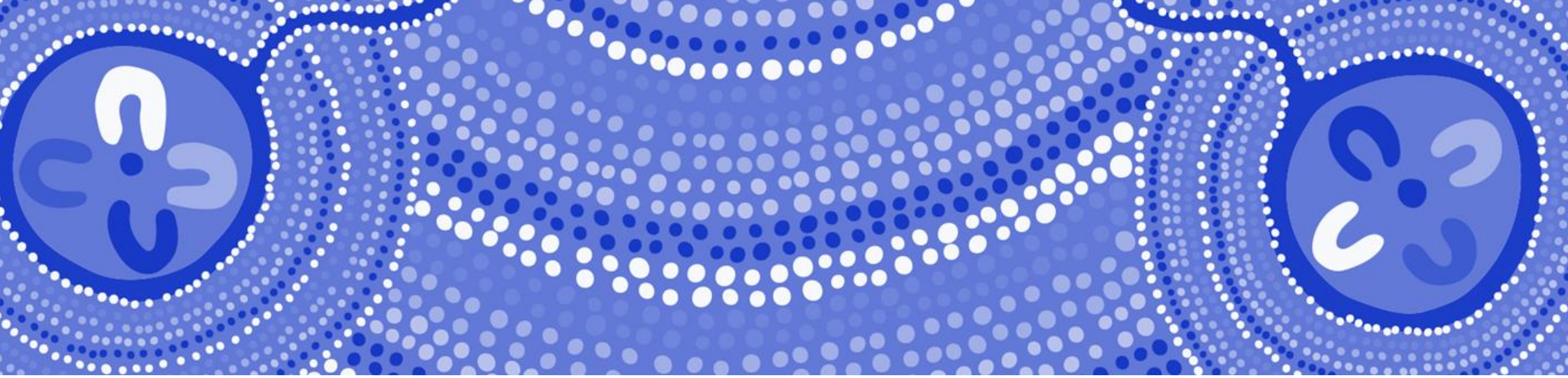
First Nations Guideline

Case Studies on First Nations community engagement for renewable energy projects



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Citation

Frangos. M, Bassani. T, Hollingsworth. J, Briggs. C, (2021), '*First Nations Guidelines: Case Studies on First Nations community engagement for renewable energy projects*.' Sydney: NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.

Input was provided by Dr Chris Briggs (Research Director) and design by Rachael Jackman, Institute for Sustainable Futures.

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Indigenous Energy Australia (IEA) is an Aboriginal organisation that works with community, government and industry to revolutionise the way that infrastructure is developed in Australia. IEA collaborates with a wide group of partners to develop projects and concepts that leverage the enabling nature of critical infrastructures (e.g., energy, water, housing, telecommunications, waste, transport), to develop communities' economies in a way that supports communities to achieve social and economic aspirations in a self-determined manner.

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“a meaningful relationship and improvement of cultural connection are two of the most important things for our community, and they are both often overlooked”

Quenten Agius, Chairperson, Ngadjuri Nation Aboriginal Corporation

Introduction

Indigenous Energy Australia (with input from the Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney) was commissioned to undertake a literature review and produce case studies which identify key lessons for electricity generation, storage and transmission projects on best practice engagement, benefit-sharing, and capacity building with Aboriginal communities.

The scale of investment in renewable energy, storage and transmission through the NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap creates opportunities for increased First Nation employment, businesses, income, and community development. However, the extent to which those opportunities are realised will depend significantly on the quality of engagement and programs implemented by project developers, builders and operators, and the relationships established with Aboriginal communities.

Aboriginal Australians have been harnessing the sun's energy and sustainably managing the lands for millennia - meaning there is deep cultural alignment (and possible learnings) with the transition to cheap, clean, and reliable energy. This cultural alignment presents a unique opportunity to place Aboriginal people as key voices in what the NSW Minister for Energy, Matt Kean, has described as a "once in a generation opportunity" infrastructure investment (Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, 2021) which would result in significant advancement to the *Closing the Gap* targets for Aboriginal communities.

