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## ANZ Guarantee reaches \$150 million milestone in First Nations business lending

ANZ today announced its First Nations Guarantee program, has reached a \$150 million milestone in Asset Finance lending to First Nations businesses.

ANZ's Guarantee is a nationally leading program unlocking access to capital for First Nations startups and existing business, giving them the opportunity to invest in growth, expand their operations, acquire assets, and drive economic growth.

The Guarantee program was first established in 2018 by ANZ in partnership with mining company Fortescue Metals Group and has since expanded to include other mining companies.

Since then, the program has backed 35 Western Australia-based First Nations businesses, allowing them to secure essential assets – machinery, equipment, property, and vehicles – while expanding infrastructure and creating jobs.

First Nations businesses face unique and heightened challenges in securing finance from traditional lenders and financial institutions, such as lower intergenerational wealth and financial inclusion, as a result of systemic financial and economic exclusion. However, initiatives like ANZ's Guarantee program can provide crucial financial support, enabling businesses to purchase their assets rather than rent, and helping those without an extensive credit history or collateral to build a stronger asset base for long-term sustainability.

Today, some of these businesses no longer require a guarantor, marking a significant milestone in their financial independence and ability to scale their business.

Commenting on the milestone, ANZ's Head of First Nations Strategy (Australia), Shelley Cable said: "ANZ's First Nations Guarantee has become Australia's single most successful program for lending to First Nations businesses at scale. It significantly increases the finance available to First Nations businesses, and this \$150 million lending milestone demonstrates the ongoing need for finance, to fund the rapid growth occurring within Australia's First Nations economy.

"Being able to extend finance allows participating First Nations businesses to start and scale rapidly. This milestone signals a shift towards a greater role for First Nations businesses across the economy, where Indigenous enterprises are key drivers of growth and innovation."

To expand the reach of the program, ANZ encourages more institutional and large corporate businesses to join as guarantors, further strengthening the financial ecosystem for First Nations businesses.

ANZ's Managing Director, Corporate Finance for Institutional Banking, Christina Tonkin said: "Collaborating with our large Institutional customers demonstrates the collective impact we can have, when large organisations combine their financial strength and scale in support of First Nations economic growth.

"We're proud to work alongside partners like Fortescue, and we see a clear opportunity for more institutional businesses to play a role in unlocking capital, capability and long-term growth in the First Nations economy.

"Becoming a guarantor supports First Nations economic growth while strengthening procurement pipelines with a more diverse and resilient supplier base," Ms Tonkin concluded.

This program is one of several initiatives that reflects ANZ's broader commitment to supporting the First Nations economy as a driver of national growth and opportunity, through its Australian First Nations Strategy.

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