

## GETTING ON WITH BUSINESS



Economic development of Gulf indigenous communities has taken a step forward after an Indigenous Economic Development Forum was held in Normanton in October.



The Gulf Indigenous Economic Development Forum was planned and managed by a Steering Committee comprising Bynoe Aboriginal Corporation, and the Shire Councils of Doomadgee, Mornington Island and Kowanyama. Gulf Savannah Development (GSD) secured the funds to run the Forum and to appoint a consultant (Jeremy Blockey) to work with the Steering Committee.



*Paul McGuiness addressing the Forum*

“The Forum was an important event and the challenge now is to translate some of the ideas into action” said Fred Pascoe, Chairman of the Steering Committee. “As entrepreneurs and Councils, we face some common challenges in business development, and there are important opportunities to work together in addressing these. Our goal is to participate in indigenous economic development to create a better future for our communities” said Fred. A submission is now being developed by the Steering Committee to secure funds to keep driving the indigenous economic development agenda forward.



*Fred and Paul telling the Delta Downs story to Forum participants*

About 40 participants attended the Forum, which was held at the TAFE campus, and heard the perspectives of a range of presenters including Gerhardt Pearson (Balkan Cape York Development Corporation), Paul McGuiness (Aboriginal Development Benefits Trust), Lloyd Jones (Oz Minerals) and Rob Macalister (Gulf Savannah Development).

Participants then identified a range of possible business opportunities and set some key priorities. Participants were very keen to establish networks between indigenous entrepreneurs, such as a network of community stores to share experiences and look at areas of collaboration (eg joint purchasing). A highlight of the 2-day Forum was a field trip to Delta Downs. As one participant said - the Forum was a way of “sharing others ideas, showing a way to move forward”.

Thanks to the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations who provided funding and to everyone who gave their time and ideas. Please contact Fred Pascoe at Bynoe in Normanton for more information or if you want to get involved.