This report is a resource document with case studies on approaches by infrastructure projects to Aboriginal community engagement, employment and capacity building to support the development of First Nations guidelines for the NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap. These guidelines are required under Section 4 of the *Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020* and set minimum standards for how energy infrastructure proponents negotiate and engage with Aboriginal peoples and communities about employment and income opportunities. The report builds upon other recent guides on community engagement and renewable energy such as:

- Lane, T. and J. Hicks (2017) *Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development: A Guide for Applicants to the Victorian Renewable Energy Target Auction*. Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Victorian Government, Melbourne.[1]
- Lane T. and Hicks, J. (2019) *A Guide to Benefit Sharing Options for Renewable Energy Projects*. Clean Energy Council, Melbourne.
- Hicks, J., Briggs, C & Mey, F. (2020) *Renewable Energy Purchase Agreements: Maximising Social Benefits and Minimising Social Risks*, Business Renewables Centre – Australia.

The aim of this report is not to duplicate these resources on community engagement for renewable energy projects but to provide case studies with learnings specifically on how engagement and outcomes for Aboriginal communities can be improved with best practice examples across a range of sectors. The case studies include large-scale renewable energy projects in Australia but also the resource sector, distributed renewable energy and international renewable energy projects.

[1] This guide has recently been updated by the Victorian Department of Environment, Water, Land and Planning which can be found here.

Best Practice Engagement Principles

Best Practice Engagement with Aboriginal Communities: Four Key Principles

While there are important variations in the cultures, priorities, and aspirations between and within Aboriginal communities, four key elements of best practice were identified for this report. These elements were all derived from community voices, rather than experts and community advisors, and reflect what communities have recognised as a necessity for them to be and feel engaged appropriately. If implemented properly, they are the elements that will best contribute to the achievement of community outcomes and benefit for a project. All four are essential for effective engagement of a community and for the project to identify and impact positively upon community aspirations.

