

Making Indigenous Friendly Businesses: What makes Indigenous owned businesses better workplaces for Indigenous employees?

Information sheet on the NIAA funded research project by ANU in collaboration with Supply Nation

A research team from the Australian National University (ANU) is undertaking a research project to determine why Indigenous-owned businesses hire a much larger proportion of Indigenous employees than non-Indigenous-owned businesses. Understanding this will also help to inform how to make non-Indigenous-owned businesses more supportive of, and conducive to, Indigenous employment.

The research team comprises of five multi-disciplinary researchers from the ANU and Griffith University, three of whom identify as Indigenous. The research project has grant funding from the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), and includes Supply Nation, Indigenous Business Australia, Black Business Finder, and the NIAA as collaborating and consulting partners.

The research comprises of three parts:

1. An analysis of Indigenous business data to provide an updated picture of Indigenous employment in the Indigenous business sector. The preliminary analysis of Supply Nation data has been published as [Supply Nation Research and Policy Brief No.3](#)
2. Online focus groups with Indigenous business owners / managers and employees to discuss how workplace practice in Indigenous business supports Indigenous employment.
3. A survey of all Australian businesses to understand their practices regarding Indigenous employment, and to understand what they could potentially implement from Indigenous business practices.

The research project will offer unique and valuable findings that will have practical applications for the Indigenous business sector and Indigenous employment policy nationwide. While previous studies have outlined best practice Indigenous employment policy, these studies have not considered the employment policies and workplace environment of Indigenous-owned businesses. Previous analysis of Indigenous businesses has also been limited by small sample sizes, whereas this study will be based on the over 3,000 Indigenous businesses now registered with Supply Nation.

The online focus groups with owners / managers and Indigenous employees from Supply Nation registered Indigenous businesses are planned to take place over the next few months. The focus groups will help inform our understanding of what Indigenous businesses do differently to non-Indigenous businesses and how these workplaces differ.

In the coming weeks, you may hear from the research team requesting your participation in the online focus groups. This is the most important aspect of the research project, as it will give you the opportunity to provide your experience, perspective, and expertise about the Indigenous business sector.



If you have any questions, suggestions, feedback, or wish to participate, please contact one of the research team via the contact emails below.

The research team

Chief Investigator Boyd Hunter

boyd.hunter@anu.edu.au

Boyd is Emeritus Professor at the ANU Centre for Social Research and Methods (CSRM). He has several decades of work in Indigenous economic policy research and has been President of the Australian Society of Labour Economics. Boyd is the lead researcher on the project and is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences of Australia.

Professor Dennis Foley

dennisfordf@gmail.com

Professor Foley is the leading scholar on Indigenous entrepreneurship with a long-standing international reputation and is a visiting fellow at the ANU CSRM. As a descendant of Gai-mariagal and Wiradjuri First Nation Peoples, he has collaborated with Professor Hunter consistently since 2005, being jointly responsible for important policy developments around Indigenous business.

Associate Professor Kerry Bodle

k.bodle@griffith.edu.au

Associate Professor Kerry Bodle is a descendant of Karendali, Kalali and Waka Waka First Nation Peoples and is the first Indigenous Accountant with CPA qualifications. As such, she is in a unique position to work closely with both Indigenous businesses and community groups associated with them. She is first-named CI on the ARC Indigenous Discovery Project Empowering Indigenous businesses through improved financial literacy. Kerry is a Visiting Fellow at the ANU CSRM, but also works at Griffith University.

Research Assistant Jessica Harris

jessica.a.harris@griffith.edu.au

Jessica Harris is a research assistant employed part-time for this project at ANU and is also a PhD candidate and researcher at Griffith University. Jess is an Indigenous researcher and has extensive experience in facilitating focus group interviews both in person and online and will therefore play a strong role in the co-facilitation and co-design of the focus groups for this project.

PhD Candidate Christian Eva

Christian.Eva@anu.edu.au

Christian is a PhD candidate (part of the research project) at the ANU CSRM, supervised and aided by the members of this research group. Christian has previous experience and passion in researching Indigenous economic self-determination as part of his Master's degree.