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Cr Josh Wilson at the Aboriginal Cultural Centre with Sam Wainswright, Vanda Duru, Jaime Lee Kickett, Marlia Falnowna and Natalie Snooke. Picture: Robin Kornel

FREMANTLE GETS CLOSER TO INDIGENOUS JOBS TARGET

Closing the gap

Jessica Nico

THERE continues to be a divide between indigenous and non-indigenous numbers in the workforce but the City of Fremantle is working hard to reduce that gap locally, according to councillor Josh Wilson.

In 2010, the City set a target to have 4 per cent of its workforce made up of people of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent by 2015-16, a target above the Commonwealth public service aim of 2.7 per cent.

In July, 2013, the city's most recent Indigenous Employment

Action Plan report showed the number of indigenous people employed had reached 3.4 per cent, an increase from the 2.05 per cent the year before.

Cr Wilson said this progress was so encouraging that he was eager to see the city establish an Indigenous Employment and Reconciliation Compact with large employers in the area, which would promote an increase in employment and traineeship opportunities.

"Every kid in Fremantle/Walyalup should grow up with the chance to participate fully in the social and economic life of

this City, yet there continues to be a clear participation gap in many areas of life between indigenous and non-indigenous people, including when it comes to employment," he said.

"Indigenous employment participation Australia-wide is much lower than it should be and the council has worked hard to be more inclusive across the board."

Cr Wilson said there were many issues that affected employment participation, with education and training playing big roles, but cultural factors also played a part.

"If we are serious about closing the gap it means we have to go beyond 'business as usual' and that's a challenge for all of us in trying to create an Australian community that is fairer and more inclusive," Cr Wilson said.

"The idea behind the creation of a Fremantle Indigenous Employment and Reconciliation Compact is to model proactive approaches to increasing indigenous employment and to share ideas and methods which could create pathways that small and medium businesses could then follow or use."