

MEDIA RELEASE

'From Little Things Big Things Grow' for this Indigenous Business,
thanks to Fortescue



Ochre Workforce Solutions was formed in family home of CEO Joanne Pellew, with the dining room table used between meals to stack resumes that came pouring in from Indigenous people across WA, who had seen Ochre's callout and wanted to register for a job.

Four years later, Ochre has signed a contract with one of Western Australia's largest companies, iron ore producer Fortescue Metals Group, continuing its growth from humble beginnings into a preferred supplier of direct blue collar labour hire. The two year, initial term contract places Ochre on Fortescue's direct labour hire panel, which comprises four recruitment businesses.

Joanne said Ochre has progressed through many stages and diversification processes in a few short years and has grown to become not only a specialised contract labour hire company, but the only privately owned Registered Training Organisation (RTO) licensed to an Indigenous woman in WA.

"RTO status means that as well as delivering mainstream training courses for the resources sector, Ochre can run customised pre-employment programs with guaranteed jobs at the end of the training program, an area of the business that we have taken the greatest rewards from," Joanne said.

“To see Indigenous people, some who may have been long term unemployed, who have had many barriers through disadvantage placed in front of them, with young families actually start and finish the programs and go off into the mining sector, starting on significant incomes and taking those steps to changing their own futures for the better, is such a powerful thing to be a part of.”

Fortescue’s commitment to engaging Indigenous businesses, through its *Billion Opportunities* program, has been a welcome opportunity to businesses like Ochre. The *Billion Opportunities* program was launched in December 2011 with an initial target of awarding \$1 billion worth of contracts and sub-contracts to Aboriginal businesses and joint ventures – a target that was achieved six months ahead of schedule in June 2013.

“Being given a hand-up instead of a hand-out, is the only thing we ever wanted,” Joanne said. “We don’t need charity, all we need is the opportunity to prove we can provide services just as good as the next business. We need the real contract transactions from industry leading companies such as Fortescue to provide those opportunities for us to prove ourselves as legitimate and capable businesses.”

Fortescue Chief Executive Officer Nev Power is proud of the program’s success. “The *Billion Opportunities* program has awarded Aboriginal businesses and joint ventures over 160 contracts and sub-contracts, now worth more than \$1.6 billion. That value represents approximately 10 per cent of Fortescue’s total procurement since the program was launched. Having Ochre on our recruitment panel is a great example of the diversification of Aboriginal businesses we engage.”