ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

STATEMENT FROM THE ROUNDTABLE ON ABORIGINAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

23 September 2015
Representatives of government, business and the community came together to agree to take action and to share responsibility for increasing Aboriginal economic participation to realise enduring Aboriginal economic prosperity.

NSW is a wealthy state and looks forward to a future of equal or greater prosperity. We believe its wealth could be more equitably shared amongst all its communities.

We support sustainable, inclusive economic growth and the creation of good quality, well-paid jobs, capacity and leadership development and support for flourishing small business and enterprise, where the benefits of growth are shared by all.

Together we commit to a program of economic and social policy reform to make real inroads to addressing Aboriginal disadvantage in NSW. We, in partnership with the Aboriginal community, commit to improving educational attainment at all levels, to create real and sustainable jobs, increase Aboriginal participation in public life and decision making, and to closing further the gap of disadvantage in NSW. This will be achieved together through good governance, infrastructure and community investment, land use planning, and the recognition of culture, heritage and healing in public policy making.

Our ultimate vision is to raise the living standards of Aboriginal communities in NSW and to guarantee future intergenerational Aboriginal prosperity.

NSW is a strong state, but we acknowledge that out fortunes are intertwined with the economic and social realities of our fellow Australian states and the Australian economy.

In identifying strategies to support Aboriginal economic development, we recognise the challenges faced by Aboriginal community members, including:

- an ageing population placing pressure on the provision of some goods and services
- a relative younger Aboriginal population whose consumption of some government goods and services differs to that of the general population
- demographic changes in rural and regional communities brought by a downturn in mining (and related activity) and outward migration of non–Aboriginal residents
- the realisation of land justice outcomes as envisaged by the Aboriginal Land Rights Act, to create and manage a wealth base and encourage the cultural, social and spiritual growth of Aboriginal people
- funding government services and infrastructure and supporting ongoing private sector engagement
- the rising cost of living and housing in parts of NSW, notably the Sydney basin
- technology and its impact on business development and the provision of government services
- the impact of community and family and domestic violence on economic and social participation, with particular emphasis on the impact of domestic violence on womens economic and workforce participation
- interaction with, and the impact of, the criminal justice system on Aboriginal communities
- the presence of a good education and sound health to active economic and social participation
• rising levels of unemployment (especially amongst young Aboriginal people) and lower rate of economic participation of Aboriginal women in the NSW economy

• higher rates of poverty and vulnerability of Aboriginal communities in NSW

• the impact of the historical exclusion of Aboriginal people from economic participation and markets generally

• the residual effect of past government policies and practice on contemporary Aboriginal communities.

In consideration of these challenges and the opportunities presented through broad ranging discussions, the signatories to the Roundtable recognise the collective role they play in achieving a vision for Aboriginal economic development. They agreed to work collaboratively to realise long term Aboriginal economic prosperity which may include:

• Affirmative Action integrated into policy settings, including a focus on the economic participation and leadership of women and young people

• establishing accountability measures for government and industry

• establishing enduring partnerships between the government, private and not-for-profit sectors, and the community, in support of programs and services directed to improving Aboriginal economic participation and development

• improved coordination of policy and service delivery, especially through the principles of co-design

• supporting and enabling the sustainable growth of Aboriginal business and enterprise through investment in building business capacity and capability

• options to increase the transfer of lands to Aboriginal people as envisaged by the Aboriginal Land Rights Act

• the formulation of strong and good governance arrangements supporting future endeavours to realise intergenerational Aboriginal economic prosperity.

Signatories agreed to support this vision

Aboriginal Affairs NSW
Aboriginal Employment Strategy
Australia Council for the Arts
Australian Industry Group
Business Council of Australia
Civil Contractors Federation NSW
Cox Inall Ridgeway
Customer Owned Banking Association
David Liddiard Group
Department of Premier and Cabinet
Good Shepherd Micro Finance
Indigenous Business Australia
LendLease
Master Builders Association NSW
Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly
NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce
NSW Aboriginal Land Council
PwC Indigenous Consulting
South Sydney Rugby League Club
Supply Nation
University of Sydney