



Indigenous business is Australia's sleeping giant

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Opportune Business Network is upping the ante on the Government's Closing the Gap target by not just creating indigenous employees but creating better indigenous business owners.

Colin Coverdale, Opportune's director, said over the past week, 20 indigenous business owners from across Australia had travelled to the Gold Coast to learn how to build stronger businesses.

"The program supports Closing the Gap. However, we are going one step further to help the Government's target of generating more indigenous employees by giving employers the knowledge and tools to develop successful businesses" he said.

"These businesses in turn will employ indigenous people and benefit their own community."

Mr Coverdale said his company appreciates the ongoing support of Department of Education Training and Workplace Relations who fund this program.

"We have put together a program to help owners develop knowledge in mainstream business operations – an area that has long been overlooked," he said.

"For the past week, we have explored aspects of running a company, which will help build bigger, brighter and better businesses.

"The information provided will help the owners compete in the mainstream arena."

Mr Gordon Cole, program participant and owner of G Cole Consulting WA, said the program has been fantastic.

"We have been provided with the skills, tools and knowledge to advance our businesses.

"Indigenous business is Australia's sleeping giant," he said.

The IEP Clinic is only one step in the program with each business owner receiving post-clinic mentoring from Opportune Business Network.

Mr Coverdale said the program targeted all levels of business. "We have people attending who are at the start-up phase or who have well established operations," he said.

"With a mix of people with runs on the board and those working to make a go of it."

Mr Coverdale said while the IEP Clinic has been developed for a specific purpose, there have been other serendipitous benefits.

"There is an amazing amount of business that gets done in this week," he said.

"People connect to develop joint ventures and partnerships as result of the time they spend together.

"An unintended bonus is people re-establish long lost family ties – they find connections they did not know existed."

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