



**Australian Government**  
**Indigenous Business Australia**

2 June 2006

## **Media Release**

### **Celebrities to attend historic First Nations Economic Conference**

Celebrities such as opera diva Deborah Cheetham, AFL star Adam Goodes, former Senator Aden Ridgeway and chef Mark Olive, otherwise known as the Black Olive, will feature prominently at next month's first ever international economic conference organised by Indigenous Business Australia.

Delegates from Canada, New Zealand and South Africa are expected to share knowledge with up to 450 Australian counterparts on a range of matters including participation in mining and tourism when the First Nations Economic Opportunities Conference gets underway at the Sydney Hilton on July 17.

Aimed at improving the skill levels of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to cultivate an interest in business with IBA and the private sector, the focus is firmly on enlarging the wealth base of First Nations peoples.

The conference will kick off with a Youth Forum at which more than 80 young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders from all parts of Australia have been invited to participate.

"It is an opportunity for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to learn about the challenges they are likely to experience in business," said IBA chairman Joseph Elu.

"At the same time they will find out first hand about some of the highlights that success in business can bring, both from local and overseas delegates who are already engaged in global trade through sectors like mining and tourism."

Budding entrepreneurs will be flown and bussed to Sydney from destinations as far away as Darwin, Alice Springs, Kalgoorlie and Bendigo in what Youth Forum co-ordinator Darren Knight has described as unprecedented.

"Sydney Swans' skipper Adam Goodes and former Kangaroos hero Jason McCartney, now the national youth coordinator for the AFL, will be among many motivational speakers. Jason not only survived the terrorist bombing in Bali but showed tremendous personal courage to make a successful return to football before announcing his retirement in 2003," said Mr Knight.



**FIRST NATIONS  
ECONOMIC  
OPPORTUNITIES  
CONFERENCE**

SYDNEY-AUSTRALIA  
17-20 JULY 2006

5<sup>th</sup> Floor Bonner House West, Neptune St, Woden ACT 2606  
PO Box 38 Woden ACT 2606 | Phone (02) 6121 2700 Fax (02) 6121 2730  
Website [www.iba.gov.au](http://www.iba.gov.au) | ABN: 25 192 932 833

Conference Website: [www.ibaconference.com.au](http://www.ibaconference.com.au)



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Former Senator Aden Ridgeway, now Executive Chairman of Indigenous Tourism Australia, businessman Damien Amamoo of Inception Strategies and Dr Louise Earnshaw, founder of the Goldfields Chutzpah Factory College of Entrepreneurship in Western Australia, are among dozens of other speakers.

The conference marks a whole-of-government initiative that will see the involvement of a number of Australian Government departments and agencies. The primary sponsor is the Indigenous Land Council chaired by Ms Shirley McPherson.

“It has long been our intention to bring together people from a diverse range of disciplinary fields and nations who are engaged in developing, have ownership of, or have an impact on the emerging Indigenous business landscape,” Mr Elu said.

“This represents an ideal opportunity for Indigenous entrepreneurs everywhere to showcase their abilities, but more importantly for business people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent to prove that they are capable of far more than simply producing didgeridoos and bark paintings.”

The Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, Kevin Andrews, has lent departmental support to the event which he said provides an opportunity for the private sector to engage directly in dialogue with Indigenous entrepreneurs.

Late last year Mr Andrews officiated at the opening of the new Scarborough House in the Canberra suburb of Woden. In a \$32 million joint venture involving IBA and Indigenous partners from WA and the Top End, a derelict former Commonwealth building was transformed into A-grade office accommodation that is now fully let to the Department of Health and Ageing for a period of 10 years. This guarantees a respectable return for Indigenous investors far removed from the ACT.

Among more than 30 other successful business ventures currently operated by IBA, also in conjunction with Indigenous partners and the private sector, is the Monkey Mia Dolphin Resort at Shark Bay, the Fitzroy River Lodge in WA and the Gagudju Crocodile Holiday Inn at Kakadu in the Northern Territory.

For further details contact conference organiser Ms Trudi Ridge on (02) 6121 2703 or email at <[trudi.ridge@iba.gov.au](mailto:trudi.ridge@iba.gov.au)>  
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