

MEDIA RELEASE

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Council contract sets up Indigenous-owned NT business for staff expansion

A commitment by Roper Gulf Regional Council to Northern Territory businesses has allowed one Indigenous-owned enterprise to boost its employment by 40 per cent on the back of a three-year supply contract awarded this month.

Practical Safety Australia (PSA) has been engaged to supply the Council with personal protective and first aid equipment, and safety signage until 2020 in a deal with an estimated value of \$500,000.

Securing the tender has also provided the Darwin-based business with an opportunity to employ two Indigenous trainees in a move director Lance Martin said would create a revenue stream to deliver a structured career pathway for the pair.

“On the strength of this contract, we have already placed two Indigenous trainees into the company as stores and warehouse people, with a view to upskilling them with first the basics, such as fork lift operations, warehouse safety and stock control, to be followed up with computer training, warehouse management and wherever that leads to,” he explained.

“We are excited that we have the opportunity to make a real difference to young people’s lives, and to have them as part of our continual growth and improvement program.”

Mr Martin praised the Council for its focus on helping to develop Indigenous-owned NT businesses and said he hoped other organisations followed its example.

“It is critical for Northern Territory companies to receive the support of both local companies and those companies that come to the various regions to fill gaps in skill shortages for the larger contracts,” he said.

“The simple reason for this is that it enables the growth of the Indigenous workforce and begins the upward cycle of creating higher-skilled Indigenous workers who can then pass on their knowledge to their peers, thus developing a pool of skilled individuals.”

Staff from the Council’s Procurement and Work, Health and Safety units travelled to Darwin on September 27 to meet the PSA team and witness first-hand how the commercial partnership would benefit both parties.

Council Chief Executive Officer Michael Berto said an emphasis on utilising local NT businesses aligned with the organisation's strategic goal of supporting training, employment and economic development.

"It may not be viewed as a traditional role of Local Government, but Council is committed to the big picture of delivering sustainable, vibrant communities across the Roper Gulf region and NT as a whole," he said.

"Part of that centres on providing Indigenous employment opportunities and fostering economic development strategies for businesses based in the Territory.

"With an annual operating budget of almost \$40 million, Council has the responsibility and financial capacity to be a leader in this area, and it is great to see our focus having a real impact on the growth of operations like Practical Safety Australia."

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For further information, please contact the Communications Coordinator on 0427 674 212 or at roper.governance@ropergulf.nt.gov.au.