

Fact Sheet

Economic development in New South Wales



Economic development seeks to influence the well being of a community through growth and restructuring of an economy.

There is no single strategy, policy or program for achieving successful economic development. Communities differ in their geographic and political strengths and weaknesses and each community has a unique set of challenges for economic development. Utilising existing land and water assets, improving the school to work transition for Aboriginal people and ensuring the growth and sustainability of existing Aboriginal businesses are some of the challenges within NSW.

Two Ways Together

Aboriginal people are significantly disadvantaged when compared with the general population. Aboriginal people experience higher levels of unemployment than non-Aboriginal people, which impedes economic participation and life choices.

Two Ways Together, the NSW Aboriginal Affairs Policy 2003-2012 responds to the findings of the Productivity Commission's *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage – Key Indicators 2003* Report and establishes a new framework for a wide range of Government agencies to work with each other and with Aboriginal communities to improve the lives of Aboriginal people.

Under *Two Ways Together* seven cluster groups of government agencies and Aboriginal peak bodies have been formed to address priority areas identified by Aboriginal communities and aligned with the national indicators developed by the Productivity Commission.

Economic Development forms one of these Cluster groups.

Economic Development Cluster Group

The goal of the Economic Development Cluster Group is to create opportunities and build capacities for Aboriginal people and communities to achieve their goals and aspirations through participation in the economy.

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs is the lead agency for the Economic Development Cluster. The Cluster group includes such members as NSW government agencies, peak Aboriginal bodies, Commonwealth government agencies and private sector representatives.

Members

NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs
NSW Department of Education and Training
Office of Indigenous Policy
NSW Department of State and Regional Development
Premier's Department
Tourism NSW
NSW Department for Local Government
NSW Aboriginal Land Council
NSW Treasury
Commonwealth Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
NSW Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources
GROW Employment Council
NSW Department of Primary Industries
NSW Department of Commerce
NSW Department of Housing
NSW Aboriginal Housing Office
Indigenous Land Corporation

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An Economic Development action plan for 2004-2006 has been developed by the Cluster and work is currently underway to implement cross agency actions.



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Indicators

National indicators for economic development are:

- Unemployment and labour force participation
- Land Ownership
- Indigenous Training.

State based indicators developed by the Economic Development Cluster are:

- Employment
- Aboriginal enterprise
- Asset Utilisation
- Training and skills development.

Utilising land and water assets owned by Aboriginal people is a significant emerging issue and work has commenced to recognise this in the action plan. One challenge facing the Cluster group is addressing the barriers that prevent Aboriginal organisations accessing sound commercial advice about their assets. The Office of the Registrar, Aboriginal Land Rights Act has been working with Westpac to identify opportunities for

Aboriginal Land Councils. Work is also underway to develop a governance and investment advisory service. This service would provide advice on a pro-bono basis by a panel of approved specialists, to work with Aboriginal organisations who want independent support with land utilisation decision making.

The Departments of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources, Primary Industries and the Indigenous Land Corporation have recently been invited to participate in this Cluster group. This will strengthen the Cluster's ability to better monitor the economic utilisation of Aboriginal-owned assets, collectively promote examples of effective utilisation as well as support organisations to better manage the balance between capacity development and purchasing capacity.

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Reporting

A yearly report showing what progress has been made against the Indicators will go to the Premier. These yearly reports will assist Cluster groups decide what the next priorities are and what needs to be done to make action plans under *Two Ways Together* deliver results to Aboriginal people in NSW.

Artwork: 'Possum Skin', by Euphemia Bostock.



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