

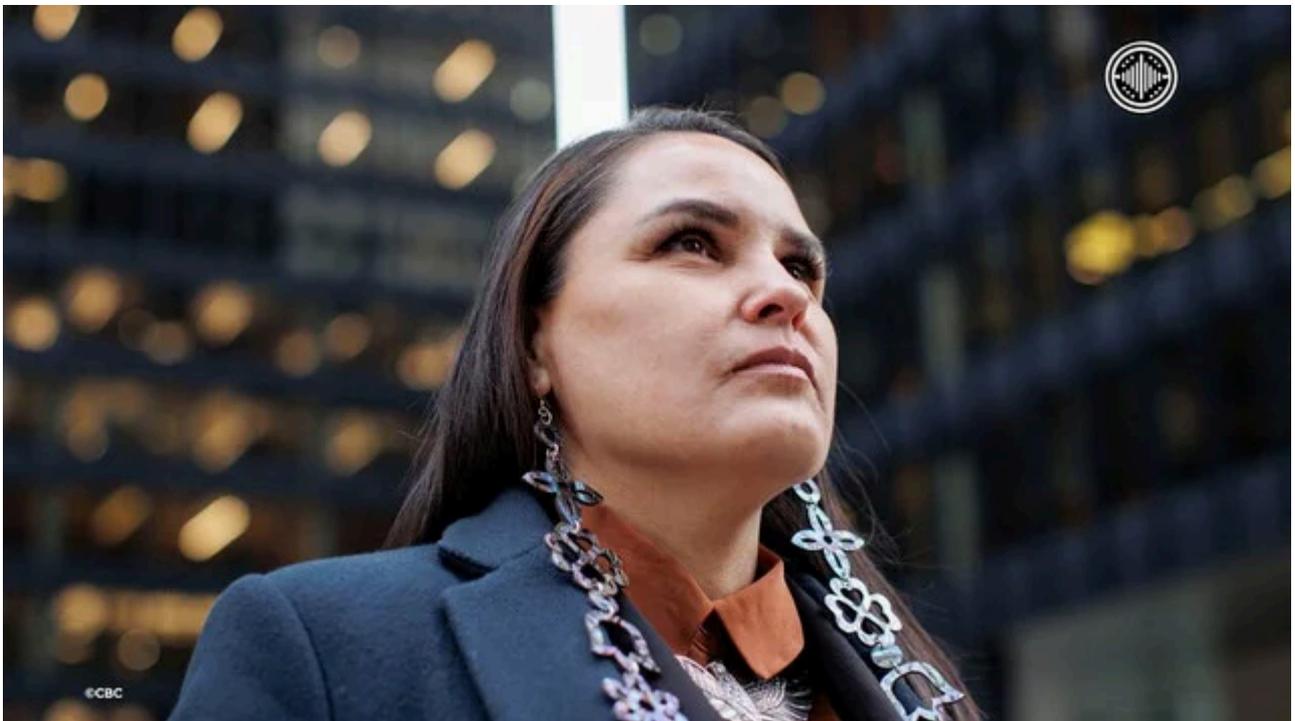
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## Indigenous Leaders Shape Economic Reform at Roundtables

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Indigenous leaders, through a series of roundtables led by Minister Malarndirri McCarthy, aim to influence Australia's national economic reforms, focusing on job creation and sustainable development.

Indigenous leaders are actively shaping Australia's economic future through a series of four First Nations roundtables, with the first hosted by Minister for Indigenous Australians, Senator Malarndirri McCarthy, in early August 2025. These discussions, designed to inform the broader Economic Reform Roundtable in Canberra later this month, prioritize Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives on job creation, infrastructure, and sustainable land use. The initiative follows the Australian Labor Party government's 2023 commitment to partner with the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak

Organisations (Coalition of Peaks) to boost economic outcomes, though critics argue progress has been slow, per Treasury data.

At the inaugural roundtable, National Native Title Council chief executive Jamie Lowe emphasized leveraging native title for economic gain, citing the \$75 million allocated for native title reform in 2025, as announced at the Garma Festival, per The Canberra Times. Lowe argued that empowering traditional owners to advocate for projects like renewable energy could drive jobs and protect cultural heritage. However, Liberal Party Member of Parliament (MP) Angus Taylor cautioned that such reforms must avoid adding regulatory burdens, which could stifle small businesses already grappling with 2.8% inflation, per the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Yolngu leader Djawa Yunupingu, speaking at the roundtable, stressed the need for a “real economy” in regions like Arnhem Land, advocating for Indigenous-led projects in housing and energy, per Canberra CityNews. This aligns with the First Nations Clean Energy Strategy, which aims for 82% renewable electricity by 2030, with Indigenous participation as a key pillar, per ABC News. Yet, shadow Indigenous Australians Minister Jacinta Nampijinpa Price criticized the government’s focus, arguing it sidesteps practical solutions like auditing Indigenous program spending, per ABC News.

The roundtables reflect a push for self-determination, with leaders like Kate George from the Pilbara Energy Transition steering committee highlighting Canada’s model, where First Nations control 20% of energy infrastructure, compared to Australia’s 2%, per ABC News. Business groups, including the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), warn that reforms must balance economic growth with fiscal sustainability, given the \$46.7 billion federal deficit forecast for 2025–26, per Treasury. As the national roundtable looms, these discussions will test the government’s ability to deliver measurable outcomes.