**COMMUNIQUE - FIRST NATIONS REFERENCE GROUP**

**REMOTE JOBS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

The First Nations Reference Group for the Remote Jobs and Economic Development program held its second meeting today in Canberra.

The Remote Jobs and Economic Development program will create 3,000 jobs in remote Australia, to help close the gap in employment outcomes, boost economic opportunities and invest in cultural authority.

Remote Australia is different – culturally, geographically and economically. Members discussed that for the Remote Jobs and Economic Development program to shift the dial on employment and economic development in remote Australia, the program needs to be designed in a way that will work effectively on the ground.

It was agreed that harnessing the strengths of remote communities is the best way realise the full potential of the 3,000 jobs.

The Group also discussed how more remote jobs and economic opportunity will contribute to improvements in health, education and community safety. And the importance of ensuring local jobs benefited both the individual and the community. Supporting purpose, pride and the capacity of community organisations.

The importance of work and training opportunities for young people was emphasised by the Group. The Remote Jobs and Economic Development program will have an important role in supporting young people to complete school and transition to training and work.

Members emphasised the importance of sustainable ongoing employment – which provides a pathway into local opportunities by leveraging employment in public sector programs and the private sector, including in the care economy and health, renewable energy, land management, agriculture and municipal services.

The First Nations Reference Group also discussed the current remote jobs trials – including what has worked, and what hasn’t. These lessons will used to improve the implementation of the Remote Jobs and Economic Development Program. Information on these trials can be found at [niaa.gov.au/job-trials](https://www.niaa.gov.au/job-trials)

The Group considered how to support local organisations to deliver the 3,000 jobs, principles of eligibility and priorities for the Program.

A key role of the First Nations Reference Group is to provide advice on how the National Indigenous Australians Agency can conduct broader consultation with communities and stakeholders in remote areas.

Members also provided advice on the most effective way to consult with local communities about the implementation of the program, built on the first phase of consultations undertaken by the National Indigenous Australians Agency in 2023. The consultation report from this first round of consultations can be found on [the NIAA website](https://www.niaa.gov.au/resource-centre/indigenous-affairs/replacing-community-development-program-consultation-report#:~:text=Between%20February%202023%20and%20June,proper%20wages%20and%20decent%20conditions.).

Details on future consultation process will be announced in the coming weeks. Information will continue to be available at [niaa.gov.au/remote-jobs](https://www.niaa.gov.au/remote-jobs)

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 10 April 2024.

**Friday 22 MARCH 2024**