Minister’s Message


Firstly, I would like to thank the officers within my Department for their commitment and professionalism.

The Northern Territory Government under its Indigenous Economic Development Strategy has identified 13 specific industry sectors for development.

During 2006 we had the opportunity to hear about some great Indigenous job and business developments across the Northern Territory. Great examples such as the increased numbers of Indigenous employees working at Newmont’s mine in the Tanami and the GEMCO mine on Groote Eylandt, and the positive affect this is having on attracting and retaining new Indigenous staff to the mines.

In east Arnhem, the Northern Territory Government is working with Alcan to invest in training for job-readiness. And, the Australian and Northern Territory Governments are working on a Tourism Hub model to trial in the region during the year.

Other opportunities can be leveraged from commitments such as the $100 million to remote housing announced by the Chief Minister on 19 October 2006.

To create more job opportunities Government is partnering with Indigenous organisations, land councils and the private sector to lay foundations for strategic initiatives in the construction, pastoral, retailing, tourism, knowledge based industries and natural resource management.

These are exciting times and I am sure we will see more new and innovative ways for Indigenous Territorians to develop sustainable livelihoods from their land and culture in the future.

I look forward to reporting on these updates in future newsletters and look forward to working with you during the coming year.

The Hon. Kon Vatskalis, MLA
Minister for Business and Economic Development

Taskforce Welcomes New Faces

Entering its third anniversary, the Indigenous Economic Development Taskforce continues to provide strategic advice and direction across governments, Indigenous organisations and the private sector in alignment with the Northern Territory IED Strategy.

Undergoing some membership changes since its creation the Taskforce would like to welcome new members:

• Mr Joseph Elu, Chairman, Indigenous Business Australia
• Mr John Carroll, Chief Executive, Department of Primary Industry Fisheries and Mines
• Roy Chisholm, President, Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association
• Christine Charles, Regional Director Environment and Social Responsibility Australia and New Zealand, Newmont Australia Limited
• Lawrie Mortimer, General Manager Indigenous Directorate, Telstra Country Wide
• David Malone, Executive Director, Regional Development, Department of Business Economic and Regional Development
• Ms Priscilla Collins, CEO, Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association

The Taskforce says goodbye to:

• Mr William Tillmouth who resigned due to work commitments at Tangentyerre.
Working Hard to Make Dugong Beach Resort a Success

In September 2006, Tourism NT arranged a study tour in Kakadu National Park to provide participants with a greater understanding of visitor expectations and required service levels when operating cultural tours.

Key Indigenous personnel associated with the Dugong Beach Development on Groote Eylandt attended the four day tour which then led to Tourism NT agreeing to conduct a “Stepping Stones for Tourism Workshop” on Groote Eylandt during late 2006.

Over 20 participants attended the five day workshop which focused on tourism issues that Dugong Beach Resort may encounter.

Possibly the key outcome achieved in the week was documenting 10 possible tours associated with the resort. There was also a strong realisation that there isn’t long before the resort is to be opened and there is still much to do.

Given this, Tourism NT in conjunction with Charles Darwin University plans to conduct more study tours to Kakadu National Park in early 2007. The tours will be aligned with extensive training programs in certificate courses in tourism/hospitality and guide training.

Proposed Tourism Hub to Link Homeland and Family Groups

Tourism NT and the Department of Business, Economic and Regional Development are in the final stages of negotiation with the Australian Government to pilot a tourism hub in east Arnhem.

Based on the idea that a central business operation can effectively support a range of Indigenous tourism experiences, the model will link a number of homeland or family groups interested in providing tourism with a professional operator.

Indigenous providers can engage in the industry at their own pace and where cultural reasons prevent one group from hosting tourists an alternate tourism experience can be substituted.
**Focusing on Literacy and Numeracy for a Sustainable Future**

A Literacy Implementation Group has been established as part of the Boosting Indigenous Employment and Economic Development Bilateral Schedule between the Australian and Northern Territory Governments.

The Group will approach those who deliver literacy training to request proposals to involve local residents and volunteers in the delivery of literacy training. For example, train the trainer for local or volunteer engagement in delivering existing, modified or innovative methods.

Additionally a range of methods including accelerated literacy and e-learning will be trialled in partnership with selected communities, schools, training organisations, volunteer groups and the private sector.

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**Yilpara’s Vision for Sustainable Economic Activity**

Yilpara, located approximately 240 km south of Nhulunbuy on Blue Mud Bay has enormous potential for tourism. Following a meeting in late 2006, the need for a planning workshop was recognised to help the community realise their vision for sustainable economic activity.

Twenty-two officers from a range of Australian and Northern Territory Government agencies and the Laynhapuy Homelands Association met at Yilpara to discuss the community’s vision.

Community members came up with the concept of a two-way learning centre for sharing knowledge between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people (Yilpara Bukutjuw Galtha Rom).

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**Bushlight Wins at Engineering World’s Night of Nights**

The Centre for Appropriate Technology’s Bushlight Renewable Energy Project was recognised at the 2006 Australian Engineering Excellence Awards.

