



COUNCILLOR CRAIG CROMELIN

SILVER ANNIVERSARY SPEECH

PARLIAMENT HOUSE, NSW

TUESDAY, JUNE 10, 2008

## **WEALTH GENERATION AND COMMERCE**

**YAMA KARRA MAYAI-NG KAL-KAA KUWI-NG KAL-KAA.**

**THIS IS MY GREETING TODAY IN THE NGIYAMPAA LANGUGE,**

**IT IS THE MOTHER TONGUE OF MY PEOPLE.**

**IT IS A GREETING TO ALL HERE TODAY....BOTH BLACK AND WHITE.**

**AND MORE IMPORTANTLY FOR ME, IT IS MY CONNECTION TO MY ANCESTRY.**

**IT ALSO RECOGNISES AND ACKNOWLEDGES THE SPIRITS OF MY PEOPLE.**

**I STAND HERE TODAY IN FRONT OF YOU ALL A PROUD NGIYAMPAA MAN.**

**I ALSO STAND HERE TODAY BECAUSE I WAS PROUDLY ELECTED TO REPRESENT THE PEOPLE OF THE REGION, THE WIRADJURI NATION.**

**I DO NOT.....AND WILL NOT..... FORGET WHERE I COME FROM.....AND HOW I GOT HERE.**

**BEFORE I CONTINUE LET ME ALSO ACKNOWLEDGE THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS OF THIS LAND.**

**I THANK THEM FOR THEIR PERMISSIONS TO SPEAK HEAR TODAY.**

**I WAS NINETEEN YEARS OF AGE WHEN THE ABORIGINAL LAND RIGHTS ACT WAS INTRODUCED INTO THIS PARLIAMENT.**

**I RETURNED TO MY COMMUNITY—MURRIN BRIDGE-- FRESH FROM A PRE-CARPENTRY COURSE IN DUBBO.**

**LIKE MOST YOUNG BUCKS I WAS MORE INTERESTED IN SPORT THAN POLITICS AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS.**

**THAT WAS UNTIL I STOOD FOR A POSITION ON THE BOARD OF THE LOCAL HOUSING ORGANISATION.....KOONCHIE.**

**IF YOU THINK STAR AND STRIPES..... YOU THINK AMERICA.**

**IF YOU HEAR THE NAME KOONCHIE.....YOU THINK OF MURRIN BRIDGE.**

**IT WAS THE ONLY ORGANISATION WE HAD.....BEFORE THE LOCAL ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCIL WAS FORMED AS A RESULT OF THE LAND RIGHTS ACT.**

**EVERY YOUNG FELLA IN OUR COMMUNITY GREW UP DREAMING OF WORKING FOR KOONCHIE.....THOSE WHO DREAMED OF WORKING.**

**I DO NOT SAY THAT TO OFFEND.**

**I STATE IT AS A FACT.**

**THE LACK OF OPPORTUNITY IS ONE OF THE THINGS I MOST REMEMBER AS A KID.**

**YOU DID NOT SEE THAT MANY PEOPLE GET UP EACH MORNING TO GO TO WORK.**

THE FARMERS KIDS SAW THEIR FOLK DO IT.

WE DID NOT.

THERE WAS LITTLE OR NO REAL EMPLOYMENT.

WHAT WORK WAS AVAILABLE.....WAS LOWLY PAID.

OFTEN PEOPLE WERE PAID IN THE BARE ESSENTIALS.

OUR TERMS OF TRADE FOR LABOR WERE.....MORE OFTEN THAN NOT....BARTER.

PAYMENT WAS OFTEN SOMETHING LIKE HALF A SHEEP.

THANKFULLY TIMES ARE CHANGING.

THE MINDSET IS CHANGING.

I HEAR A LOT OF CRITICISM OF CDEP

I DON'T AGREE WITH MOST OF IT.

CDEP HELPED CHANGED THE MIND SET OF KIDS IN MY COMMUNITY...AND MANY OTHERS.

WHILE IT MAY NOT HAVE BEEN A REAL JOB....IT WAS A JOB

IT GAVE PEOPLE A SENSE OF SELF WORTH.

