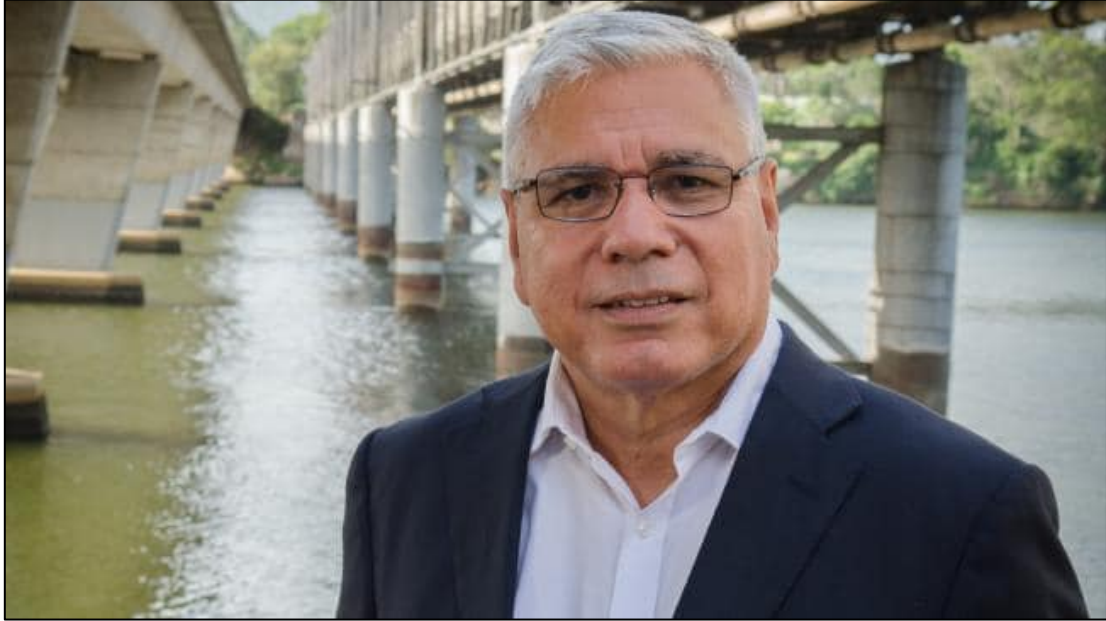

Warren Mundine to quit indigenous company awarded jobs contract



Warren Mundine will resign as chairman of Rise on Monday. Picture: Phil Harris

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- Paige Taylor
 - 22nd February 2019

Liberal party candidate Warren Mundine will resign on Monday from a company the Coalition has chosen for contracts due to start in July, a senate estimates committee has been told.

Mr Mundine, the Liberal candidate for Gilmore, is chair of RISE Ventures, a 50 per cent indigenous-owned company that has contract grants to deliver jobs programs in six regions across Australia.

In a cross-portfolio estimates hearing in Canberra today, Indigenous Affairs minister Nigel Scullion faced questions about the contracts from Labor Senators Jenny McAllister and Pat Dodson and Greens Senator Rachel Siewert.

Senator Scullion told the estimates hearing he signed off on a recommendation for Rise to have job services contracts renewed, albeit in a smaller number of regions, last December. This was before he knew that Mr Mundine would become a candidate for Liberal preselection. Mr Scullion told the Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee that he learned of Mr Mundine's candidacy from media reports in late January. He agreed this would have been January 22.

Mr Scullion said that on December 7 last year his department recommended Rise, and a selection of other companies that are at least 50 per cent indigenous owned, should become preferred tenderers to carry out the work of the Coalition's Community Development Program.

The program, which replaced an incarnation of the work-for-the-dole scheme, is in place in remote towns and communities across Australia where indigenous unemployment is high.

Senator Scullion said he signed off on the recommendations, and informed the preferred tenderers on December 19 and 20 last year.

“That was the circumstances before anyone had any knowledge of the intentions of Mr Mundine,” Senator Scullion told the hearing.

He said he then asked his department: “What’s happening with Rise?” and was told verbally that Mr Mundine had indicated he would resign.

After a break in the hearing, Senator Scullion’s department advised the hearing that Mr Mundine’s resignation would happen Monday.