

30 November 2007

Employment needed for Noongar People

The South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council welcomes the State Governments Indigenous Employment Forum being held today. The South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council is the native title representative body for the Noongar people of the south west.

Mr. Glen Kelly, CEO of The South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council (SWALSC) said, "There is a grave need to get more Noongar people into the workforce. This is not just for the Noongar community, but for whole of Western Australia".

"It is disappointing that the West Australian Government and SWALSC are still at odds over the nature of native title".

"Native Title is not simply about land, it is the catalyst for resolving so many of the social issues that the Aboriginal communities face, including unemployment. It provides the structure for Aboriginal people to help themselves to find the solutions to issues that affect the whole community".

Mr Kelly added, "Noongar people have a burgeoning youth population. Over 40% of the Noongar populations are under the age of 18. If we don't act to create more jobs for Noongar people now, unemployment will increase dramatically as will the attendant social issues".

The 2006 Census shows that there is a high percentage of the Indigenous labour force that are unemployed and looking for work. In Western Australia 14.25% of the Aboriginal workforce are unemployed compared to around 4% for the general population.

"The Government and the private sector urgently need to work with the Noongar Community to address the problem of unemployment, especially in this boom time when there have never been so many opportunities. Noongar people want to be part of the solution to make sure that Western Australia has the workers to continue the economic boom over the next decade", Mr Kelly added.

As the native title representative body for the south west, part of SWALSC's role is to create opportunities for Noongar people. Currently SWALSC performs this through native title negotiations which so far have successfully created opportunities for in excess of 100 positions for Noongar people.



South West Aboriginal
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Mr Kelly said, "While this is extremely positive, we actually need to create thousands of jobs for Noongar people to cater for the large youth population that will be looking for employment very soon".

We need all sectors to work with SWALSC and the Noongar community to put aside their preconceived ideas of employing Noongar people, to draw experience from extremely successful programs elsewhere in the state and transfer them to Noongar Country.

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