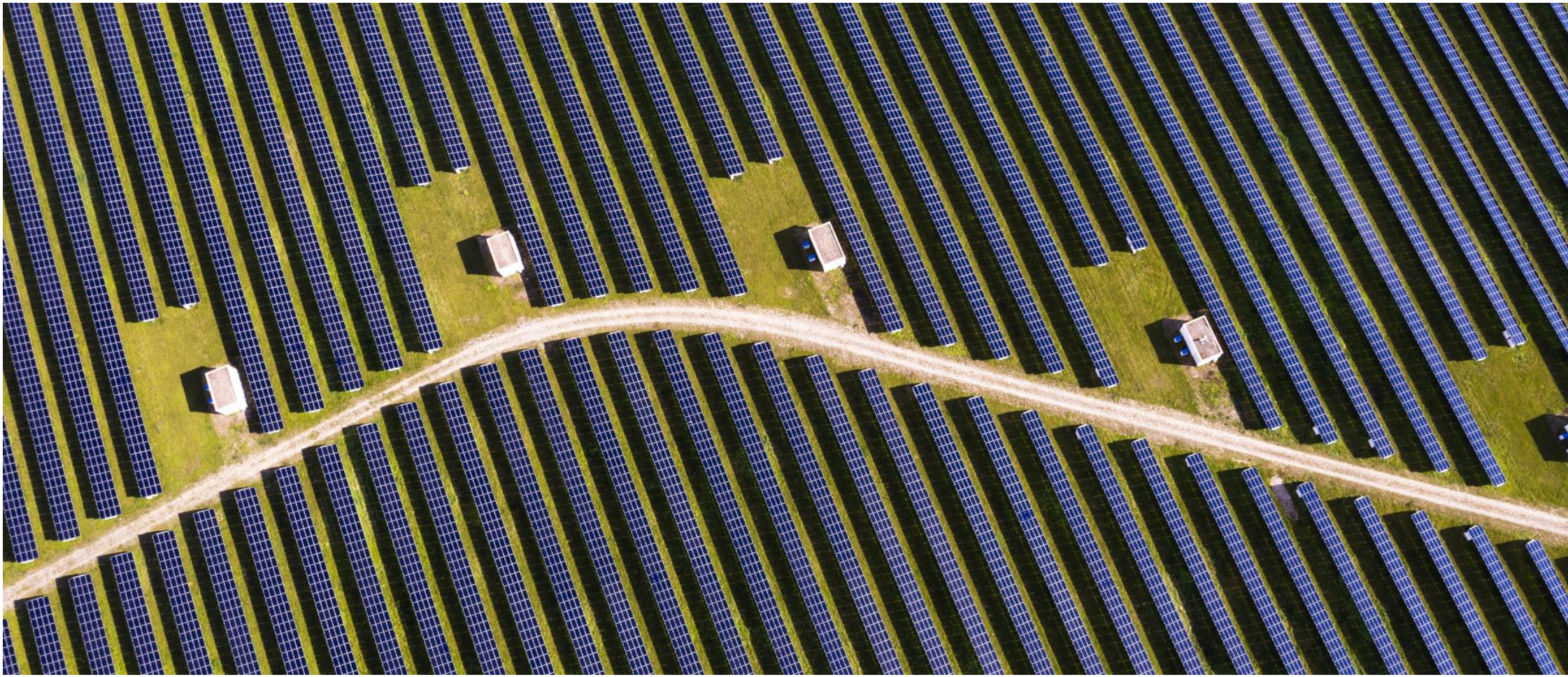
Engagement Principles		About
	Long-term and meaningful relationships	A meaningful, on-going relationship is the bedrock for positive outcomes for Aboriginal communities from renewable energy projects identified by communities, literature, and projects that achieve community outcomes (L O'Neil, 2017). The development and maintenance of good personal relationships through regular communication and a long-term mindset is an integral feature of Aboriginal culture and expectations of projects developed on their Country. A meaningful and ongoing relationship is an end-in-itself as well as an enabling outcome for the realisation of community priorities. A literature review by O' Neil et. al. (2021) found when communities are involved in projects, the likelihood of communities gaining meaningful social and economic benefits are increased. Some of the key points to be noted here are: • Ensuring there is an understanding and recognition through the organisation of basic concepts such as Aboriginal sovereignty over land and that a company must obtain a 'social licence to operate' which require acting above the minimum legal requirements. Recognising sovereignty is a show of respect and the first step in the agreement making process, particularly when developing energy on Aboriginal held land. Ingraining the meaning and fact of this sovereignty reduces the tendency of an organisation and their staff to underestimate the value and strength of Aboriginal people's connection to their lands. • It is important to not only focus on the short-term outcomes but also on dialogue and mechanisms that can improve outcomes over the long-term. Projects can become focussed on satisfying development approval processes, "box ticking", without establishing and maintaining longer-term relationships and outcomes (behaviours sometimes called 'blackwashing'). Indeed, your project may encounter cynicism due to the behaviour of other projects that have come beforehand. • Ensuring agreements span the life cycle of the project, and are embedded deeply within an organisation and a community is paramount to the longevity of a meaningful and ongoing relationship. Taking steps to ingrain agreements into the whole-of-company, ensuring monitoring and evaluation arrangements are in place, and to ensure the agreement is periodically reviewed and re-negotiated, will maintain social license with multiple generations. Agreements can often drift from what was originally set out, and this drift may go unnoticed particularly where there are significant changes in

