



Australian Government
Indigenous Business Australia

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MEDIA RELEASE

IBA holds inaugural NAIDOC Breakfast event

Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) held its first major event during NAIDOC Week celebrations today with a breakfast function at the National Press Club, Canberra.

The theme of the event *Advancing Indigenous Australians Fairly* follows on from the continuing progress IBA has made in the area of Indigenous economic development with the recent formation of an Indigenous business association in WA.

Guests were addressed by Richard Marles, Member for Corio and Chair of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, former IBA chair and current Mayor of Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council, Joseph Elu, Acting Chair of IBA Bob Blair and IBA Board member Leah Armstrong.

Joseph Elu spoke on how economic participation is critical to Indigenous health and well being.

"I have long argued the disconnect between regaining our rights and connection to land, and our ability to develop our lands for the benefit of our children and our grandchildren, needs to be addressed.

"We need to move on from being land rich but dirt poor," Mr Elu said.

Bob Blair stated the importance of Indigenous Australians participating equally in the commercial life of the country to close the life expectancy gap.

"Social issues will not be solved by social programs alone, developing economic and commercial opportunities and jobs is essential.

"We believe IBA has a lot to offer to help build a sustainable economic future for Indigenous people," Mr Blair said.

Leah Armstrong officially launched IBA's Corporate Plan 2008 - 2013 outlining the direction for IBA over the next five years.

"We see IBA, with its commercial focus, as uniquely placed to assist Indigenous Australians to participate in the mainstream economy.

"We will also be acknowledged as a respected leader in developing solutions though our commercial approach to achieving social impact," Ms Armstrong said.

2007 National NAIDOC Artist of the Year Leah Purcell was the Master of Ceremonies for the breakfast event.



The guest list was made up of representatives from the private sector, Indigenous groups, various government departments and agencies along with IBA employees and Board representatives.

IBA General Manager Ron Morony said it is fitting during the 2008 NAIDOC week celebrations that we give a focus to what has been achieved in the area of Indigenous economic development.

“What will become clear is that small incremental steps have been taken by Indigenous groups, and in the future we intend to capitalise on those achievements,” Mr Morony concluded.

Please note: Photos of the event are available on request. Joseph Elu Mayor of Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council, Bob Blair Acting Chair of IBA, Leah Armstrong Board Member of IBA and Ron Morony IBA General Manager are available for interview.

Media contact: Daniel Hughes on 02 6121 2731 or email daniel.hughes@iba.gov.au