



CONGRESS CROSSES TO CATSI

The Registrar of Indigenous Corporations, Anthony Beven, has welcomed the registration of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Inc. (Congress) under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act) 2006* (CATSI Act). The transfer from the Northern Territory's *Associations Act 2003* to the CATSI Act occurred yesterday after it was approved at the Congress annual general meeting in Alice Springs on 14 December 2012.

Formed in 1973 Congress has expanded to become the largest Aboriginal-controlled health service in the Northern Territory. It delivers primary health care to the Aboriginal community of Alice Springs and to those on outstations within a 100-kilometre radius. It is also responsible for clinics in five remote Central Australian communities.

'This has been an important decision for us,' said Congress CEO Donna Ah Chee, 'But we are very confident that it is the right one. We know there are many advantages in registering under the CATSI Act.'

Some of the benefits for Congress incorporating under the CATSI Act include:

- assistance and advice from the Registrar's office on corporate governance
- flexible corporate governance that incorporates local culture and customs
- access to free services from the Registrar, such as the pro bono legal service LawHelp and recruitment assistance for senior positions.

The members of Congress also approved a change to its rule book to strengthen its governance structure by adding three independent Aboriginal experts to serve alongside the other six elected board members.

'I am encouraged Congress has chosen to register with my office,' Mr Beven said. 'This is one of the largest Aboriginal organisations in the Northern Territory with a long and important history. It plays a vital role in delivering essential health services and I look forward to working with the new directors as they build on Congress' past achievements.'

Background

The CATSI Act delivers modern corporate governance standards which emphasise the importance of compliance and reporting obligations as a mechanism to improve transparency and accountability. At the same time, the CATSI Act retains special measures to meet the specific needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

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