**IT GAVE THEM INCENTIVE TO MOVE ON TO SOMETHING ELSE.**

**THE ABOLITION OF CDEP IN MY COMMUNITY.....AND OTHERS.....HAS HAD A TERRIBLE AND NEGATIVE IMPACT.**

**IT IS ONE PROGRAM, AMONG MANY OTHERS, THAT HAS...AND STILL CAN...STIMULATE COMMUNITY GROWTH.**

**IT HELPED MY COMMUNITY ESTABLISH A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS—MURRIN BRIDGE WINES.**

**IT HELPED ME LEARN TO WALK IN TWO WORLDS....BETWEEN MY OWN COMMUNITY AND THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY.**

**THIS COUNCIL IS COMMITTED TO HELPING OTHERS WALK IN THOSE TWO WORLDS.**

**CDEP WAS A STEP UP.**

**NOTHING MORE....NOTHING LESS.**

**IT WAS....AND STILL CAN BE....ONE COG IN THE ENGINE OF COMMUNITY GROWTH.**

**THE ENGINE HAS MANY MORE COGS.**

**YOU HAVE HEARD MUCH TODAY ABOUT OUR CORPORATE PLAN.**

**I WANT TO TALK ABOUT ONE OF ITS KEY CORPORATE PRIORITIES....WEALTH GENERATION AND COMMERCE.**

**NSWALC AND THE LAND COUNCIL NETWORK IS SELF FUNDED.**

**WE ARE COMMITTED TO ENSURING LASTING COMMERCIAL AND FINANCIAL SUCCESS FOR OUR PEOPLE.**

**WE ARE DOING SO BY ENGAGING IN SOUND BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES.....UNDERPINNED BY INDEPENDENT PROFESSIONAL ADVICE.**

**WE WANT TO WORK TOGETHER WITH ALL RELEVANT INDUSTRIES TO MAXIMISE THE FINANCIAL, EMPLOYMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL ABORIGINAL PEOPLE AND THEIR COMMUNITIES.**

**WE ARE COMMITTED TO GENERATING CONTINUED WEALTH BY SEEKING TO GAIN THE BEST FINANCIAL RETURNS AND GROWTH WE CAN ACHIEVE FOR OUR STATUTORY INVESTMENT FUND.**

**WE WILL DO SO THROUGH PRUDENT MANAGEMENT.**

**YOU HEAR A LOT IN THE MAINSTREAM MEDIA ABOUT ABORIGINAL BUSINESS FAILURE.**

**YOU HEAR IT SO OFTEN...AT TIMES....YOU WOULD THINK EVERY BLACK BUSINESS DOLLAR AUTOMATICALLY TURNS RED.**

**BUT THINK ABOUT THIS.**

**THE TAXPAPER FUNDS STOPPED FLOWING INTO OUR STATUTORY INVESTMENT FUND  
TEN YEARS AGO.**

**AT THE TIME THE VALUE OF THE INVESTMENTS FUND WAS JUST UNDER THREE  
HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS.**

**TODAY THAT FUND IS WORTH MORE THAN \$600 MILLION.**

**THAT IS A SUCCESS STORY.**

**WE ARE NOW FULLY SELF FUNDED.**

**WE NO LONGER HOLD OUR HANDS OUT TO GOVERNMENT FOR CORE FUNDING.**

**I HOPE WE NEVER DO SO AGAIN.**

**WE CAN STAND ON OUR OWN TWO FEET.....AND SUSTAIN THE LAND RIGHTS  
NETWORK.**

**WE CAN, AND DO, WORK WITH GOVERNMENT TO DEVELOP COMMUNITY BASED  
ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT STRATEGIES.**

**WE ARE ALSO MONITORING THE BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY ENVIRONMENT TO  
IDENTIFY SUITABLE AND VIABLE COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISE OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
OUR PEOPLE.**

**AND WE WANT TO PURSUE PARTNERSHIPS WITH KEY INDUSTRY GROUPS TO BUILD COMMERCIAL AND ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY FOR ABORIGINAL PEOPLE.**