The project was one of five projects honoured with an Australian Engineering Excellence Award.

Bushlight has created a new Australian and international benchmark for the design of renewable energy systems. Bushlight innovation, invention and infrastructure has resulted in an average saving of $3500 per year per household on energy costs in over 80 communities and demonstrates a clear link between sound engineering and the success of community consultation.

For more information visit [www.bushlight.org.au](http://www.bushlight.org.au)
PARTNERSHIPS & PATHWAYS
3rd Indigenous Economic Development Forum
30 - 31 October 2007, Darwin, Northern Territory

The Northern Territory Government committed to running three successive Indigenous Economic Development (IED) Forums aimed at exploring ways to achieve economic outcomes for Indigenous Territorians during the 2001 IED Summit.

The first Forum was held in Alice Springs in 2003 and the second Forum was held in Darwin in 2005. During the second Forum the Northern Territory Chief Minister launched the Northern Territory IED Strategy.

With the theme “Partnerships and Pathways” a steering committee has been established to develop the third Forum scheduled for Darwin 30 - 31 October 2007.

Early pans for the Forum include combining:
• conference format with key-note speakers and break-out sessions;
• Indigenous Business Expo, and
• facilitated partnering-up sessions.

The rationale behind this approach is that the third Forum will add to the usual conference-style format by showcasing Indigenous businesses and positively encouraging links and partnerships between Indigenous proponents and potential joint venture or investment partners.

A range of sponsorship opportunities are available. For a Sponsorship Prospectus or more information about the Forum contact Kym Nolan on p: (08) 8999 7426 or e: kym.nolan@nt.gov.au

Established in 2004, RT Tours Australia provides four tourism products including the Mbantua morning tour taking in local attractions and cultural sites around Alice Springs, an evening gourmet tour to the West MacDonnell Ranges, a shuttle transfer service for conferences and special events and charter tours to locations around Alice Springs and Uluru.

RT Tours Australia owner Robert (Bob) Taylor is a local Aranda man who moved back to his traditional country after a 20 year career as an international and gourmet chef. RT Tours reflects Bob’s new found approach to a relaxed life inspired by his culture and the amazing desert landscape while maintaining service and quality, essential skills he learnt being a chef.

Bob was recently elected as an executive member of the Central Australia Tourism Industry Association and has been working with Tourism NT to provide a unique Indigenous perspective on the Centre as a tourism destination.

RT Tours was a successful recipient of a Department of Business, Economic and Regional Development grant to expand the business to its full potential. Tourism NT has also provided funding and in kind support to the development of marketing collateral.

Great Southern Plantations

The Tiwi Land Council and Great Southern Plantations have formed a partnership to continue the development of the timber industry on Melville and Bathurst Islands, including the construction of a deep water international port for exporting timber with financial assistance from the Australian Government.

The long term commitment of both parties is for a period of up to 60 years, after which time the forestry operation will revert to the Tiwi people.

Currently 28 of the 60 Great Southern employees are Tiwi:
• 14 are completing an apprenticeship for a Certificate II in Forestry and Forestry Products
• 2 are an integral part of GSP’s environment crew
• 2 are working in GSP’s general crew including with their Research Forester
• 10 are employed as rangers
• 2 are sea ranger trainees
• 8 are land management ranger trainees

A new intake of apprentices is currently being recruited for commencement in 2007.

Approximately 12 million trees were planted in 2006 bringing 27,500 hectares of land under production.

There is also approximately 4500 hectares of pine originally established by Government that forms part of the estate. Cyclone Ingrid affected a large portion of the estate in March 2005. As a result the first rotation of Acacia is expected to be harvested in 2013. Approximately 1 million tonnes per year will be harvested, the equivalent of around $300 million per annum at today’s prices.

Extensive consultations - three times per year with each of the eight land owning groups, ensures Tiwi people are fully involved with the project and have the opportunity to maximise Tiwi employment and business outcomes.

www.tiwilandcouncil.net.au
www.great-southern.com.au

Identifying Indigenous Economic Aspirations in Remote Communities

A tender for the purpose of engaging a consultant to conduct market research into Indigenous economic aspirations in remote communities will be readvertised in early 2007.

The Australian and Northern Territory Governments are working in partnership on the project to provide a valuable insight into Indigenous economic policy development and program delivery. It is expected that the development of a successful methodology will provide on-going market research opportunities for government and the private sector.

The findings will be made public around mid 2007.
Maningrida Mud Crabs Promising Results

The Maningrida Crab Farm pilot project (fenced mangrove enclosure) is a low technology-low risk economic development opportunity for Maningrida communities. Fully operated by traditional owners, it’s jointly funded by the Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation and the Northern Territory Government. At present, the mud crab enclosure is continuing with a new nursery design to control the amount of water the crablets are exposed to. Although some minor problems have occurred, they have been overcome, with promising results anticipated in the future and a healthy harvest expected for early 2007.

