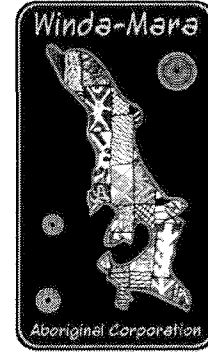


Submission No.....29.....
Date Received.....
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23 JUL 2008

BY:.....ATSLA.....

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25 July 2008

House of Representatives Standing Committee
on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
Australian Parliament
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Standing Committee

Indigenous Economic Development

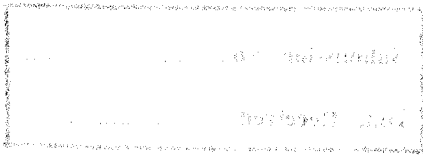
Winda Mara Aboriginal Corporation was established in 1991 by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community living in the far southwest of Victoria. Winda Mara is a community-controlled organisation that provides services to 450 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the Heywood, Portland, Hamilton, Lake Condah and Casterton district. Economic development and independence is an objective of the organisation.

Since its establishment, Winda Mara has developed and maintained several commercial businesses in the tourism, hospitality, land management and professional services. In 2002, Winda Mara partnered with government agencies, industry, tertiary institutions and the broader community to initiate the Lake Condah Sustainable Development Project (LCSDP).

The LCSDP has the major aims of developing the Lake Condah, Mt Eccles and Tyrendarra area into a major heritage park and restoring permanent water to Lake Condah. In 2004, the Lake Condah, Mt Eccles and Tyrendarra area was declared as the Budj Bim National Heritage Landscape for its Gunditjmara heritage values. The restoration of permanent water to Lake Condah is scheduled for the summer of 2008/09.

Winda Mara has envisaged our community members and family groups to take on these established businesses. However, many of our community members and family groups are extremely tentative to owning and operating a commercial business.

This situation extends to community members and family groups establishing smaller businesses to gain ancillary contracts to the established businesses.



There is a range of documented reasons for this situation including the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the far southwest of Victoria not having a personal or family history of owning and operating a commercial business.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people face many disadvantages in relation to health, wealth and wellbeing. These disadvantages are well documented and are required to be continually addressed by communities, governments and the broader Australian community.

Winda Mara concentrates on the areas of advantage that our community has in the tourism, hospitality and land management industries. Only we can provide a unique perspective and experience as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Although we aim to harness our advantage to an optimal commercial strength, we are very mindful of ensuring the integrity of our cultural heritage, identity and obligations are maintained.

Winda Mara is not aware of the US minority business/development council model and we do not have the resources to provide advice on its feasibility to place the model in the Australian context.

We are aware of the Gunya model (see below) that seeks tax incentives for industry to invest and partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business. The Gunya model also provides a supportive network of mainstream business advice and mentoring to ensure the success of the enterprise.

We believe that the Gunya model offers a solution to the current situation of where our community members are extremely tentative to advance to owning and operating their own successful businesses.

We recommend that governments continue to maintain the current level of support and provision for the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business and commerce and also provide new models of business investment, development and success for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, families and individuals.

If you require further information please contact me at the Winda Mara office.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely

Damein Bell
Chairman

http://www.gunya.com.au/acrobat/gunya_discussion_paper_august_07.pdf