

The Sleeping Giant Rises

Understanding the social value created by Indigenous businesses and its contribution to Closing the Gap



Supply Nation

Supply Nation is Australia's leading supplier diversity organisation. Supply Nation connects over 5,700 verified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers on Indigenous Business Direct with more than 850 corporate, government and not-for-profit members. Since 2009, Supply Nation has worked with Indigenous entrepreneurs and procurement teams across Australia to help shape today's rapidly evolving Indigenous business sector.

Report highlights

Introduction

Supply Nation's latest social impact report, The Sleeping Giant Rises (2025), builds on The Sleeping Giant report (2018), and provides evidence of the value generated by Indigenous entrepreneurs as they build and grow successful businesses.

This report offers deeper insights into how positive social impact is being generated across families, employees, Community and the broader national economy.

Key differences from 2018 report:

> Broader scope

The Sleeping Giant Rises report analyses a larger collection of data from businesses both within and outside Supply Nation.

> New methodology

This study uses a Social Return on Revenue (SRR) model instead of the Social Return on Investment (SROI) approach, offering more detailed insights.

> Focus on values

Highlighting the unique values and ways of working that help

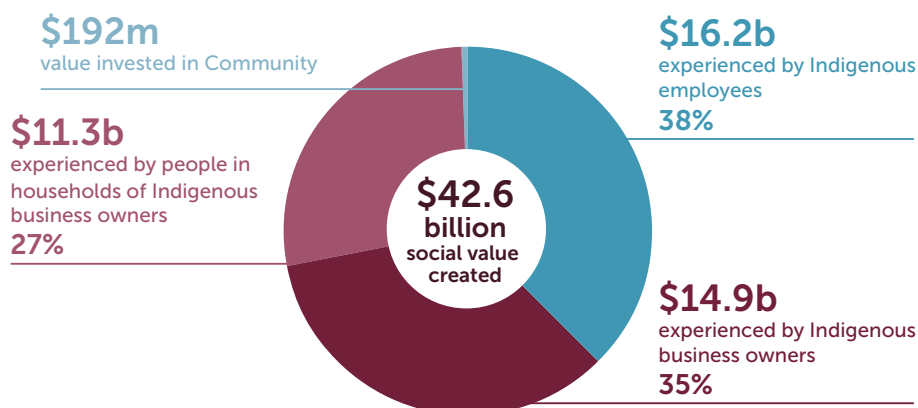
Indigenous businesses grow wealth for their families and communities.

> Closing the Gap

Findings are linked to the Closing the Gap targets, showing how Indigenous businesses contribute to self-determination and economic empowerment. The Sleeping Giant Rises shifts the focus from deficit-based frameworks to the strengths and positive impacts made by Indigenous entrepreneurs.

Key findings:

The social value of Indigenous businesses



“

As a business owner, you set an example for your family, especially your children. They witness your hard work, dedication, and entrepreneurial spirit, which can inspire them to pursue their own goals and dreams.

”

– Indigenous business owner

The Sleeping Giant Rises

Key findings:

An estimated **16%** of the Indigenous population are directly connected to the Indigenous business sector, including:

- **29,200** Indigenous business owners
- Over **61,300** people living in the households of these business owners
- Over **65,700** Indigenous employees working at these Indigenous businesses.

How social value is experienced

Indigenous businesses are major employers of Indigenous people, creating ripple effects across

families and communities. This impact extends beyond just employment, and are experienced as:

- Financial security
- Agency and control over life
- Expanded aspirations
- Pride
- Physical health and mental wellbeing
- Improved family relationships
- Stronger connections to Community.

Indigenous businesses contribute to Closing the Gap targets

Indigenous businesses contribute to multiple Closing the Gap

targets, including health and wellbeing, child education, employment, housing, and connection to Culture and Country.

Key outcomes include:

- I feel proud of who I am – **95%**
- I am more able to express my culture – **89%**
- Young people in my family have more pride in their Culture – **86%**
- Indigenous employees are better able to support their family and are more positive about life – **84%**

**Social value +
economic value**

**\$42.6 billion +
\$16 billion**

=

Revenue

\$16 billion³

= **\$3.66***

For every dollar of revenue, Indigenous businesses create \$3.66 of social and economic value for Indigenous communities.

*Please note that the methodology of this amount is different from The Sleeping Giant report (2018). This report is focused on the social value rather than Social Return on Investment (SROI)

“

Overall, owning my business has enhanced my social, cultural and economic wellbeing, providing a sense of purpose and fulfillment.

”

– Indigenous business owner

Closing the Gap by partnering with Indigenous businesses

The role that Indigenous businesses play in creating meaningful, sustainable employment is often undervalued and should be recognised in policy frameworks at all levels of government.

Supporting Indigenous businesses is a powerful way that we all can contribute to Closing the Gap. We can take meaningful action by:

- Acknowledging that while many Indigenous businesses have formal philanthropic initiatives, they are Closing the Gap purely by operating
- Designing programs, policies, and funding initiatives that foster Indigenous entrepreneurship
- Actively involving Indigenous businesses in Closing the Gap Priority Reforms implementation
- Increasing procurement from Indigenous businesses to generate social value and challenge outdated stereotypes

- Investing in Indigenous enterprises in ways that respect and support their unique, value-driven business models.

To read the full report, scan the QR code or visit:

www.supplynation.com.au