**THEY ARE ALL WORTHY GOALS.**

**WE PURSUE THEM EVERY DAY.**

**WE DO SO THROUGH AN IN-HOUSE COMMERCIAL UNIT AT NSWALC.**

**THIS UNIT WAS ESTABLISHED IN RECOGNITION OF THREE THINGS.**

- **THE EMERGING VALUE OF THE LAND ESTATE NOW HELD BY LOCAL ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCILS AND NSWALC.**
- **THE EMERGING COMMERCIAL INTEREST IN IT,**
- **AND THE NEED FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF THAT LAND BASE.**

**THE UNIT PERFORMS A DUAL ROLE FOR THE LAND COUNCIL NETWORK.**

**IT ADMINISTERS NSWALC'S STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS REGARDING THE APPROVAL OF PROPOSED LAND DEALING TRANSACTIONS.**

**PERHAPS..... MORE IMPORTANTLY.....IT ASSISTS LALC'S AND NSWALC IN LAND AND COMMERCIAL MATTERS.**

**THE UNIT IS WORKING WITH AN INCREASING NUMBER OF LALC'S EVERY DAY TO SEEK TO ACHIEVE BENEFICIAL OUTCOMES FROM THEIR LAND BASES.**

**IT IS FAIR TO SAY THERE WAS A BIT OF SUSPICION INITIALLY.**

**THIS IS BECAUSE OF OUR ROLE IN APPROVING THOSE DEVELOPMENTS.**

**MOST LALCS NOW UNDERSTAND WE WANT TO ENSURE THEY OBTAIN THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOME FROM ANY PROPOSED LAND DEALING.**

**WE ARE NOT LOOKING TO STOP DEVELOPMENT.**

**THIS WAS A COMMON MISUNDERSTANDING WHEN THE COMMERCIAL UNIT WAS FIRST ESTABLISHED**

**MANY LALC'S NOW SEEK OUR ADVICE BEFORE ENTERING INTO ANY ARRANGEMENTS AND KNOW WE WANT TO GET THE BEST OUTCOME FOR THEM AND THEIR COMMUNITIES.**

**WE NOW RECEIVE A CONSTANT STREAM OF LAND DEALING APPLICATIONS.**

**THESE INCLUDE ACQUISITIONS, DISPOSALS, LEASES FOR A PERIOD OF THREE YEARS OR GREATER, THE GRANTING OF EASEMENTS AND OTHER TRANSACTIONS THAT RESULT IN A CHANGE OF USE TO THE LAND.**

**DURING THE 2006-07 FINANCIAL YEAR, THE COMMERCIAL UNIT WAS INVOLVED IN MORE THAN 80 PROPOSED OR COMPLETED LAND DEALINGS.**

**THIS INVOLVED LAND WITH AN ESTIMATED VALUE OF MORE THAN \$200 MILLION.**

**THOSE LAND DEALING APPLICATIONS RANGED FROM THE SALE OF INDIVIDUAL LOTS TO REZONING AND RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISION OF MAJOR LAND HOLDINGS.**

**APPLICATIONS WERE ALSO RECEIVED FOR RETAIL DEVELOPMENT OF LAND, SAND MINING AND EXPLORATORY PETROLEUM DRILLING ON LALC LAND.**

**TOURISM IS ANOTHER AREA WHICH MANY LALCS ARE NOW LOOKING AT.**

**MOST OF THESE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS ARE COVERED BY THE NORMAL COMMERCIAL-IN-CONFIDENCE CONVENTIONS.**

**WHILE WE CANNOT TALK OF INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS I CAN ASSURE YOU THERE ARE MANY OF THEM.**

**WE INTEND TO LET THE WORLD KNOW ABOUT THEM AS THEY ARE APPROVED WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE RELEVANT PARTIES.**

**NSWALC ALSO HAS INCREASED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE BUSINESS PLANNING OF LALC RESOURCES.**

**NSWALC MUST NOW APPROVE ANY COMMUNITY BENEFIT SCHEME PROPOSED TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY A LALC FOR THE BENEFIT OF MEMBERS.**

**AND THE COMMERCIAL UNIT IS NOW DEVELOPING POLICIES AROUND COMMUNITY BENEFIT SCHEMES.**

**AS YOU CAN SEE MUCH HAS BEEN ACHIEVED.**

**THERE IS MUCH MORE TO BE ACHIEVED.**

**I CAN ASSURE YOU IT IS A LONG WAY FROM KUNCHI.**