



AUSTRALIAN
INDIGENOUS
CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE

Indigenous Jobs Australia Website Launch

Fairfax Group, Darling Island Road, Pyrmont
31 August 2009
8.50am - 10.30am

Warren Mundine
Chairman, Australian Indigenous Chamber of Commerce

Minister Mark Arbib, distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I wish to acknowledge and pay my respect to the elders, past and present, and the traditional owners of the land on which we are holding this exciting launch - the Gadigal people of the Dharug nation. I also wish to acknowledge and pay my respect to my own Bundjalung and Gumbaynggirr elders past and present.

My ancestors would be proud of what we're doing today, getting First Australians working again in an environment that promotes individual initiative, learning, confidence and respect.

The Indigenous Chamber of Commerce - myself and Shane Phillips and George Newhouse - are certainly proud that together with the private sector, the not-for-profit sector and government, we're revolutionising the employment structures for First Australians.

We're moving out of the welfare mould of government-funded, community-delivered projects and starting to promote work for Indigenous people that is entrepreneurial, private sector and profit making for communities.

This website is a valuable tool to make that shift happen. It is the tool that will support the initiatives of our partners, the Australian Employment Covenant – whose CEO Mal James is represented today by Paul Knight; and the Aboriginal Employment Strategy, Dick Estens and Danny Lester , who is here today with some of his team.

Thanks to Fairfax, Lloyd and his talented people in Fairfax Digital, this state of the art technology will help change people's lives by putting Indigenous employment at the forefront of the job market. John Brand, Matthew Newcomb, Elizabeth Ross, Tracy Kennedy, Jay Munro and Jeff Allan and the many others – great job, congratulations. We also owe a great debt to Bruce Wolpe who made the original introductions between the Indigenous Chamber and Fairfax. The enthusiasm and commitment of everyone involved in this website is unparalleled, not only those involved in its creation but the corporates and numerous government entities who have already made the commitment to using the website to potentially employ First Australians and who are leading the way for others to follow.

The problem with employment is not about the availability of work per-se – it's about getting First Australians into those jobs and this is where IndigenousJobsAustralia.com.au comes into its own – the first national internet jobs board catering exclusively to Indigenous job seekers.

While on the subject of getting First Australians into jobs I would like to thank the Minister and the government for agreeing to fund the first new job for an Indigenous Australian arising directly from the establishment of the website - the position of Client Relationship Manager for the Indigenous Jobs Australia website at Fairfax Digital, and we already have wonderful candidates for the role.

I applaud the Federal Government for providing the space to let this website happen, by having the foresight to take a step back from direct service delivery and instead support this multi-party, industry-driven approach that puts Indigenous jobs back into the mainstream world. I've known the Minister for many years and I thank Mark for his commitment and his support of Indigenous employment, which is second to none.

What we're trying to do here is more than just find a job for one person here, and another over there. The Indigenous Chamber is working towards achieving economic independence and self-reliance for all Indigenous Australians.

Jobs are the key and through the website we're attempting to make having a job the most normal thing in the world. My grandfather had a job all his life, so for my dad that was normal. In turn my dad had a job all his life, which I considered normal. I've worked all my life and passed that on as normal behavior to all my kids. So the message from my own experience is that whatever behaviour is considered normal is the behaviour that will be nourished and handed down within families and communities and between siblings and peers.

It's the same concept with this website – tapping into today's social mediums to market jobs and people and bring them together. I like this website because it provides a platform to tell individual stories about how First Australians have changed their lives through employment. Our intention is that that this website becomes the gateway between Indigenous Australians and their new jobs and career paths. The plethora of jobs and the stories of success will be inspiration for others to take that positive and sometimes scary step forward to change their life and in turn share their journey.

We know that to achieve generational change its important to reach out to our kids to normalise the concept of working after they leave school and to learn about the job market and how to put themselves out there using today's technology which is becoming more and more accessible to all. We applaud initiatives like the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation, AEC and AES who engage school aged First Australians as well as older teenagers and adults.

This website, this approach, can change lives, but only if there's an equal effort and commitment by First Australians to take the initiative to become self-reliant. It's now up to us to make it happen and I lay down an exciting challenge to Indigenous people to get on board. Have a go. Get a job. Don't sit around at home just because a particular job is not perfect for you in every way.

The reason I'm throwing down this challenge to both young and older First Australians is that because a job does change your life. This happens not only through building income, but also through learning and professional development and by socializing and networking – being seen and getting recognition for what you can achieve. So again, our thanks to everyone involved in this website, and let's all get cracking and get to work.

ENDS.