

Wednesday, 1 February 2012

## Unions form alliance with Jack Thompson Foundation to improve job outcomes for Indigenous Australians

A new partnership between unions and the Jack Thompson Foundation will aim to deliver better outcomes for Indigenous Australians through new skills and job training opportunities.

ACTU Secretary Jeff Lawrence, who announced the partnership alongside renowned actor Jack Thompson in Melbourne today, said the alliance would empower indigenous Australians and their communities, through a strengthened skills base within local communities.

“The Jack Thompson Foundation is already doing fantastic work in this area, training young indigenous people in construction trades so that they can use their skills to build homes in their local areas,” Mr Lawrence said.

“We know how important it is to ensure we have a skilled workforce, which means the needs of communities are met, but also so that individuals have a chance to contribute to their communities and to earn a living.

“Unions have long been committed to improving the outcomes for our indigenous Australians and just last year developed the Indigenous Action Plan 2011-13, which includes a focus on improving employment opportunities.

“The Action Plan is consistent with Australian unions’ commitment to justice, rights for all workers and a more equal society.

“Our values align closely with those of Mr Thompson and his foundation, so when we had the opportunity to create an alliance with the group, we immediately agreed.”

Mr Lawrence said one of the partnership’s immediate goals would be to secure more apprenticeship opportunities for young indigenous Australians.

“The partnership will work closely with unions in the trade and education sectors to explore training pathways for young people in remote communities,” he said.

“We will also investigate secondment opportunities for trade training mentors into remote townships where Jack Thompson Foundation projects are being undertaken.”

Mr Lawrence said the partnership would consult closely with Indigenous communities in developing all projects and their aims.

Mr Thompson said: “Partnerships with all Australians are the way forward in closing the gap of disadvantage. By working together, all Australians can work to help impoverished communities seek a better life for their children and their communities.

“This partnership with the ACTU is exciting and it is essential for the ongoing achievement of the Jack Thompson Foundation’s aims, to provide trade-recognised skills that will enable remote Indigenous communities to house and support their needs now and into the future”.

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