

20 October 2025

## Three Regional Councils join forces calling for urgent review of their Aboriginality status

Roper Gulf, East Arnhem and Victoria Daly Regional Councils have called for an urgent review of Councils' ineligibility to implement the Federal Government's new Remote Australian Employment Service program.

Roper Gulf Regional Council Mayor Tony Jack said that despite meeting every criteria to provide services for the new training and employment scheme, regional councils are told they are not Aboriginal enough to participate.

"Our joint membership of Councils and Local Authorities is overwhelmingly Aboriginal. We are Aboriginal-controlled. We are local Aboriginal people elected by local Aboriginal people and we challenge the notion that local government does not meet this criteria.

"If the new Remote Australian Employment Service continues on its current path, it will fail. People will blame the model. We need this new model to work, we need this to work for our communities," he said.

The regional councils welcomed the new program and its focus on delivering jobs for real people in the community as part of Closing the Gap and Aboriginal Community Control policies.

Mayor Jack also acknowledged the work already done by the Minister for Indigenous Australians Malarndirri McCarthy and Special Envoy for Remote Communities Marion Scrymgour, in listening to communities about the Remote Australian Employment Service program.

"Our local councils can help make it happen. We have trusted relationships through our daily work with community members, including vulnerable and young people, to uncover their passion and drive, whatever that is. We then support them on a pathway together until they realise their goals," he said.

The Remote Australian Employment Service is a new program of the National Indigenous Australians Agency.

It replaces the Community Development Program and aims to support job seekers in remote communities.

### Further quotes from elected members:

"We are the community. We have pride in working for our communities." Lapulung Dhamarrandji – East Arnhem Regional Council President

"We all support Closing the Gap. To do that, we need to make things work." Deborah Jones - Victoria Daly Regional Council Councillor

"We councils can act to Close the Gap through real training and real jobs." Brian Pedwell – Victoria Daly Regional Council Mayor



“Communities aren’t going forward but backward.” Tony Jack – Roper Gulf Regional Council Mayor

“We [local government] deliver services in community, by community.” Priscilla Yunupingu – East Arnhem Regional Council President

“We don’t make profits, every single dollar goes to the communities.” Brian Pedwell – Victoria Daly Regional Council Mayor

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