

NEW CLC OFFICE 27 STUART HIGHWAY ALICE SPRINGS

More than 1000 guests turned out when the Central Land Council opened its new office in Alice Springs in June.

The building has 2,720 square metres of office space and will accommodate 140 staff members who were formerly spread around Alice Springs in five separate offices.

CLC Director David Ross said the growth of the Aboriginal population in Central Australia, the increased demand for land management and community development services, the increasing complexity of issues facing Aboriginal people and the growth of mineral exploration have led to an expansion of the CLC's staff.

"The organisation has grown enormously in the last decade and we are very proud that 90 of our 174 employees are Aboriginal," Mr Ross said.

The cost for design, construction and fit out of the building was about \$10 million dollars funded from the Aboriginal Benefits Account, the sale of the CLC's other properties and a refund of payroll tax after a successful court challenge.

"We tried extremely hard to ensure that most of that construction money was spent locally," Mr Ross said.

In addition, through goods, services and personnel expenditure, the CLC contributes more than \$15 million annually to the local economy of Alice Springs.

Aboriginal people receiving royalties from mining on their country spend nearly \$15 million on consumable items and services, almost exclusively in Alice Springs.

"They have opted to spend another \$15.5 million of their royalties on community development in their communities to make them better places to live and to bring up kids," Mr Ross said.

Former Federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs Amanda Vanstone approved the initial funding from the ABA and it was supported by subsequent ministers Mal Brough and Jenny Macklin.

More than 24,000 Aboriginal people speaking 15 languages live in the CLC's region.

Its 90 delegates come from all parts of Central Australia to represent their communities in a unique forum which obtains a broad consensus of Aboriginal people's aspirations and wishes.

