



## The Benevolent Society Social Issues Paper 9

# Social and economic inclusion of Indigenous people

**We recognise the ongoing impact of the harsh injustices and exclusion inflicted on Indigenous Australians since colonisation. We value Indigenous culture and will be respectful and inclusive of Indigenous views and needs across our organisation and actively support the visions and aspirations of Indigenous people.**

We recognise that Indigenous people are the original inhabitants of Australia at the time of European arrival and settlement and that the descendants of the original inhabitants are the present-day custodians of the land.

We acknowledge that colonisation led to dispossession, alienation and impoverishment and that successive government policies have resulted in entrenched social and economic exclusion.

We acknowledge the impact of forced removal of children from their families and the continued impact of this on Indigenous communities.

We respect and value the importance of Indigenous culture and the rights of Indigenous people to self-determination, equitable access to resources and services and to full participation in the community.

We support reconciliation between all Australians, which necessarily means promoting the economic, political, and social inclusion of Indigenous Australians and upholding their rights, needs and aspirations.

We recognise our responsibility to be inclusive of Indigenous views and needs in our services and programs and to support the positive visions and aspirations of Indigenous people.

### What should be done?

By actively ensuring our organisational policies, practices and culture are respectful and inclusive of Indigenous Australians we can make an important contribution to the social and economic inclusion of Indigenous people. To do this we will:

- promote understanding of and respect for Indigenous issues and culture across our organisation
- formally acknowledge traditional Indigenous custodians at the opening of meetings and recognise Indigenous days of celebration and mourning
- consult with local Indigenous communities about the services and programs we deliver in their communities and incorporate relevant Indigenous perspectives
- implement The Benevolent Society Aboriginal Employment Strategy to attract and support retention of Indigenous staff.

- promote a two way transfer of knowledge and skills between Indigenous communities and our organisation, and the transfer of knowledge and skills between our Indigenous staff and our non-Indigenous staff.
- support Indigenous organisations that are working to deliver culturally appropriate services to their communities and seek opportunities to work in partnership with them
- use appropriate opportunities to advocate for and uphold the rights of Indigenous Australians and take actions which create a more just and fair Australia

## Sources of information

ABS/AIHW, 2005: The Health and Well-being of Australia's Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Australian Institute of Criminology, 2006. Child Protection and Indigenous Status.

National Enquiry into the Separation of Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families, 1997. Bringing Them Home.

Productivity Commission, Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision, 2005. Overcoming Indigenous disadvantage. Key Indicators Overview.

United Nations Human Rights Council, 2006. UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People.

## Social Issues Papers

The Benevolent Society works with vulnerable individuals, families and communities who face a wide range of difficult issues which affect their wellbeing and their social and economic participation. Our Social Issues Agenda identifies 12 broad issues that are related to social and economic inclusion, and our series of issues papers explores these challenges and some potential solutions. To read the full series of social issues papers go to [www.bensoc.org.au](http://www.bensoc.org.au)

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