

Northern Australia Indigenous Reference Group Meeting Communique

Meeting in Darwin, 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 held its eighth meeting in Darwin, Northern Territory on 27-28 July 2023.

Chaired by Colin Saltmere, the Group focused on driving three priorities of their 2023 Action Plan to provide advice on improving the social and economic prosperity of Indigenous Australians in Northern Australia:

- Strengthening Indigenous business outcomes through procurement policies.
- Improving disaster resilience and recovery of Indigenous businesses and communities.
- Place-based, people-centred initiatives to support Indigenous youth.

Members in attendance were Colin Saltmere (Chair), Tara Craigie, Jerome Cubillo, and Gillian Mailman. The meeting was also attended by the Minister for Northern Australia, the Hon Madeleine King MP and the Minister's Adviser for Northern Australia and senior representatives from the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts and the National Indigenous Australians Agency.

IRG member Troy Fraser was an apology for the meeting due to sorry business in community. The IRG sends condolences to Doomadgee families for their recent loss.

The IRG acknowledged the resignation of Cara Peek from the IRG, thanked her for valuable input into their deliberations and advice to the Australian Government over the past 18 months and commended her ongoing advocacy for advancing Indigenous businesses in Northern Australia.

The IRG thanked Minister King for her acknowledgement of the Group's achievements to date and the extension in tenure for the IRG from December 2023 to December 2024 to continue to deliver the important work outlined in the Action Plan.

To progress their priorities the IRG heard from key stakeholders including Supply Nation CEO, Michelle Deshong, First Nations Digital Inclusion Advisory Group Deputy Chair Mr Lyndon Ormond-Parker and Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility CEO Craig Doyle.

The Group explored with the Cooperative Research Centre for Northern Australia Board Chair Sheridan Morris options for future collaboration.

Prior to the IRG meeting, members attended the 2023 Developing Northern Australia Conference and welcomed the focus on Indigenous businesses and acknowledged the opportunity to network with Northern Australia stakeholders.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the Northern Australia Indigenous Reference Group is scheduled for mid October 2023 in Canberra.

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