

# FINANCIAL STANDARD ONLINE

## Indigenous Australians offered chance to Clime career ladder

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By Matt Woodington | In Investment

Clime Asset Management will welcome an Aboriginal trainee into its business next month, with a view to helping them develop into an investment professional and prompt other firms to follow their lead and change perceptions within the industry.

Clime has signed up to a school based traineeship programme run by the [Aboriginal Employment Strategy](#) (AES), which aims to help young indigenous people find employment and build careers.

The programme has been running since 2002 and counts the big four banks, Qantas, Telstra, Woodside, Nine Entertainment Group and Westfield among its partners.

Targeting year 10 students, AES has placed over 360 trainees across Australia, working in industries ranging from aviation, governance services and the banking sector, though not other areas of financial services.

"If we can be the poster boy for our industry and used by AES to spread that message then it could lead to a lot of industry jobs for Aboriginals and open new doors for them," said Michael Kloeckner, director, Clime Asset Management.

Clime, which only employs 15 people will choose its first trainee to begin in November, developing them for one year and then if there is a mutual interest, helping them through further education and offering them a full time position.

"What draws us to this is that it's employment. It's not giving them a fish, it's teaching them how to fish," said Kloeckner, who helped establish the black economic empowerment initiative during his time at Citibank.

AES continues to mentor trainees during their time in the workplace to increase the chances of them being retained by the employer. Last year it had 113 graduates from the programme, 75% of which were given the chance to stay on and start their careers.

Kloeckner sees opportunities for trainees to work either as analysts or on the sales and distribution side, depending on their skill set and hopes this will create awareness among young Aboriginal people that they can succeed in this industry.

"There's a ripple effect in their families with elders and parents who have been severely disadvantaged and might have well entrenched mindsets," he said.

"But their children being mentored and employed in these environments can thrive and bring home a different message to the one their parents have been propagating.

"That's the most powerful aspect, if you employ one then you might benefit ten."

AES' vision is 'a career opportunity for every indigenous Australian', it is a non-profit specialist recruitment agency that aims to deliver not just the benefit of placements to the trainees but also proper return on investment and a positive impact for employers.

"What employers want is skilled, talented, reliable employees and we're in that game," said Danny Lester, chief executive officer, AES.

Lester said the funds management industry was among the worst at failing to accommodate all cultures.

"People think Aboriginal people are good at sport and they can't do anything else.

"We've got to start to promote academics and professionals and through this programme we're enabling and creating role models."

"We're so far behind here, it scares me to say it but even New Zealand is probably beating us, there's so many Maoris out there running their own businesses," said Lester.

The aim now is to build slowly, hopefully attracting more companies to emulate Clime and offer young Aboriginals a way

into this industry.

"Companies see genuine growth in people and get return on investment so it just makes good business sense," said Lester.

"Hopefully in five years time these Aboriginal trainees are fund managers at a Macquarie Bank or a Clime, scaling the heights and achieving fantastic outcomes."

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