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Mining jobs for 200 additional Indigenous Australians

Fortescue Metals Group (FMG) will place 200 Indigenous job seekers into mining industry related jobs in the Pilbara region through the Australian Government's Vocational Training & Employment Centre (VTEC) initiative.

Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Senator Nigel Scullion, announced the Centre today saying the VTEC model brought an end to the cycle of training for training's sake.

"The Fortescue Metals Group VTEC will provide training and guaranteed jobs for up to 200 Indigenous job seekers in the mining industry," Minister Scullion said.

"It's vital that training programmes are aligned to real jobs because getting Indigenous Australians into ongoing employment is critical to reducing Indigenous disadvantage," Minister Scullion said.

"The need to align training with actual jobs is one of the reasons why the Government commissioned Mr Andrew Forrest, Non-Executive Chairman of Fortescue, to lead a review of our Indigenous employment and training programmes.

"Mr Forrest is also the Chairman of the Minderoo Foundation, which established GenerationOne and the employment model that VTEC is based on. GenerationOne manages the Australian Employment Covenant, an industry-led initiative that has established more than 60,000 job pledges for Indigenous Australians from Australian companies.

"The funding agreement will enable Fortescue to continue its successful in-house VTEC which has been operating since 2006.

"The Fortescue VTEC is the first 'employer' VTEC. This means job seekers supported and trained at the VTEC will be placed directly into jobs with Fortescue or with contractors."

The Australian Government has provided Fortescue with significant financial assistance to deliver their VTEC over a number of years. The VTEC has an impressive record of achievement, including Indigenous employment retention rate of over 90 per cent. Fortescue reports employing more than 500 Indigenous employees, which represents 13 per cent of its workforce.

The Australian Government has committed up to \$45 million for VTECs to train up to 5,000 Indigenous Australians for specific jobs across Australia before July 2015.

"The VTEC model is based on strong collaboration between employers, employment and training service providers, participation support services and local Indigenous communities," Minister Scullion said.

"As part of the process of rolling out the VTEC model, we have spoken to employers across the country to determine where the jobs are located and what industries they are in.

“Increasing Indigenous employment is one of the three key priorities of the Australian Government and I congratulate GenerationOne on its enthusiastic involvement in this critical area.”

GenerationOne National Development Director, Jeremy Donovan, said VTECs were driven by a demand-led employment model that was the future of Australian Indigenous vocational training and employment.

“Commitment to the VTEC program is not only about improving the lives of Indigenous job seekers, but also about broadening wider Australian business company culture. Hiring Indigenous Australians is not goodwill, but good business,” Mr Donovan said.

Chief Executive Officer at Fortescue Metals Group, Mr Nev Power, said Fortescue believed in changing lives through opportunity.

“This VTEC contract gives us the capacity to deliver the opportunity that only a job can provide. We are building on eight years of VTEC success by adding another 200 jobs to our Aboriginal workforce over the next 12 months through this contract,” Mr Power said.

VTECs will be located in Sydney, The Hunter Region, South Coast NSW, Brisbane, North and Central Queensland, Perth, Darwin, Melbourne, Kalgoorlie, Alice Springs, The Barkley Region of the Northern Territory, the Kimberley and Adelaide.

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