MEDIA RELEASE

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BOARD DIRECTION TO ENCOURAGE ABORIGINAL BUSINESS PARTICIPATION

Minister for Finance and Services Andrew Constance and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Victor Dominello have today welcomed a new board direction aimed at promoting Aboriginal employment and business procurement opportunities.

“The NSW Government is committed to changing its current procurement practices to make it easier for Aboriginal enterprises to participate in business transactions,” Mr Constance said.

“This direction puts in place guidelines that allow NSW Government agencies to purchase directly from an Aboriginal business up to the value of $150,000 after obtaining at least one written quotation.”

Mr Dominello said the NSW Procurement Board direction contains significant provisions that will help to achieve the target of getting more NSW Government agencies to engage with Aboriginal businesses.

“By streamlining the process, the NSW Government can better support performing Aboriginal businesses to grow and develop, which has multiple outcomes for the whole community,” Mr Dominello said.

“Economic empowerment through employment and enterprise development is a cornerstone of the NSW Government’s Aboriginal affairs plan, OCHRE, released earlier this year.

“OCHRE (Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility, Empowerment), aims among other things to focus on creating opportunities for economic empowerment and make Government and communities more accountable for the money they spend,” Mr Dominello said.

As part of OCHRE, the Department of Finance and Services has been consulting with the NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce as well as not-for-profit organisation Supply Nation to better understand the capacity of businesses to participate in government procurement.

NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce CEO Debbie Barwick said she looks forward to playing an active role in working with the Government to promote the new directive to Indigenous businesses and support agencies seeking to engage Indigenous suppliers.
“One of the major barriers for Indigenous businesses is access to finance. Contracts of this size will be very valuable to smaller companies who will have the opportunity to scale up at a controlled pace, where financing requirements levels are more readily available,” Ms Barwick said.

The Department of Finance and Services’ engagement with the Aboriginal business sector also extends to membership of Supply Nation, a not-for-profit organisation which connects its corporate and Government members with certified Aboriginal business suppliers.

Supply Nation CEO Charles Prouse sees the latest board direction as a major step towards making it easier to procure goods and services from Aboriginal companies.

“This move by the Board demonstrates positive action which will result in higher levels of procurement activity through a formalised process and creating the opportunity of growth for Indigenous business,” Mr Prouse said.

The board direction was approved by the Procurement Leadership Group on 20 September and took effect from 1 October 2013 for a period of two years.

The implementation of the board direction aligns the NSW Government with the Victorian and Western Australian Governments who have similar guidelines in place.

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