

## Northern Australia Indigenous Reference Group Meeting

# Communique

**Meeting in Cairns, Queensland**

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The Northern Australia Indigenous Reference Group held its sixth meeting on 14 March 2023. The meeting was hosted in the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility (NAIF) head office in Cairns, Queensland.

Chaired by Colin Saltmere, the Group focused on their strategic action plan which schedules priorities for providing advice on improving the social and economic prosperity of Indigenous Australians in Northern Australia.

Members in attendance were Colin Saltmere (Chair), Tara Craigie, Jerome Cubillo, Troy Fraser, Peter Jeffries, Gillian Mailman and Cara Peek. Representatives from the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, the National Indigenous Australians Agency, and the NAIF also participated in the meeting.

The Group acknowledged the many communities impacted by flooding across Northern Australia and the associated trauma of loss and uncertainty. The Group supports the Minister for Northern Australia, the Hon Madeleine King MP and the Australian Government's commitment to work with impacted communities to rebuild.

The IRG extended its congratulations to member Gillian Mailman on her appointment to the First Nations Digital Inclusion Advisory Group Expert Panel in recognition of her technical skills and years of industry experience.

Digital inclusion is a critical enabler of the highest importance to First Nations people. The Group has acknowledged lack of digital connectivity in the movement between communities to access services in the north.

The Group was also provided with an update from the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) on the Referendum process and the communication strategy to inform voters; Closing the Gap National Agreement and reporting mechanisms; and the Indigenous Business Sector Strategy and associated policies.

The Group was also provided with an update from the Australian Government Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts on digital inclusion initiatives.

The CEO of Gur A Baradharaw Kod Sea and Land Council Corporation discussed with the Group innovative approaches to commercialisation of Native Title interests in the Torres Strait.

## Next meeting

The next meeting of the Group is scheduled for early May 2023 in Kununurra, WA.