

City of Sydney

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The Secretary

Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

House of Representatives

PO Box 6021

Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600

atsia.reps@aph.gov.au

RECEIVED
16 JUL 2008
BY: ATSI A

Dear Sir/Madam

The City of Sydney supports the development of Indigenous enterprises.

Following the Federal Parliament's apology to the Stolen Generations on 13 February 2008, the City of Sydney Council resolved to commit to the establishment of a major Aboriginal Cultural Centre in cooperation with the State and Federal Governments and private philanthropic sources by February 2012.

In its consultation on Sustainable Sydney 2030, the City received considerable feedback from all levels of the community on the need for recognition and celebration of Aboriginal culture and identity in Sydney. As a result, the City has proposed The Eora Journey, a major project arising from SS2030.

The Eora Journey aims to take the opportunity of the creation of an Aboriginal Cultural Centre to make the journey towards cultural and economic sustainability for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Our Indigenous community wants to see successful, independent, Indigenous controlled businesses providing employment across a range of industries and professions. They asked for training in business skills including corporate governance. They wanted business incubation.

The City is currently investigating opportunities for Indigenous enterprise development. We have started building relationships with Indigenous business mentors and other business incubators, and are in conversation with individual Aboriginal owned businesses to understand their needs.

The City is aiming to encourage its major contractors to employ Aboriginal staff across a diversity of services – construction, horticulture, management of recreation facilities, etc.

While we believe there is a particular opportunity for Indigenous enterprise in the areas of tourism, culture, land care, food and design in Sydney, we also believe that the community seeks enterprises across the broader spectrum of commerce. We particularly seek opportunities for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal business to work jointly within social enterprise frameworks. Incentives for all business which seek to

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provide social outcomes and benefits for Aboriginal communities are encouraged, as are incentives for the development of Aboriginal owned and run initiatives.

The development of Indigenous enterprise must be undertaken in a holistic way, and incorporate an understanding of Aboriginal cultural, social and economic needs and aspirations. The City is in a good position to develop this understanding, given its grass roots connection with its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, and with business at all levels.

In relation to the feasibility of adapting the US minority/development council model to the Australian context, the 2007 NSW Local Government Association Conference adopted a proposal by the City of Sydney to "investigate ways to assist and encourage member Councils to adopt the principles of supplier diversity in their procurement policies and practices."

We look forward to an opportunity to develop programs to support Indigenous enterprise with the Commonwealth Governments. For further information, please contact Ann Hoban, Manager Community Living on 9246 7752 or at ahoban@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely,

MONICA BARONE
Chief Executive Officer