Forum supports Indigenous economic development in the Northern Territory

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Creating jobs and economic development opportunities for Indigenous Territorians will be the focus of a two day forum in Alice Springs starting today.

More than 300 delegates are taking part in the Indigenous Economic Development Forum, which will include presentations, breakout sessions, private business meetings and an expo for 37 Indigenous businesses to showcase their products and services.

Speaking at the forum today, Chief Minister Adam Giles said the Country Liberals Government was focussed on working in partnership with Aboriginal people to build sustainable remote economies and create the economic independence so many of us take for granted.

“My Government is determined to build the capacity of Aboriginal communities so they can take full advantage of business and job opportunities,” he said.

“We’ve set a number of ambitious employment targets and policies including doubling public sector Indigenous employment from 1800 to 3600 employees by 2020, and initiating Aboriginal employment requirements for all Government infrastructure contracts above $500,000.

“Collectively, the various targets we have set could deliver at least 3800 new jobs to Aboriginal people across the Northern Territory over the next five years.”

Mr Giles said the Government was also investing in essential services like power, water and waste disposal, telecommunications services, education and health facilities, and town planning, to ensure remote communities had the right ‘enabling environments’.

“We have created an Office of Aboriginal Affairs in Alice Springs and Darwin to spearhead government initiatives, drive the creation of enabling environments and focus on creating economic opportunities for Aboriginal people,” he said.

The Indigenous Economic Development Forum is a key event in this year’s October Business Month, and discussions at the forum will range from starting and succeeding in business, support for business, education, procurement and future leaders.
The Forum's keynote speaker is Chief Robert Louie from Westbank First Nation in Canada. Chief Robert Louie is a former practising lawyer specialising in native law and has a number of successful businesses in Canada.

North Australia Development Office General Manager Luke Bowen will discuss the ‘Developing the North’ agenda with delegates, while the Chief Executive of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs, Mike Chiodo will provide an overview of the service.

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