



Emerging Indigenous businesses in Sydney

The House of Representatives Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Committee is holding a roundtable discussion with a diverse and dynamic range of Aboriginal-owned and operated businesses from the Sydney metropolitan region in Eveleigh this Friday 25 July.

Committee Chair Richard Marles said the inquiry into developing Indigenous enterprises will hear from emerging businesses looking for opportunities within the new agenda for Indigenous economic empowerment recently adopted by the City of Sydney.

“One of the ideas being discussed is the development of an Australian Indigenous Minority Supplier Council, along the lines of the minority development council model operating successfully in America,” Mr Marles said.

At its Sydney public hearing the Committee will assess the potential of the model, among other initiatives, with Aboriginal-owned businesses such as Message Stick Group, corporate partnering organisations including Indigenous Enterprise Partnerships and Gunya Australia and a ‘social venture capital’ company Indigenous Capital Limited. The Committee will also hear about the new Australian Indigenous Chamber of Commerce set up by George Newhouse and Warren Mundine.

In a roundtable discussion, Indigenous business operators will unpack the opportunities and challenges for Aboriginal people in business. The diversity of entrepreneurial talent in the region is evident in the range of trades and services offered – from construction to carbon management; communications technology to exported bush cuisine.

Roundtable participants will include Diz Homes; Ability Plus; Ashby and Co; Exceed Security Service, LBF Consultancy, Traffic Control – Traffic Management, Message Stick Group and the World Indigenous Cultural Exchange & Economic Development Organisation. City of Sydney Councillor Marcelle Hoff will also attend.

“The Committee wants to uncover the best and fairest ways to attract corporate investment in Indigenous business, including by boosting trade with them,” Mr Marles said. “The largest population of Indigenous people lives in New South Wales, so Sydney’s urban hub should provide exciting opportunities for Koori entrepreneurs. The next step is to expand these opportunities into regional townships and remote areas around Australia.”

Public hearing schedule for Friday 25 July 2008

Venue: Meeting Room 9a, Bay 8, Australian Technology Park, Eveleigh

10.30 am	Indigenous Enterprise Partnerships
11.00 am	Message Stick Group
11.30 am	World Indigenous Cultural Exchange & Economic Development Organisation
12.00 pm	Indigenous Capital Ltd
1.15 pm	Roundtable
3.30 pm	The Australian Indigenous Chamber of Commerce
4.00 pm	Gunya Australia

For background information please contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4559 or by email at atsia.reps@aph.gov.au. Further details on the inquiry and hearing program can be obtained from the Committee’s website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/atsia>.

For media comment, please contact the Committee Deputy Chair, Mr Andrew Laming MP, on 07 3821 0155 (electorate office)