

## Northern Australia Indigenous Reference Group Meeting

# Communique

### Meeting in Kununurra, Western Australia

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The Northern Australia Indigenous Reference Group (the Group) held its seventh meeting on 4-5 May 2023 in Kununurra, Western Australia.

Chaired by Colin Saltmere, the Group focused on driving three priorities of their action plan to provide advice on improving the social and economic prosperity of Indigenous Australians in Northern Australia:

- Strengthening Indigenous business outcomes through procurement policies.
- Improving disaster resilience and recovery of Indigenous businesses and communities.
- Place-based, people-centred initiatives to support Indigenous youth.

Members in attendance were Colin Saltmere (Chair), Jerome Cubillo, Troy Fraser, Peter Jeffries, and Gillian Mailman. The meeting was attended by the Minister's Adviser for Northern Australia and senior representatives from the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts.

The IRG acknowledged the resignation of member Peter Jeffries from the Chief Executive Officer role at the Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation noting Peter's contribution to the community during his near five-year tenure.

The IRG also extended their congratulations to member Jerome Cubillo and the work of the Northern Territory Indigenous Business Network on their success in exceeding the Northern Territory's Aboriginal Procurement Policy target of 5 per cent for both the number and the value of NT Government contracts awarded to Aboriginal Business Enterprises by achieving an impressive 13 per cent.

Appropriate Indigenous Procurement policy is a critical enabler of increasing wealth creation and management for First Nations people. The Group acknowledged the importance of addressing black cladding to improve First Nations outcomes by improving the consistency of Indigenous Procurement Policy definitions, and accountability with monitoring and compliance.

The Group heard from Supply Nation on the certification process for Indigenous owned businesses.

The Group was also provided with an update from the Cooperative Research Centre for Northern Australia (CRCNA) on outcomes of the First Nations EOI.

The Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility (NAIF) discussed with the IRG ways to maximise First Nations outcomes from NAIF investment.

The IRG met with representatives from the partnership MG Corporation, Pollination, Kimberley Land Council and Balangarra Ventures to hear about the East Kimberley Green Hydrogen Project, a renewable energy and green hydrogen development. IRG members support these types of visionary, inter-generational initiatives that will empower First Nations people through equity ownership and provision of a pipeline of skilled jobs in the Kimberley region.

### Next meeting

The next Northern Australia Indigenous Reference Group meeting is scheduled for 27-28 July in Darwin, NT, adjacent to the Developing Northern Australia Conference.