



10 February 2009

Committee Secretary
Senate Select Committee on Regional and Remote Indigenous
Communities
Department of the Senate
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Dear Committee Secretary

Inquiry into Regional and Remote Indigenous Communities

The Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia (CME) appreciate the opportunity to review and provide a brief response to the Inquiry into Regional and Remote Indigenous Communities.

The CME is the peak resources sector representative body in Western Australia with its members covering approximately 85% of all mineral and energy employees in Western Australia.

The CME's vision is to champion the Western Australian resources sector and assist in achieving its vision to lead the world in sustainable practices through innovation and underpin Australia's position in the global economy.

The CME supports the views taken by the Mineral Council of Australia in their responses to the Senate Inquiry that they submitted in June and August 2008 and will not be making a separate submission.

The purpose of this correspondence is to highlight initiatives undertaken by the Western Australian resource sector in remote and regional locations to encourage Indigenous participation.

The resources sector is the largest private sector employer of Indigenous Australians, with most operations being in remote and regional areas. A large proportion of the CME's member companies operate in regional and remote locations around Western Australia and there is significant interest and support for the development of Indigenous businesses and employment opportunities.

Many of CME member companies have Indigenous employment initiatives in place, including traineeships, mentoring or employing Indigenous contractors. Some companies have altered internal tender policies to facilitate Indigenous enterprise participation.

Another joint initiative between CME, the Australian government and industry, currently occurring in the Kimberley region, is a partnership "Closing the Gap" Steering Committee with Indigenous people to build sustainable Indigenous communities, through increased employment and business opportunities across the Kimberley.

For further details of programs and initiatives undertaken by the Western Australian resources sector, please refer to the attached document Indigenous Participation in Western Australia's Resource Sector.

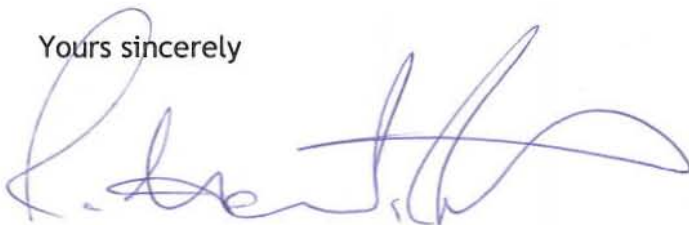
The CME supports initiatives which have a positive socio-economic impact on Indigenous communities and encourages increased Indigenous participation through employment and business development opportunities. A collaborative approach needed to be adopted whereby local communities, industry, businesses, the vocational and education sector, and the Federal and State government work in partnership.

The CME advocates for reform which supports economic growth and job and business creation, to ensure this capability the government needs to position itself to ensure social and economic reforms are coordinated and take into consideration barriers Indigenous Australians incur. As such CME supports the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) targets in Indigenous communities of:

- Closing the life expectancy gap
- Halving the mortality gap for children under 5
- Halving the gap in employment outcomes
- Having the gap in attainment for year 12 schooling by 2020

If further information is needed on the issues raised in this submission please contact Amanda Gradisen, Executive Officer Workforce Participation (08) 9220 8538 or at a.gradisen@cmewa.com.

Yours sincerely



Reg Howard-Smith
Chief Executive