

PRESS RELEASE – ADC FORUM – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TOWNSVILLE SUMMIT RIVALS G20 IN IMPORTANCE FOR AUSTRALIA'S INDIGENOUS WORKFORCE, SAYS WARREN ENTSCH

IN the midst of raising awareness about the upcoming G20, Federal MP Warren Entsch says the Northern Development Summit in Townsville (26-28 June) will be just as important as the G20 in terms of Australia's short and long-term development.

Mr Entsch, Member for Leichhardt and Chair of the Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia, said the Summit will be a chance to showcase months of work and consultations with individuals, businesses and communities from Perth to the Kimberley, Darwin to Alice Springs and Nhulunbuy, Mackay to the Torres Strait.

"What we've seen is really inspirational," said Mr Entsch. "There are incredible opportunities out there – now it's up to us as a government to identify the barriers to making these opportunities happen, and find ways to address them. I'm really looking forward to taking part in the Northern Development Summit and seeing participants tackle some of the big issues, and it's especially timely given the release of our interim report today (SUBS – 16 JUNE).

"A key element in developing the North is that we need increased population and a capable and adaptable workforce in place. If we want to see the North become Asia's food-bowl, if we want to double output, grow mining, tourism and mega-cities, then we need - first and foremost - a ready workforce."

Mr Entsch highlighted the case of Rusca Brothers Group, a family-owned business based in Borroloola that is 100% Indigenous owned and staffed and has seen incredible outcomes through its training programs.

"Rusca Brothers employs all Indigenous staff from the ages of 16-60, many of whom have never had the opportunity to work in their lives," Mr Entsch explained. "They operate a fleet of earthmoving equipment and are involved in civil construction in our remote regions, recently completing a 170km haul-out road for Western Desert Resources to the Bing Bong Port.

"This is not tokenistic – it's a serious operation running a critical service and paying its workforce top dollar. Sid Rusca and his sons Robbie and Shannon are the sorts of people who will capture the opportunities we'll be talking about at the Summit and make them happen."

Due to be held in Queensland at the end of this month, the Northern Development Summit is mobilizing some of the country's largest political, industrial and public organisations to discuss the future of Australia's North. The public have been officially invited to participate and the results will inform the Commonwealth Government's Northern Development White Paper.

Hosted by ADC Forum, the Northern Development Summit is encouraging all sectors of the public, government and business communities to attend and have their say on the future of Australia's North.

For more information on registration, the public is encouraged to visit www.adcforum.org

Ends -----

PICTURE CAPTION: Chair of the Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia, Warren Entsch (centre) met with NT entrepreneur Sid Rusca (second from right) and members of his team at the Bing Bong Port near Borroloola.



ADC Forum (Founded as the Australian Davos Connection) is a not-for-profit leadership organisation founded in 1996 by the Australian members and participants of the World Economic Forum.

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ADC Forum is an independent not-for-profit organisation delivering high-level strategic leadership forums including the annual Australian Leadership Retreat on Hayman Island and the annual Future Summit.



The Hon. Warren Entsch MP is the Federal Member for Leichhardt and Chair of the Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia. As well as helping to shape the social, economic and environmental future for Northern Australia, Warren continues to advocate for initiatives that he sees as vital to the prosperity of Far North Queensland. Since first being elected to Parliament in March 1996, Warren has served on several joint committees addressing Native Title issues, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Environment, Recreation and the Arts. Warren was appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Industry, Science and Resources from 1998 to 2001 and from 2002-06 was Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources. In 2007 he was appointed to the Northern Australia Water and Land Taskforce. He is currently patron of the Vietnam Veterans' Motorcycle Club (FNQ Chapter), the North Queensland Rubies women's indigenous hockey team, the Blaze men's indigenous hockey team, and the Leichhardt Lions football club.

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