



# Building better Indigenous enterprises in Western Australia

The House of Representatives Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Committee will make a second trip to Western Australia as part of its inquiry into developing Indigenous enterprises.

“Western Australia has a range of diverse Indigenous businesses, in areas such as theatre, tourism, the arts and mining. Some of the collaborations taking place between Indigenous people and mining companies in the development of Indigenous enterprises are at the cutting edge,” Committee Chair Richard Marles said.

At the Perth public hearing, the Desert Knowledge CRC will present information on their Desert Biz project which seeks to understand how small businesses and small business networks can more effectively deliver livelihoods for desert people based on natural and cultural resources in ways that are environmentally sound and socially appropriate. The Committee will also hear from the West Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators who see particular challenges in encouraging the development of existing Indigenous tourism businesses, as well as capitalising on the capacity of Aboriginal heritage and culture to deliver unique and iconic tourism opportunities across Western Australia. The Chamber of Minerals and Energy will also appear along with Harlequin Business and Training.

The Committee will hear from Yirra Yaakin Aboriginal Corporation, who was highly commended in the 2006 Reconciliation Australia Indigenous governance awards. This theatre group produces mainstage theatrical productions which are written, directed and performed by Indigenous artists, as well as producing issues-based theatre performances and workshops that tackle specific social concerns in the community. Yirra Yaakin also ensures opportunities for Indigenous trainees, giving them the means to develop skills to work in the theatre industry.

“During the course of the inquiry, the Committee has seen several sources of support to Indigenous enterprises that have the potential to be more widely applied. The Committee was very impressed with the level of support provided by centres such as the Aboriginal Arts Centres and is interested in whether this could work in other sectors,” Mr Marles said.

## Public hearing schedule for Friday 12 September

**VENUE:** Room 230, Centre of Aboriginal Studies, Curtin University of Technology, Bentley

9.00 am TBC  
9.30 am West Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators  
10.00 am Harlequin Business and Training  
10.30am Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre  
11.30 pm Yirra Yaakin Aboriginal Corporation  
12.00 pm Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia Inc (CME)  
12.30 pm Close

Further details on the inquiry can be obtained from the Committee's website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/atsia>.

For **media comment**, please contact the Committee Chair, Mr Richard Marles MP, on 02 6277 4330 (Canberra) or 03 5221 3033 (Electorate Office).

For **background information**, please contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4559 or 0421 611 182 by email at [atsia.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:atsia.reps@aph.gov.au)