New contracting policies to support Aboriginal economic development

1 August 2015

The Country Liberals Government is targeting the creation of at least 3800 new Aboriginal jobs over the next five years through a range of new procurement policies that are designed to drive economic development in remote and regional areas of the Northern Territory.

Speaking at the Garma Festival, Chief Minister Adam Giles outlined how the Territory Government is working to increase Indigenous employment through requirements being built into Government contracts.

“My Government is determined to build the capacity of Aboriginal communities so they can take full advantage of business and job opportunities,” he said.

“The Territory’s economy is doing well with our growth rate of 4.5 per cent the highest in Australia, our CPI unchanged and our unemployment rate the second lowest in the country. We want all Territorians to share in this wealth and prosperity no matter where they live.

“That’s why we have set a number of ambitious targets that collectively could deliver at least 3800 new jobs to Aboriginal people across the Northern Territory over the next five years.”

Mr Giles said the Territory Government’s Indigenous employment targets and policies included:

- Doubling public sector Indigenous employment from 1800 to 3600 employees by 2020;
- Requiring each contractor to achieve 30% Aboriginal employment for all Government infrastructure contracts above $500,000;
- A new remote contracting policy aimed at ensuring 70% of small contracts for construction, repairs and maintenance in remote Aboriginal communities go to local Aboriginal businesses by 2017; and
- Ensuring a minimum of five civil and construction contracts per year valued at over $5 million are awarded to joint venture proposals with Aboriginal businesses.

“These policies set a clear direction and encourage Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal businesses to work together in a spirit of partnership across remote areas to build wealth creation for remote Aboriginal communities,” Mr Giles said.
The Chief Minister also outlined today the findings of a Government audit of essential services across the 76 major Territory remote towns and communities.

“We found only about half these communities had mobile and data services, only 19 communities had town or area plans and only nine communities have a financial institution physically present,” he said.

“While we are working with Telstra to fund the delivery of more telecommunication services and improving planning by conducting land surveys, there must be a transition from land rights to land use and economic development to address the underlying issues in these communities.

“It is a fact of life for Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory that no bank in Australia will lend money for a home or a business to an Aboriginal person living on Aboriginal land – and that is more than half of the Territory.

“The Territory Government is not seeking control of Aboriginal land but we are seeking to work with the land councils to transform land rights into land use and economic development.

“My Government is determined to work hard in partnership with Aboriginal people, the land councils, the Commonwealth Government, the private and community sectors to build prosperous, vibrant and sustainable economies in Aboriginal communities across the Northern Territory.”

**Media Contact:** Scott Whitby 0438 531 583