



MEDIA RELEASE

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National Indigenous land plan to boost jobs and learning

A new five-year strategy for acquiring and managing Indigenous land in Australia has been released by the Indigenous Land Corporation.

The new National Indigenous Land Strategy (NILS) 2007-2012 will again focus strongly on acquisitions and projects which can generate and support employment, training and education opportunities for Indigenous people, according to ILC Chairperson Shirley McPherson.

"The ILC believes Indigenous land ownership is important but it should also deliver education, employment and training outcomes," Ms. McPherson said.

"The ILC Board recognises the importance of a core education to the future of Indigenous youth and that the current education outcomes for those living in rural and remote areas can be limited by a lack of education facilities.

"Under the new NILS, the ILC will collaborate with Australian, State and Territory Government agencies to acquire or develop boarding facilities in regional centres to help Indigenous youth access the education they deserve.

"The ILC has increasingly tailored its programs to specify in greater detail what benefits people hope to achieve in acquiring land.

"The NILS has four main categories - Economic, Social, Cultural and Environmental - under which land can be bought and we go through all applications to test that real benefits will be delivered and that the planned use of land is sustainable.

"If applications cannot meet those basic criteria they will not be supported by the ILC and we make no apologies for applying a rigorous test to applications because buying land and then having no plan on how that land will deliver benefits and how ongoing land ownership costs will be met, is a waste of time for everyone.

"In rural and remote communities the ILC believes the pastoral and tourism industries offer significant opportunities to deliver jobs, training and education and boost Indigenous economic development over the next five years.

"The existing application-based system did not always generate these kinds of projects so the new NILS builds on the ILC's ability to generate strategic projects in its own right where economic development, employment, training and education are key outcomes.

"A multi-million dollar tourism operation and training facility at Home Valley Station in the WA East Kimberly and a \$30 million redevelopment of the old Redfern Public School into a National Indigenous Development Centre catering for up to 5,000 young people each year, are examples of this new strategic approach," Ms. McPherson said.

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