

MEDIA ADVISORY

ABORIGINAL LEADER NOEL PEARSON TO DELIVER BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE LECTURE

Pathways to Prosperity for Indigenous People

The 15th annual New Zealand Business Roundtable Sir Ronald Trotter lecture will be delivered by Noel Pearson at a dinner at The Auckland War Memorial Museum on 2 November 2010. A lawyer and the founder of the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership, Noel Pearson has devoted his life to solving problems of education, welfare and employment in Aboriginal communities (see below).

The Sir Ronald Trotter Lecture series was inaugurated by the New Zealand Business Roundtable in 1995 to honour its founding chairman's many contributions to business and public affairs.

The challenges facing indigenous people living in first-world welfare states like Australia and New Zealand differ markedly from those of indigenous people in developing countries with no welfare state. In the case of Australia's Aboriginal communities, passive welfare has completely replaced any real indigenous economy or traditional lifestyle, for there is no longer any need to maintain these things. In discussing this challenge Noel Pearson will explore ideas New Zealand can take from Australia's experience as it seeks to address the ill effects of welfarism here, and the social, cultural and economic impoverishment of our own disadvantaged communities.

Noel Pearson is regarded as one of Australia's most influential thinkers and activists. He has spent much of the past decade promoting a wholesale shift in indigenous policy, notably in relation to welfare, substance abuse, child protection, and indigenous participation in economic development. He argues that so-called 'progressive' approaches to these issues merely serve to keep people dependent on welfare and out of the 'real' economy.

Pearson played a pivotal role in the establishment of the Cape York Land Council, the first organisation to work with and fight on behalf of traditional owner groups for the return of their homelands. His work on native title cases included the historic WiK decision, regarded as one of the most important Native Title cases in Australian history. Clive James has described Noel Pearson as "beyond classification as a political theorist and commentator: for his historical sense, plain style and power of argument, he simply knocks spots off everybody else in the country."

Note: The Cape York Institute was established in July 2004 as an independent policy and leadership organisation. The Institute champions reform in Indigenous economic and social policies and supports the development of current and future Cape York leaders. The Institute was developed in partnership with the people of Cape York and Griffith University, with financial support from the Queensland and Australian Governments. It is focussed on issues in Cape York but aims to have a national influence.

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