Launch of Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy 2015-20

Chief Minister

(Check against delivery)

• Parliamentary colleagues, Commissioner for Public Employment, Craig Allen, Chief Executive Officers, Indigenous employees, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

• Let me begin by acknowledging the Larrakia people, the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today, and pay my respects to the elders, both past and present.

• Thank you to Richard Fejo for your warm Welcome to Country.

• Around 30 per cent of the Territory population is Aboriginal.

• It’s unacceptable that under Labor, just 8 per cent of our public service was of Indigenous heritage.

• My first order of business upon becoming Minister for Indigenous Affairs was to announce the setting of an Aboriginal employment target of 16 per cent for the public service.

• We are now taking that policy to the next level with a strategy setting out how we plan to achieve this improvement.
• We’ve allocated $2.5 million over five years to help roll out the strategy, including $0.5 million in 2015-16.

• The Country Liberals Government is committed to increasing Aboriginal employment across all levels on the NT Public Sector to 16 per cent, with a 10 per cent target for Indigenous participation in the senior management and executive levels of the public service.

• As the largest employer in the Territory, the NT Government is perfectly positioned to expand the employment options available to Aboriginal Territorians and set an example for the private sector.
• This policy is about giving Aboriginal people an opportunity to have a real job in government and a chance to contribute to breaking the cycle of welfare dependency that has crippled our communities for too long.

• This is all about empowerment.

• There are so many good reasons to do this.

• The Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research at Australian National University found last year, that closing the Indigenous employment gap across Australia would result in an additional $4,821 million in earnings each year for Australia’s Indigenous population,

• And those earnings would return the Commonwealth government an additional $762 million in income tax.
• It estimated that the increased labour market earnings would also reduce welfare payments by $780 million per year.

• It found that if 116,000 extra Indigenous jobs were created to close the employment gap Australia wide, then there would be around 12,000 fewer arrests of Indigenous people over a five-year period,

• And that equates to an average saving of $229,950 per person and a national public benefit of $1.6 billion.

• It found that the sense of wellbeing improved markedly for indigenous people who had a job and that has a significant impact on health care needs.

• Apply those figures to the Northern Territory where almost a third of the population is
indigenous, and where the vast majority of services in remote areas are provided by government, it makes economic sense as well cultural sense to have as many indigenous Territorians working in the government as we can.

- This strategy has been two years in the making and sets individual agency targets to achieve an overall global Indigenous employment rate of 16 per cent by the year 2020.

- It will require a very focused cross Departmental program to achieve the target and so that’s exactly what we’re going to do.

- The strategy is focussed on four key themes-
  - The **first theme** sets the targets for Indigenous employment and participation.
Theme 2 is focused on engagement and support to welcome new Indigenous employees to the Public Service and support our existing staff by building their confidence and capabilities to reach their goals and career aspirations.

Under this theme, agencies will be responsible to ensure every ongoing Indigenous employee and those on temporary contracts of 12 months or more will have a capability or career development plan in place.

Theme 3 focuses on attraction and retention of Indigenous people through promoting the Government as an employer of choice.

And Theme 4 will focus on whole of career development to identify and facilitate career progression and pathways.
• The Northern Territory Government is committed to ensuring the success of this strategy.

• We have established a brand new division within the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment called the Indigenous Employment and Career Development Unit.

• The IECD Unit will be responsible for the implementation of the strategy as well as providing guidance and support across the sector.

• As Chief Minister, I will be personally monitoring this program to ensure targets are met and opportunities are created.

• Let me finish by acknowledging the staff of the Indigenous Employment and Career Development Unit.
Development Unit here tonight, in particular Phil Brown the Director,

• I encourage all of you to contact them to discuss any issues, challenges or ideas you may have that can contribute to the success of Indigenous employment in the Northern Territory Public Sector.

• Thank you.