Mines and Energy Minister, Kon Vatskalis, has addressed the membership of the Indigenous Mining and Enterprise Task Force (IMETF) at its first meeting for 2004.

Mr Vatskalis said he was pleased to take part in the meeting during a visit to Tennant Creek this week.

“The Indigenous Mining and Enterprise Task Force (IMETF) is dedicated to increasing and improving indigenous employment and contracting opportunities in various industries, particularly mining,” he said.

“Formed in 1996, IMETF consists of mining companies, Northern Territory and Federal government agencies, Land Councils, indigenous contractors and groups, training organisations and other interested parties.

“Mining is the Territory’s largest industry, and its contribution to our economy can not be understated.

“Last year, the mining industry provided more than 4,600 jobs to Territorians, and through the dedication of IMETF, the level of Indigenous participation has been maintained and improved.”

The Minister highlighting the recent agreement between the Territory Government, Northern Land Council and traditional land owners, granting American petroleum company, Sweetpea Corporation, exploration titles over approximately 14,000 square kilometres of land in the McArthur Basin.

“This project is a fine example of the new relationships we are forming, and the opportunities that will be created for Indigenous Territorians,” he said.

“We are making significant inroads with traditional land owners, and fostering a new era of cooperation that will benefit all.”