

## Media release

### Supplier Diversity Award winners announced at Connect 2023

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**Date of release** 9 August 2023

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Supply Nation's annual flagship event for the Indigenous business sector, **Connect**, returned to Gadigal Country, transforming the ICC Sydney into a hub of learning, collaboration, and relationship-building.

This year's theme – Empowering Indigenous Futures – spoke to the significant political, social and economic changes that have led to greater outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In her welcoming address at last night's Gala Awards Dinner, Supply Nation Executive Director, Michelle Deshong, reflected on the monumental historical shift on the horizon, in the upcoming referendum:

*"Tonight, we find ourselves on the precipice of a hugely significant change, and one that will be pivotal in setting Australia's course for generations to come... This nation has an opportunity to reframe our terms of engagement, and these are the historical moments that shape our generations. Our people are certainly poised to harness this opportunity."*

Deshong expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to lead Supply Nation over the past nine months, as Interim CEO, watching the Indigenous business sector break new ground and harness its power to generate positive outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians alike, before handing the reins to Supply Nation's new CEO, Kate Russell.

Connect 2023 was the biggest to date – with over 2,400 Indigenous businesses, corporate and government members, international delegates and attendees through the Tradeshow doors. Tradeshow hosts, Carla McGrath and Dan Bouchier harnessed the energy on the Tradeshow floor and guided everyone through an action-packed day of entertainment, panel discussions, interviews and networking.

The morning kicked off with a warm Welcome to Country from Nathan Moran of the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council and Didgeridoo performance from Brendan Kerin, with heartfelt performances from Buuja Buuja Butterfly Dance Group, Harbour Beizam, De Greer Yindimincarlie and Buluuy Mirrii as the day went on. Panel discussions were held throughout the day at the Knowledge Forum, where changemakers and industry leaders shared their truths with packed crowds, exploring key issues facing the sector.

With the Tradeshow doors closed, the Gala Awards Dinner opened in a powerful celebration of Blak excellence with over 1,200 guests. Hosted by media and entertainment giants, Narelda Jacobs and Luke Carroll, the night celebrated the success of the supplier diversity community and recognised outstanding individuals and organisations at the Supplier Diversity Awards, with the winners announced throughout the course of the evening.

Aunty Joan Bell of the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council delivered a fiercely emotive Welcome to Gadigal Country before Harbour Beizam and Brolga Dance Academy, Budjerah, and Electric Fields took the stage to share their breathtaking stories through music and dance.



## Supplier Diversity Awards 2023 winners

Award Category	Winner
<b>Certified Supplier of the Year</b> Sponsored by Telstra	Muru Office Supplies
<b>Procurement Professional of the Year</b> Sponsored by Killara Services	Fran Peterson – Shell
<b>Supplier Diversity Advocate of the Year</b> Sponsored by AusIndustry	Matthew Inkster – Fulton Hogan
<b>Supplier Diversity Partnership of the Year</b> Sponsored by ANZ	Yaru Water and Qantas
<b>Registered Supplier of the Year</b> Sponsored by BP	WV Technologies
<b>Indigenous Businesswoman of the Year</b> Sponsored by Westpac	Mundanara Bayles – BlackCard
<b>Indigenous Exporter of the Year</b> Sponsored by Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade)	Aldridge Railway Signals
<b>Government Member of the Year</b> Sponsored by Laing O'Rourke	TAFE NSW
<b>Corporate Member of the Year</b> Sponsored by Kulbardi	Ventia
<b>Sam Tjengala Young Indigenous Entrepreneur of the Year</b> Sponsored by EY	Jarrad Oakley Nicholls – Oaks Civil Construction
<b>Dr Dean Jarrett Award recognising Outstanding Impact</b> Sponsored by Wesfarmers	Ventia

## Connect 2023 sponsors

Sponsorship type	Sponsor
Platinum Sponsor – Gala Awards Dinner	Commonwealth Bank of Australia
Platinum Sponsor – Indigenous Business Tradeshow	Woolworths Group
Gold Sponsor – Gala Awards Dinner / Official Airline Partner	Qantas
Gold Sponsor	City of Sydney
Silver Sponsor – Event App / Indigenous Business Tradeshow	Accenture
Silver Sponsor – Indigenous Business Tradeshow	CPB Contractors
Silver Sponsor – Indigenous Business Tradeshow	Stockland
Silver Sponsor – Indigenous Business Tradeshow	Google
Silver Sponsor – Indigenous Business Tradeshow	Shell
Silver Sponsor – Indigenous Business Tradeshow	McKinsey and Company
Silver Sponsor – Exhibitor Networking Event	Westpac
Government Link Participant	NSW Government
Government Link Participant	Department of Climate Change, Energy, The Environment and Water
Government Link Participant	Department of Defence
Government Link Participant	Department of Finance
Government Link Participant	NIAA

Government Link Participant	Consulate General of Canada
Government Link Participant	Indigenous Business Australia
International Lounge Participant	AMOTAI
International Lounge Participant	The Akana Group
International Lounge Participant	New Zealand Trade and Enterprise
First Nations Media Partner	Koori Mail

## About Supply Nation

Supply Nation is Australia's leading supplier diversity organisation. Since 2009, Supply Nation has worked with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and procurement teams from government and corporate Australia to help shape today's emerging and rapidly evolving Indigenous business sector. Supply Nation's world-leading verification process provides peace of mind by ensuring that all businesses listed on Indigenous Business Direct are not only Indigenous owned but are regularly audited for changes in company structure. Supply Nation's support, combined with a range of business tools, helps our members develop their supplier diversity practices, and build a strong, successful and sustainable Indigenous business sector. To find out more, visit:

[supplynation.org.au](http://supplynation.org.au)

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