



Media Release – 3rd June 2022 (Mabo Day)

Marking 30 years of the High Court Mabo Decision – Gladstone’s First Nations business leaders and key stakeholders met to establish a First Nations Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Celebrating Mabo Day 2022 during National Reconciliation Week, the Bailai Aboriginal Corporation for Land and Culture hosted a breakfast meeting of First Nations business leaders and key stakeholders to discuss the establishment of a First Nations Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Gladstone, Central Queensland.

The Gladstone Region is renowned as being an economic development powerhouse for the State of Queensland and the Nation. More recently, with the shift to decarbonisation, Gladstone was selected by the Australian Government as a Hydrogen Hub. The Queensland Government has also made plans for Gladstone in their proposed Renewable Energy Zones.

First Nations Leader Mr Matthew Cooke said, “whilst these announcements are welcomed news for the region and the economy, there is however a lack of clarity about what this means for the broader Indigenous community and the opportunity for genuine shared prosperity in economic development, including business participation of First Nations small to medium enterprise”.

“Today’s breakfast was an opportunity for First Nations business leaders along with key stakeholders to network, discuss and strategise approaches, including the establishment of a First Nations Chamber of Commerce and Industry for the Gladstone Region”.

“Self-determination for First Nations Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians is our people leading in the design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review of policies, programs and plans that impact our affairs. We need localised infrastructure in Gladstone and Central Queensland that facilitates practical self-determination for First Nation people and businesses”.

“We must reflect on the successes, missed opportunities and failures during the coal seam gas / liquified natural gas boom in Gladstone on Curtis Island. As our community enters this next phase of largescale economic development with a push to decarbonisation – we must act early to ensure that government and major industry cement First Nations opportunities and shared prosperity from the outset”.

“It is important that we are actively looking at what First Nations participation means well ahead of these economic developments to ensure First Nations businesses are in the best

position to take advantage of the new opportunities, rather than being left as an afterthought as was the case with past developments”.

Key areas of discussion for a First Nations Chamber of Commerce and Industry for Gladstone, Central Queensland include;

- Market development and readiness.
- Supply chain readiness.
- Business development, coaching, and mentoring.
- Developing policy position statements that guide major industry and government in sustainable First Nations business participation.
- Partnering with key stakeholders for success, including the Gladstone Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Mr Cooke said that he is hoping that this morning's breakfast is the first of many collaborative networking events for First Nations business leaders and our key stakeholders in Gladstone.

First Nations Business Leaders;

Michael and Marion Eggmoesse, Marion's Cleaning Service Pty Ltd.

Paul Olsen, Brolga Cranes Pty Ltd.

Lewis Prizeman and Mellissa Ritter, Cool Summers Refrigeration Pty Ltd.

Patricia Coleman, Patricia Coleman Artworks Pty Ltd.

Luke Smart, Luke Smart Pty Ltd.

Matthew Cooke, Byellee Operating Company Pty Ltd.

Key Stakeholders;

Glen Butcher MP, Member for Gladstone.

Joe Smith, President - Gladstone Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Gus Stedman, CEO Gladstone Area Promotion and Development Limited.

Lee-ann Dudley, Director - First Nations Bailai Gurang Gooreng Gooreng Taribelang Bunda People Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC.

Daniel Reeves, General Manager - Port Curtis Coral Coast Trust.

Kerrin Anderson, Corporate Lawyer - KA Consultant Lawyer.

-ENDS-

Enquiries: Matthew Cooke email: Matthew.Cooke1@bigpond.com or mobile: 0487 345 763.