



AUSTRALIA



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UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES

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Statement by H.E. Dr Fiona Webster, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations

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Thank you.

Australia remains committed to the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and takes this time to highlight ways we are enabling economic development opportunities.

Australia recognises the importance of empowering Indigenous peoples with economic opportunities both in business and employment.

Australia's economic policies continue to ensure equal opportunities in business and employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Funding and procurement strategies are; growing the sector, encouraging Indigenous entrepreneurship, creating jobs and driving demand for Indigenous goods and services.

Indigenous businesses continue to grow and create more jobs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Since 2015, government procurement of goods and services has seen over \$4 billion in contracts awarded to more than 2,000 Indigenous Australian businesses.

Australia currently requires at least three per cent of the number of domestic government contracts to be awarded to Indigenous businesses annually and from July 2019, a new contract value target is being phased in to deliver greater opportunity for Indigenous businesses to win contracts of higher value. Indigenous participation targets also apply to a wide range of industry sectors, to help build chances for Indigenous businesses to be included in the supply chain of major government procurements.

Indigenous businesses and workers are also increasingly participating in infrastructure projects. For example, the Indigenous Employment and Supplier-Use Infrastructure Framework includes employment and supplier-use targets for land transport infrastructure projects funded by the Australian Government.

For more than 50 years, Indigenous land rights have been recognised in legislation in Australia. These land rights are transforming from an era of recognition and protection, to one of realising how they can support the realisation of economic, social and cultural rights and benefits. This is giving rise to an ever-growing cohort of Indigenous businesses and social enterprises, Indigenous services and regional decision-making.

By harnessing traditional knowledge and the entrepreneurial skills of Indigenous Australians, providing land security and co-designing solutions with Indigenous communities the Indigenous business sector and employment opportunities are delivering ever growing economic empowerment for Indigenous Australians.

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