

2 September 2011

JESUIT SOCIAL SERVICES' AFRICAN-AUSTRALIAN INCLUSION PROGRAM WINS MELBOURNE AWARD

Jesuit Social Services today welcomed the announcement that their African-Australian Inclusion Program, which is run in conjunction with National Australia Bank (NAB), has won a Melbourne award for its contribution to the community.

Jesuit Social Services Chief Executive Officer, Julie Edwards said they were delighted by the award and that recognition was being paid to a crucial program which helps African- Australians enter into the finance industry workforce.

"The African-Australian Inclusion Program (AAIP) has been running since 2008 and provides quality work experience within the banking sector for university qualified African-Australians.

"The AAIP has been extremely successful with 54 participants completing the program so far and seventeen of those participants securing ongoing roles within NAB.

"A lack of Australian work experience has been identified as the most significant barrier to professionally qualified African-Australians gaining employment in corporate Australia and the AAIP helps to break down this barrier by offering members of the African community local work experience with major financial corporations such as the NAB.

"It is crucial that African-Australians are given a realistic opportunity to enter into the workforce so they can support their families, become role models and mentors and encourage the next generation of African-Australians to become qualified and pursue their ambitions.

The AAIP aims to provide a practical learning and working experience for participants and provide them with enhanced job prospects in their chosen field by:

- Developing baseline skills and process understanding, such as developing spreadsheets to support analysis or reporting processes,
- Enhancing their resumes with NAB experience, and
- Providing a reference from a NAB mentor for future employers.

For further information on the program, please visit: <http://www.jss.org.au/programs/all-programs/african-australian-inclusion-program>

Jesuit Social Services works to build a just society where all people can live to their full potential - by partnering with community to support those most in need and working to change policies, practices, ideas and values that perpetuate inequality, prejudice and exclusion. Together with our community partner National Australia Bank, Jesuit Social Services created the Australian African Inclusion Program providing work experience in the banking sector for unemployed tertiary educated African immigrants.

Jesuit Social Services CEO, Julie Edwards is available for comment.

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