



Australian Government
Indigenous Business Australia

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Media Release

Outback Stores to unveil high-level board

The Chairman of Indigenous Business Australia (IBA), Mr Joseph Elu, is to head a Board that includes some of the country's leading former CEOs from the retail and wholesale sectors in a bid to improve and expand the number of remote community stores in Indigenous areas.

“This has been a long time coming. If it works the way we envisage as a successful commercial enterprise then it will undoubtedly underpin the economic development of remote area communities across Australia,” Mr Elu said yesterday.

He was speaking ahead of the inaugural meeting of the Board of a new entity called Outback Stores, which is a wholly-owned subsidiary of IBA. It was formed to accommodate the Government's recent Budget commitment to spend \$48 million over four years to address ongoing concerns involving the running of remote community stores.

Among previous concerns have been financial mismanagement, poor infrastructure and the limited range of foods and services. The Australian Government is convinced that, with oversight and diligent management, community stores can play a key role in improving the health standards of remote area Indigenous communities by providing quality food at affordable prices.

Apart from Mr Elu, the Board of Outback Stores will include Mr Alan Williams, former Chief Operating Officer of the Coles Food and Liquor Group, Mr Nahmani Avner, General Manager of Corporate Marketing at Woolworths, Mr Alastair King, CEO of the Arnhemland Progress Association that operates 11 remote areas stores in the Top End, and Mr Ian Myers, Deputy General Manager at IBA. Mr Elu will chair the Board.

Mr Elu said the inaugural meeting, to be held at Parliament House on Monday, 14 August, is to introduce the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, Mr Kevin Andrews and the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Mr Mal Brough, to the new Board.

The Board is expected to consider a commercial management model with the aim of improving governance of existing stores in remote areas, financial and stock management, supply chain inconsistencies and improved availability of healthy foods.

“I have said before that community stores are crucial to the economic, social and health interests of remote indigenous communities. Outback Stores will actively seek to improve the overall wellbeing of thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islanders by helping to build commercially viable businesses that in the longer term will secure their own futures,” Mr Elu said.

**Media contact: Marshall Wilson 02 6121 2702 or email
marshall.wilson@iba.gov.au**