



Australian Government
Indigenous Business Australia

IBA Koori Mail Column
3 December 2008
Looking to leadership in trying times

Congratulations to the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) for their leadership in developing a program to address Indigenous governance. The AICD recently developed this product and undertook trial deliveries of programs in Darwin and Kununurra to refine the modules.

The result is a new and targeted product to be offered to Indigenous people occupying key positions, particularly Board positions, to provide the knowledge required to make important governance decisions. This is a new area of development for the AICD and we are helping them to offer the service to Indigenous corporations.

Governance is often talked about as a major issue and it is reassuring to see mainstream organisations like the AICD taking up the call to help.

We are all beginning to wonder what's on the horizon for the economic crisis that is gripping the world's markets. While Australia is still seen as being safer than most countries from possible effects of recession and downturns, we are not immune.

On 25th November, IBA held a forum bringing together economic leaders in order to address these issues. It was also a great opportunity for Indigenous business leaders along with a guest Maori business leader to discuss the situation and explore ways of supporting each other in these tough economic times.

Finally, I want to cover the issue of employment, currently a major focus of the Commonwealth Government, and moving to where the jobs are.

IBA was recently approached to employ a young Aboriginal man who had finished school and wanted a career in business development. He had grown up in Port Hedland and saw the need to move away from his home town to develop a future for himself. This is a tough decision, but one that has been made by many of us.

He has been given that chance and is now in Canberra looking to build a future with IBA. This young man from Port Hedland brought home to me the pressures we often face and the choices we often have to make which sometime means we have to make some difficult decisions in order to make a future in a world that is dominated by global economic issues. Our culture and associations with family do not suffer as a consequence of taking those bold steps.

An economic pathway which starts with education, leading to jobs and being able to participate in business and commerce is my idea of a real future for Indigenous Australians and importantly the means to participate in the mainstream economy.