

Northern Australia Indigenous Reference Group Meeting

Communique

Meeting in Alice Springs, Northern Territory

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The Northern Australia Indigenous Reference Group advises the Australian Government on northern development, maximising benefits and implementation outcomes for Indigenous Australians.

The Northern Australia Indigenous Reference Group (IRG) held its sixth meeting in Alice Springs, Northern Territory on 4 August 2026.

A Welcome to Country was delivered by a representative of the Akeyulerre Aboriginal Corporation.

The IRG met with the Minister for Northern Australia, the Hon Madeleine King MP, and the Special Envoy for Remote Communities and Member for Lingiari, Marion Scrymgour MP.

The meeting focused on Northern Australian communities undergoing economic transition. Members discussed how government can best support Indigenous Australian communities through this process, ensuring that community priorities are reflected in planning, investment, and implementation.

The group held discussions with industry stakeholders and government representatives on matters relevant to Indigenous Australians' economic participation and regional development, including:

- The National Indigenous Australians Agency on land tenure across jurisdictions;
- Mika McLennon, Director of MDM Mining and Civil, on Indigenous pathways into the mining and civil industries and the rehabilitation of the former Argyle diamond mine in the East Kimberley; and
- Jane Macey, Chief Operations Officer, and Stewart Forrest, Head of NT and Indigenous Affairs for Arafura Rare Earths, on the Nolans Project and Arafura's Indigenous Engagement Strategy.

The IRG used the Alice Springs meeting to progress delivery of their three priority areas with a focus towards Communities in Transition: a legacy vision for the Northern Australia Action Plan, strengthening the education-to-employment pipeline, and addressing barriers to Indigenous enterprise.

The meeting was arranged alongside the Developing Northern Australia Conference (DNAC), where the Chair, Professor Martin Nakata provided a keynote address.

IRG members in attendance were Professor Martin Nakata (Chair), Troy Fraser, Flora Warrior, Alinta McGuire and Damien Djerrkura. Nini Mills was an apology.

The next IRG meeting will be held virtually on 21 September 2026 followed by an in-person meeting in Canberra in November 2026 in Canberra alongside the Minister's Annual Statement to Parliament.