Mud Crabs Creating Employment

Situated at Kulaluk on the coastal fringes of Darwin’s northern suburbs, Aboriginal Corporation Gwalwa Daraniki has been building a mud crab farm into a substantial commercial operation.

During the past 12 months the farm has been stocked with 70,000 juvenile mud crabs. The first crop has now been harvested and although growth rates were excellent, survival was lower than expected.

This year expanded infrastructure will address factors affecting survival rates, with full commercial grow-out trials planned. Market prices have been higher than originally expected with the crabs enjoying good market acceptance.

Employment has also played a part in this project as three of six trainees involved in the project have now graduated from Charles Darwin University with their Certificate II in Aquaculture.

Construction

The Indigenous Housing Program is the major capital works program in remote communities presenting opportunities for employment and structured training.

Lessons learned from the central remote model are being used to develop a new model of training, including intensive on-the-job literacy and numeracy training, leading towards guaranteed jobs in repairs and maintenance after two years.

The announcement by the Chief Minister on 19 October 2006 of an additional $100m for remote housing over the next five years provides a new opportunity to leverage Indigenous employment and business outcomes from long term contracts.

Additionally, a range of opportunities for training and employment in the private sector are currently being explored to meet identified skill shortages.

For more information visit www.nt.gov.au/dcm
Peppered Black

Des Rogers is the type of person who makes things happen. He has never seen himself in a passive role, rather, Mr Rogers works steadily towards his goals and ultimately his rewards.

Former owner of Red Centre Produce, over the years Des Rogers has employed 168 Indigenous staff without relying on any Government assistance. His passion for helping his people find a footing in the modern world and his drive to succeed are no doubt inspiration.

Des Rogers is currently managing his new business Peppered Black Security and said it’s up to us to use our initiative and skills to achieve our goals.

“The issue of antisocial behaviour in Alice Springs needs a concentrated strategy and I believe Indigenous people can be more effective in addressing this issue. Peppered Black Security is prepared to play a major role.”

“The hours are long but the rewards are starting to appear,” said Mr Rogers.

With a pool of 12 qualified Indigenous security staff and quite a number of people in training, the employment opportunities for local Indigenous people are starting to open up.

“We have recently secured the contract for the Yeperenye Shopping Centre and three qualified Indigenous staff will be working around the clock,” said Mr Rogers.

When asked what advice he would give to someone thinking of starting their own business, Mr Rogers said research is the key.

“I spent 20 months researching and developing this business.

“Owning your own business means living by your own decisions – good or bad. Don’t be afraid to ask for support if you need it and don’t lose sight of your dream.”

Along with the Security company, Peppered Black incorporates a number of enterprises such as the Indigenous Café, Hospitality Academy, Dance Troupe, Unearthing Indigenous Cuisine and Peppered Black Art.

The whole concept is to get Indigenous people involved and provide them with practical experience running their own enterprise. Eventually Mr Rogers aims to have Indigenous people experienced and confident enough to own their own companies.
Nominate your Business or Idea for the 2007 Research and Innovation Awards

Nominations for the 2007 Research and Innovation Awards will open in February 2007.

Indigenous people and groups are invited to nominate for the awards, in particular for the category of Indigenous Innovation.

The Indigenous Innovation Award is aimed at an Indigenous person or group that has demonstrated clever ways to address significant issues in achieving a sustainable future for Indigenous people in the Northern Territory or have come up with a solution to solve a problem, including changes to process or the way things are done.

Award winners receive $5000 and finalists will be brought to Darwin as guests to attend the Presentation Dinner on 10 May.

For more information about the Awards and to view past finalists and winners visit www.research-innovation.nt.gov.au

Local Jobs for Local People

Local Jobs for Local People is a new initiative of the Australian and Northern Territory Governments to develop a community-driven employment and business strategy in association with local Indigenous people, government agencies and the private sector.

The Local Jobs for Local People pilot program rolled-out in Yirrkala in 2006. A skilled facilitator was employed to work with a team of Yolngu people to meet with key stakeholders to develop a strategy. The strategy will be launched mid 2007 and will be followed by the Employment Expo in June 2007.

The program is soon to be rolled-out in Borroloola and Groote Eylandt.

At a Glance

In late 2006, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations commissioned the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory to carry out an audit of employment opportunities in 52 Northern Territory communities. The Audit is now complete and the report is available on the DEWR website at www.workplace.gov.au

From a population of 37,070 persons in 52 communities (of which 2722 were non-Indigenous), the audit identified 2,955 “real jobs”.

These are defined as any employment off CDEP of 1 hour per week or more.

44% of the positions were held by Indigenous persons in mainly non-professional areas.

Of 5,567 CDEP participants, 1,425 or 25% were in receipt of “top-up” funding.

Some of these positions are funded through self-generating income however the majority are heavily reliant on government and special purpose grant funding.

Vacant positions (some for between 6 and 12 months) were identified within most communities.


To find out more about the stories in this newsletter or to subscribe to the mailing list, contact Kym Nolan p: (08) 8999 7426 or e: kym.nolan@nt.gov.au