

# DESERT GEM

Respect. Compassion. Empathy.



Senator Jana Stewart  
Mutthi Mutthi and Wamba Wamba  
Chair

Joint Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Affairs  
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Friday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2024

**RE: Joint Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs - Inquiry into economic self-determination and opportunities for First Nations Australians - Invitation to make a submission**

Dear Committee Secretary,

Thank you for reaching out to me regarding the inquiry on economic self-determination and opportunities for First Nations Australians. We appreciate the Committee's efforts to address these important issues and look forward to contributing to the inquiry.

There are significant opportunities for training, employment, and business development within the First Nations communities, but there are also barriers that need to be addressed. These barriers may include limited access to education and skills development, lack of funding and resources for business development, and systemic discrimination in the workforce.

In order to support economic prosperity in the long term, it is essential to build the economic and social infrastructure needed to support industry and business growth. This may involve addressing the lack of infrastructure in remote and regional areas, improving access to financial services and support programs, and promoting partnerships between First Nations communities and businesses.

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Unlocking capital and leveraging intellectual property, the Indigenous Estate, and First Nations skills can help elevate First Nations people as economic partners. This may involve providing access to funding and investment opportunities, protecting Indigenous intellectual property rights, and promoting entrepreneurship and innovation within First Nations communities.

Also, it is important to learn from international and intergenerational experiences in fostering economic independence for First Nations communities. By studying successful models within Australia and around the world while reflecting on past experiences within Australia, we can identify best practices and strategies for empowering First Nations people economically.

Looking forward to collaborating with the Committee on this inquiry and providing insights on these important issues. If you require any further information or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Your Sincerely,



Vatessa Colbung, Managing Director Desert Gem