National Indigenous Engineering Summit

Final Communique

The purpose of the National Indigenous Engineering Summit was to begin the process of achieving parity participation by Indigenous people in all aspects of the engineering profession, and in particular as tertiary-trained engineers. It has identified principles and strategies that, if adopted by all stakeholders, we believe will lead to parity in graduations by 2030.

To this end, the Summit is promoting a range of Indigenous pathways into engineering, engaging with a broad range of stakeholders, and identifying opportunities for collaboration, and thus building on and harmonising existing diverse activities that are already proving successful at raising Indigenous participation.

A preparatory workshop in September 2014 identified areas for further development, and created the following work streams:

1. Providing for more flexible pathways into the engineering profession;

2. Improving science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education for Indigenous students starting in primary schools;

3. Developing secondary education support programs for Indigenous students and promoting an interest in engineering and STEM studies;

4. Developing tertiary education adaptations and support programs to assist Indigenous students to complete engineering studies.

Consistent themes have been identified across these working groups that were developed further at the Summit. These themes are:

1. There are many existing flexible pathways and diverse support systems that are poorly articulated, not well understood, and not effectively utilised. The challenge is to coordinate these efficiently and effectively so they can be utilised as intended.

2. It is essential to support Indigenous people to develop, control, and deliver STEM teaching and support services, using respectful cultural partnerships as the vehicle.

3. Indigenous families, communities, and role models are central to the delivery of any successful support strategy for all current and future Indigenous students on a STEM journey.

4. Tertiary STEM education in particular, but STEM education in general, needs to incorporate an Indigenous perspective in the curricula.

5. Policy and program development should be based on trials, evidence and data.

6. All stakeholders, including employers, need to take a collaborative approach to improve the success of these initiatives.