responsible for all mentor contacts with Aboriginal learners. Mentors will report to the Way Ahead for Aboriginal People Program Coordinator.

Mentors will provide the Program Coordinator with reports on each mentor visit conducted. In the case of issues relating to supervision, scope of work, training, or regulative matters, the Program Coordinator will discuss the issues of concern with the employer or relevant stakeholder. If this does not resolve the issue, a formal monitoring visit will be undertaken by a relevant State Training Services delegated officer. All information will be dealt with the utmost confidentiality between the mentor and the learner, however if a situation arises that requires mandatory reporting, the Program Coordinator will be required to take further appropriate action.

The Way Ahead for Aboriginal People mentor will need to build an understanding of the learner's environment and factors that could have positive and negative influences on the training arrangement. The mentor will provide the learner with their contact details so they can be contacted if a situation arises or workplace support is required. The learner or mentor can also contact either State Training Services Centre staff or Aboriginal Services staff for assistance at any time.

7   The Benefits of Workplace Mentoring

It is expected that Aboriginal learners participating in The Way Ahead for Aboriginal People mentoring program will obtain some or all of the following benefits:

- The help needed to retain and complete their training
- Increased self-confidence
- Greater job satisfaction
- Development of professional direction
- Increased networking opportunities
- Increased awareness of possible future career opportunities in leadership and management roles
- Improved interpersonal and communication skills, and
- Encouragement to identify and participate in training opportunities and development programs or relevant work experience

Employers and host employers will benefit by having enthusiastic staff that remain in their jobs and with their businesses longer. Mentoring will improve State Training Services - Aboriginal Services delivery to employers and Aboriginal clients.
8 Recruitment and Selection of Mentors

State Training Services - Aboriginal Services employs casual mentors under The Way Ahead for Aboriginal People mentoring program.

8.1 Eligibility

To be eligible for employment as a casual mentor with The Way Ahead for Aboriginal People mentoring program the applicant needs to meet the following selection criteria:

- Aboriginality (proof of Aboriginality required)
- Current Drivers Licence and willingness to travel
- Reliable Registered Vehicle (full comprehensive insurance required)
- Computer, internet access, and record keeping skills
- Good communication and liaison skills
- Willingness to attend The Way Ahead for Aboriginal People Mentoring workshop
- Mentoring experience
- Community Involvement (Having a good rapport within Aboriginal communities the mentor wishes to Mentor in)
- Provide a current Working with Children clearance number

Desirable:
- Completed a certificate in Mentoring

Further to this, the applicant would learn and adhere to the Departments Code of Conduct, be able to represent State Training Services - Aboriginal Services at the workplace level and provide a current working with children clearance number. www.newcheck.kids.nsw.gov.au

8.2 Application

An application can be accessed at www.training.nsw.gov.au/aboriginal_services

The applicant will then need to navigate to The Way Ahead for Aboriginal People web link.

It is a condition of The Way Ahead for Aboriginal People program that the mentors are an Aboriginal Person. Aboriginality is a genuine occupational qualification and is, authorised by section 14 of the Anti-Discrimination Act, 1977.

It is an offence for a person convicted of a serious sex offence to apply for these positions.

8.3 Application Process

State Training Services, Aboriginal Services have a committee assessing all eligible mentor applications for The Way Ahead for Aboriginal People mentoring program.

(Eligible – has submitted all required documentation, meets all criteria and attends The Way Ahead for Aboriginal Mentoring program workshop)
8.4 Employment as a Mentor

Once an applicant has been successfully recruited they will be advised in writing by the program coordinator.

All new mentors will be required to have an induction with the Program Coordinator or staff representative. New mentors will then attend buddy mentoring sessions; the 1st will be conducted by the Coach/staff representative with the new mentor present; up to 3 sessions will be conducted by the new mentor with that Coach/staff representative present. Once the mentoring sessions have been completed the Coach/staff representative will provide feedback to the new mentor.

Each new mentor will be assigned a Coach who will be available to answer any questions or give advice to the new mentor when needed.

Under the casual mentor’s employment they will need to adhere to the role statement as follows;

1. Maintain regular contact with learners (apprentices or trainees) that are allocated (including phone, face to face meetings) as per The Way Ahead for Aboriginal People mentoring program guidelines
2. Complete all mentor paperwork and ensure all details are accurate, including:
   - All mentoring forms and reports
   - Administrative paperwork (Such as payroll claims & travel claims)
3. Assist State Training Services, Aboriginal Services to identify learner’s goals and objectives and to work with the learner to develop a plan of action to address these
4. Assist State Training Services, Aboriginal Services to review the learner performance and progress
5. Notify State Training Services, Aboriginal Services of any challenges throughout the learner’s apprenticeship or traineeship that may impact on their successful completion
6. Ensure appropriate confidential requirements of matters discussed and information provided by the learner and employers in the mentoring process. However if there is a situation that requires mandatory reporting the information will be notified to the program coordinator for further assessment and action.
7. Participate in the mentoring program evaluation
8. Promptly respond to requests for information and data from the program coordinator on their mentoring arrangements
9. Inform the program coordinator of any changes of personal details, vehicle details and professional details
10. Attend workshops/meetings when required
11. Attend The Way Ahead for Aboriginal People mentoring Workshop prior to employment
12. Attend any mentoring program reviews, if possible
13. Be a positive ambassador for The Way Ahead for Aboriginal People mentoring program
14. Advise the Program Coordinator if they are no longer able to undertake mentoring activities
## 9 Mentor Performance Areas - Mentor Expectations

