



## Building corporations and culture

The House of Representatives Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Committee will return to Canberra to hold its next public hearing for its inquiry into Indigenous enterprise development.

In this first public hearing of the spring parliamentary sittings, the Committee will draw on the advice of the Registrar of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporations Anthony Bevan.

The Registrar is an independent statutory office holder who administers the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006* (CATSI Act). This Act provides greater flexibility to Indigenous community organisations when establishing governance structures for community-owned corporations and for corporate partnerships with industry.

The Committee Chairman Richard Marles said: “There is a strong link between economic development and self determination in Indigenous communities. The advice and assistance of the Registrar, administered through the Office of the Registrar for Indigenous Corporations, is important not only to ensure the foundations for positive development are in place but also for delivering certainty to all parties involved.”

The Committee will also hear from experts affiliated with the Australian National University’s Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR). Established in 1990 the CAEPR is a multi-disciplinary centre with a mission to achieve better outcomes for Indigenous Australians. Its evidence based and innovative research aims to inform public debate and policy formation.

CAEPR foundation director Professor Jon Altman and Ms Kirrily Jordan will advise on the competitive advantage that land owning Indigenous communities have to build traditional cultural practices, their customary economy, into viable industries in natural resource management. The hearings will conclude with evidence from Professor Dennis Foley of the University of Newcastle and the CAEPR’s Dr Boyd Hunter who focus on Indigenous business strengths and measures to support them in urban and regional areas, where most successful Indigenous owned businesses operate.

Mr Marles said: “Land-owning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have rich competitive advantages to build on Indigenous intellectual property beyond the arts and tourism in land and resource management. At the same time, urban Indigenous business owners present significant enterprise strengths, with employers in the construction and services sectors using culture to mentor young Indigenous trainees to business readiness.”

### Public hearing for Thursday 28 August 2008 in Committee Room 2R2 Parliament House

The hearing will be webcast (audio only) on: <http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>

- 12.15pm** Office of the Registrar for Indigenous Corporations
- 12.45pm** Professor Jon Altman and Ms Kirrily Jordan (private capacity)
- 1.15pm** Professor Dennis Foley and Dr Boyd Hunter (private capacity)
- 1:45pm** *Adjournment*

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 by email at [atsia.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:atsia.reps@aph.gov.au)