MEDIA RELEASE

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**NSW GOVERNMENT SIGNS ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT WITH NSW MINING INDUSTRY**

The signing of an historic employment agreement between the NSW Government and the NSW Minerals Council could provide more jobs for Aboriginal people in the Central West, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Victor Dominello and the Member for Dubbo Troy Grant said today.

“As part of the Industry Based Agreement, signed on 3 June, the NSW Government and NSW mining industry will work closely together to provide sustainable employment and help kick-start Aboriginal businesses in the booming resources sector,” Mr Dominello said while visiting Dubbo and Peak Hill.

“Mining needs a constant stream of quality people to fill roles in a huge range of occupations from machinery operators, IT specialists and builders to mechanics, engineers, electricians, surveyors, scientists, geologists and many more.

“Training and employment initiatives will be developed in regions such as the Central West where present and emerging mining opportunities can support Aboriginal employment and economic development. Jobs could be created around centres such as Dubbo and Orange,” Mr Dominello said.

Mr Grant said the agreement was a terrific initiative for the Dubbo electorate given the important role mining plays in its economy.

“The Industry Based Agreement will help secure long term employment prospects for talented young Aboriginal people wishing to embark on a career in the resources sector.”

Minister for Resources Chris Hartcher said the NSW Government remained committed to helping people in remote and regional NSW get the skills needed to secure employment.

“Increasing employment opportunities and strengthening regional economies will lead to better outcomes for Aboriginal people and communities and help support the continued growth of our valuable mining sector,” Mr Hartcher said.

NSW Minerals Council CEO Stephen Galilee said that the NSW mining industry has been working for a long time to develop Aboriginal employment and economic development opportunities across the State.

Mr Galilee said the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the NSW Minerals Council and the NSW Government is a positive step forward.
“It is important that the NSW mining industry and NSW Government keep working closely together to secure some real outcomes in this important area.

“Economic participation lies at the heart of improving the lives of Aboriginal people in NSW and we want to ensure that they share in the long term benefits that flow from responsible minerals development.”

On 5 April, the NSW Government released its plan for Aboriginal affairs – OCHRE (Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility and Empowerment) – developed in partnership with Aboriginal people. OCHRE is focused on keeping more Aboriginal students at school and opening up opportunities for them to transition into employment, in part through partnering with the private sector.

“Using one of OCHRE’s initiatives, Opportunity Hubs, a mining company for example, can build a link to local schools through mentoring and training programs to ensure school leavers are job-ready for careers in the mining industry,” Mr Dominello said.

As well as providing employment this agreement will build and support strong and sustainable Aboriginal communities in NSW mining regions.

“Industry forums and research will be conducted to develop industry capacity to better support Aboriginal employees,” Mr Dominello said.

“There will also be support for Aboriginal-owned enterprises to successfully tender for opportunities in the broader minerals industry.”

The chief executive of Aboriginal Employment Strategy, Danny Lester, said it was critically important for associations such as the Minerals Council to commit to, embrace and advocate for growth in the Aboriginal workforce.

“Participation in the workforce is the cornerstone of gaining personal confidence, financial advancement and becoming a role model for young Aboriginal people,” Mr Lester said.

The NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce commended the NSW Government and the NSW Minerals Council for committing to a formal document and process with the potential to lead to significant employment and procurement outcomes for NSW Aboriginal communities where mining is prevalent.

Chamber CEO Debbie Barwick said: “We have been highlighting the need for formal commitments and achievable efforts by government and industry for a number of years to support the creation of real jobs and procurement opportunities for Indigenous mining communities.

“We know that this pact will be welcomed by the contractors and the communities they support.

“We expect that the insight and innovation shown here by the NSW Government and the NSW Minerals Council is a clear indicator that these stakeholders have listened to indigenous communities and peak bodies during the Task Force consultations,” Ms Barwick said.

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