State Training Services, Aboriginal Services mentors will be expected to:

| Manage the partnership | 1. Use effective communication styles to develop trust, confidence and rapport.  
2. Make agreements on how the mentoring relationship will be conducted, including the amount of time involved by both parties confidentiality of information, and scope of challenges to be covered.  
3. Provide advice and guidance on challenges encountered by the learner, especially those that could impact on their employment and training arrangement. |
| Encourage and empower | 1. Encourage the learner to make decisions, and take responsibility for courses of action or solutions under consideration.  
2. Act as a suitable role model  
3. Provide clear, objective and constructive feedback to the learner, in a timely and appropriate manner. |
| Nurture | 1. Promote personal growth and development.  
2. Assist the learner in their self-reliance while providing an appropriate level of support.  
3. Share personal experience and knowledge with the learner to assist in progress towards goals. |
| Teach | 1. Help the learner assess their current level of competence and set targets to improve their performance  
2. Create scenarios which will challenge the learner providing them with a knowledge to deal with situations they may encounter in their career and personal life |
| Offers Mutual trust and respect | 1. Accept differences in culture, values, interests, goals and priorities  
2. Deal with each situation professionally  
3. Respect the rights of others |
| Responsive | 1. Address the needs of the learner within a timely and responsive manner, in accordance with the mentoring agreement  
2. Advise the program coordinator if they are unable to perform the allocated duties |
10 Aboriginal Learner Dependence

The mentor should not try to make the Aboriginal learner dependent upon them or prevent them from undertaking their own problem-solving.

The mentor should not overprotect the learner but encourage them to learn from their own mistake/s. Once the learner has reached a stage where they have developed their independence the mentor will start to minimise the mentoring visits with the learner.

Good mentoring is about the learner building self-independence throughout their apprenticeship or traineeship, however when a challenge arises they can re-engage their mentor for support.

State Training Services - Aboriginal Services will liaise with mentors on a case by case basis to ensure that mentoring being delivered is effective and beneficial to the learner.

11 Culturally Sensitive

An Aboriginal mentor needs to have an understanding of the following challenges and their relevance. These challenges may arise throughout the mentoring process and it would be expected that the mentor would be culturally sensitive when dealing with these challenges to be able to assist the Aboriginal learner:

- Aboriginal deaths in custody
- Aboriginal history/reconciliation
- Location
- Stolen generations
- Cultural identity/cultural responsibilities/family structure
- Racism
- Languages
- Lateral Violence
- Intergenerational trauma

Not all of these challenges are relevant to every learner but many relate to these challenges through family ties or other associations.
12 Conclusion of the Mentor Relationship

It is acknowledged by State Training Services, Aboriginal Services that the final phase of the mentoring relationship needs to be managed effectively. The duration of the mentoring relationship is in relation to the term of the training arrangement. Once a learner is no longer under an apprenticeship or traineeship contract, the mentoring service is to conclude. Mentors are encouraged to liaise with the program coordinator for more information that may assist their learner.

State Training Services, Aboriginal Services fund other programs that can offer further assistance to learners needs, they are as follows:

**New Careers for Aboriginal People (NCAP)**

The NCAP program aims to increase the participation of Aboriginal people in the labour market by identifying, creating and supporting opportunities for sustainable education, training and employment.

https://www.training.nsw.gov.au/programs_services/funded_other/acp/ncap.html

**Aboriginal Enterprise Development Officer (AEDO)**

The AEDO program aims to increase the confidence and expertise of Aboriginal people to become self-employed and to encourage an entrepreneurial culture within Aboriginal communities.

https://www.training.nsw.gov.au/programs_services/funded_other/acp/aedop.html

Realistically, both the learner and mentor need to be open to the possibility that the mentoring relationship isn’t achieving its desired objectives. If this is the case the learner and mentor need to articulate and address the issues, the mentor would then be required to inform the program coordinator.

13 Quality Assurance

The Way Ahead for Aboriginal People quality assurance processes are required to ensure a common understanding and consistency among mentors in the performance of this service.

Periodical audits with employers and learners will be carried out by the Program Coordinator or staff representative.

13.1 Record Keeping Requirements

The importance of record keeping and providing program data including quality information is essential for *The Way Ahead for Aboriginal People* mentoring program.

It is a requirement for mentors to complete all documentation accurately that is assigned by State Training Services, Aboriginal Services. The program coordinator or representative will liaise with mentors to clarify information on a regular basis.
13.2 Evaluation

State Training Services, Aboriginal Services is committed to continual improvement processes to ensure *The Way Ahead for Aboriginal People* mentoring program meets the needs of Aboriginal learners. Evaluations are an integral tool in gaining feedback of the mentoring services provided by mentors.

The following evaluations will be conducted:

Six monthly evaluation of mentoring
The program coordinator will send the Aboriginal learner and employer a Six Month Evaluation Form to be completed voluntarily by either party.

Completion of mentoring
The program coordinator will send the Aboriginal learner and employer a Completion Evaluation Form to be completed voluntarily by either party.

13.3 Other Funding Sources

*The Way Ahead for Aboriginal People* mentoring program is designed to complement other initiatives that may already exist to support the learner.

State Training Services, Aboriginal Services will not make a payment to an individual as a mentor that is known to receive additional funding for mentoring from any Commonwealth, NSW or Local Government programs.

Mentors will need to advise the program coordinator as soon as possible, if they are receiving payment that duplicates *The Way Ahead for Aboriginal People* mentoring program.

13.4 Other Resources

Induction website for new staff (link)


14 Department Contact

Aboriginal Services

For further information regarding *The Way Ahead for Aboriginal People* program contact:

Phone: 02 6884 5463
Fax: 02 6881 6179
Email: [sts-as@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:sts-as@det.nsw.edu.au)

Postal Address: NSW Department of Education & Communities
State Training Services, Aboriginal Services
PO Box 1064
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*The Way Ahead for Aboriginal people mentoring program is funded and administered by the Department of Education and Communities, State Training Services, Aboriginal Services.*