



Australian Government
Indigenous Business Australia

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MEDIA RELEASE
IBA Chairman Receives Australia Day Honour

Indigenous Business Australia Chairman Joseph Elu has been appointed as an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) in the General Division for service to the Indigenous community. This award recognises his contribution in the field of economic development, the promotion of financial independence and facilitating community partnerships with skilled volunteers.

Mr Elu has been actively involved in Indigenous affairs for over 20 years, including 12 years as Chairman of IBA, and roles with a number of Indigenous organisations including National Indigenous Council, Seisia Island Council and Reconciliation Australia.

Mr Elu has also been the recipient of a Centenary Medal and an Honorary Doctorate in Economics from the Queensland University of Technology.

The AO is of particular significance to Mr Elu and the work he has done championing Indigenous affairs. "I am extremely proud to receive this award and believe it is testimony to my belief that it is only through economic independence that Indigenous Australians can engage with and become integral to the mainstream economy," said Mr Elu.

Mr Elu stressed the importance of partnerships between IBA, Indigenous business people and the private sector in stimulating economic development and wealth creation for Indigenous Australians.

"Increasing basic business skill levels, making available access to business funding and providing home loans to Indigenous people are all important pathways towards achieving our vision of Indigenous economic independence."

Mr Elu acknowledged that there are significant challenges ahead for Indigenous Australians but remains optimistic that the future is bright.

"I want future Indigenous generations to live in better circumstances than current generations. If Indigenous Australians are to have the same opportunities as other Australians living in a 21st century capitalist democracy, we need to remove the obstacles that prevent them from creating wealth, accumulating assets and fulfilling their aspirations."

In Mr Elu, Indigenous Australians have a positive role model to aspire to and “I continue to have a strong passion for the message I have been promoting for some time and that is we must as Indigenous Australians pursue the opportunities that present themselves, to take up the jobs which are emerging and find ways of participating in small and large business. This applies equally to those living in regional Australia as much as it can to remote communities.” He said

He added that “the award recognises work that has been done at the national level but more importantly I accept the award as a means of demonstrating that communities like Seisia can find workable solutions and while we live in one of the remotest parts of Australia we are still capable of building an economic base.”

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