

SENATOR THE HON MARK ARBIB

Minister for Indigenous Employment and Economic Development

Minister for Sport

Minister for Social Housing and Homelessness

MEDIA RELEASE

26 July 2011

MINISTER CALLS ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO STRENGTHEN INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT

Minister for Indigenous Employment and Economic Development Mark Arbib today opened the *National Roundtable on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment in Local Government* and urged representatives to employ more Indigenous people.

Representatives of local government organisations from around Australia gathered for the two-day roundtable at Redfern Town Hall to discuss how they could contribute to closing the gap on Indigenous employment.

“The Gillard Government is committed to working in partnership with local governments which are well placed to employ Indigenous Australians, especially in remote and regional areas,” Senator Arbib said.

“This roundtable, convened by the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government, is a great way to share ideas and plan partnerships to increase recruitment and retention of Indigenous workers.

“The Centre of Excellence has identified that local councils are facing a crisis in long-term workforce planning due to an ageing workforce and the drain of skills from the regions which has been compounded by demand from the mining boom.

“The solution is right in front of us – investment in local Indigenous communities and individuals who can provide those skills in the long term.”

Senator Arbib announced in April new funding of \$4.8 million over three years to support mentoring programs for Indigenous Shire Council employees working in the Northern Territory and urged councils to become involved with school-based traineeships in their communities.

“The Government has also committed \$50.7 million to provide 6400 school-based traineeships for year 11 and 12 students. The program provides assistance to young Indigenous Australians as they move from school to work,” Senator Arbib said.

“Local Councils can take advantage of the program and work with school-based trainees in their area. In addition, Councils can use Government programs and services, such as Job Services Australia, to provide job-readiness training, literacy and numeracy skills and ongoing mentoring for their Indigenous employees.

“There are also a raft of programs available to assist local governments in employing and retaining local Indigenous job seekers, as part of the Government’s goal of creating more than 100,000 jobs for Indigenous Australians by 2018.

“The Government is committed to working with all levels of Government, the corporate and community sectors and Indigenous communities and people to reach the target and close the gap on Indigenous employment.”

Minister’s media contact: Sean Sammon 0417 137 419/02 9364 2600

DEEWR Media: media@deewr.gov.au **Non-media enquiries:** 1300 363 079