Engagement Principles		About
		the community or company. Deterioration of a relationship or loss of social license during an activity's life can erase prior good work, and negate any possibility of regaining short to medium term connections despite any reconciliatory action • A single negative interaction with an external organisation can have a significantly negative effect on a community's desire to engage. Many communities have had a number of unsatisfactory engagements, so distrust external parties. This distrust will affect communities' interest in engaging new or unrelated groups, and can also be spread through word of mouth, so that a negative interaction with one community can affect an organisation's reputation and ability to engage with many communities - even those with whom they have had no or positive interactions Establishing a meaningful relationship requires engaging throughout the community, especially vulnerable community segments. In Aboriginal communities, representative bodies include Aboriginal Land Councils, Native Title Holders, Prescribed Body Corporates, and Traditional Owner Corporations. These bodies are most often the points through which organisations engage Aboriginal communities. However, they do not always equally represent all segments of the community, meaning that project input and benefits are not equitably distributed throughout the community. As in all communities, existing hierarchies and power structures exist, but there is a particularly serious issue with vulnerable communities being underrepresented when organisations work within Aboriginal communities. Whilst there have been improvements, the matter of haves and have nots has been an issue with Aboriginal engagement for decades and can result in them not having a voice or receiving an appropriate share in community benefits. Any project that genuinely values community outcomes should consider how it can engage both with the formal representatives and through forums that also engage with the wider Aboriginal community. Spending time with communities to identify and engage different segments and engaging third party specialists are recommended. When engaging 'around' existing hierarchies it is advised that these hierarchies are involved so the broader community is engaged with or in partnership with them. This will avoid the creation of any community tension but will also build capacity in existing community groups to better represent the whole community. To engage the community more broadly, time in communities to understand different community segments is key, engaging third party specialists, and being transparent about the intention of broad engagement when initially contacting existing community representation.
	Cultural connection	Maintaining culture or a cultural connection is one of the most important priorities for Aboriginal communities across Australia. 'Cultural connection' is a uniquely Indigenous concept and is often poorly understood in the western value set. This cultural connection is all-encompassing, linking all facets of people, animals, land, water and skies together as kin. Aboriginal culture is synonymous with custodianship and caring for Country, which aligns well with the underlying principles behind renewable and distributed energy. These synergies should be capitalised on to improve community wellbeing and project outcomes, which can often be commercial project outcomes. There is an intrinsic cultural or spiritual connection between renewable energy and Aboriginal culture. The sustainable and inter-generational nature of the Aboriginal way of life fits well with renewable energy. An even more direct connection is that Aboriginal people have been sustainably managing the land and using the sun as their main energy source for 65,000 years. Maintaining culture is important to the social health and wellbeing of the community. There are many cultural healing practices in place to improve communities' physical and mental health. The health outcomes that 'culture' directly effects include mental health, a sense of self and connectedness, and general wellbeing. Health in turn is a determinant of a variety of other outcomes such as education, employment, likelihood of being engaged in the criminal justice system, household

Engagement Principles		About
		stress and family violence. Therefore, improving cultural connection will have a wide-reaching impact on Aboriginal communities. Delivering cultural outcomes is something that is often overlooked in large infrastructure developments – but driving these outcomes has positive impacts on communities' social and economic well-being and on their relationship with project partners. Some examples of actions taken focussed on cultural and environmental outcomes include: • the establishment of trusts with funds for works on Country and cultural components incorporated into employment programs **(Altin Hydro case study)** • the use of Aboriginal cultural and bio-knowledge for project management (**Lockhart River solar public housing case study)**
	Capacity development	Self-determination achieved through long-term employment, sustainable revenue streams and capacity building is the most common aspiration of Aboriginal communities across the world. Developing capacity in the community is a highly valued outcome by most Australian Aboriginal communities whether it be through: • Preparing individuals for work, up-skilling community members and developing Aboriginal businesses: engaging and developing local businesses and employees not only strengthens the relationship with community and contributes to their economic development, but also can prove a cost-effective strategy for completing project tasks, particularly in regional and remote areas and in the context of tight labour markets • Improving the completion rates of primary, secondary education and post-secondary education (including tertiary qualifications and certifications) • Improving quality of or access to critical infrastructure such as health, telecommunications or utilities • Strengthening community governance and institutional capacity (which may seem unrelated to large infrastructure projects, but is the first step for communities to take full advantage of benefits that may come from developments) • Ensuring that Aboriginal people are resourced to obtain qualified advice in their dealings with projects There are a variety of mechanisms through which capacity building can be undertaken: • **Community Benefit Funds** can establish an independent and long-term income stream to fund capacity development such as training, local infrastructure and services and community activities. Projects need to ensure there is Aboriginal representation within fund governance and/or that Aboriginal communities are supported to enable them to apply for funding rounds • **Employment and training** initiatives such as pre-employment training, working with recruitment agencies to identify Aboriginal workers, setting targets for engagement of trainees, apprentices and employees, specialist training and support staff to integrate Aboriginal workers into the company and workplace. Specialised programs that are tailored to support the attainment of tertiary qualifications that have application in communities such as STEM, are also a powerful inter-generational tool, that can improve individual outcomes and in the long-term community infrastructure. Employment

Engagement Principles		About
		and training in civil construction can develop skills that make individuals employable across sectors within regional areas, enabling them to maintain connection with Country (**Energy Connect case study, Telfer Mine case study)** • **Strategic procurement** with a Local Indigenous Participant Plan including targets for expenditure with Aboriginal businesses and supporting initiatives to develop the capacity of Aboriginal businesses to tender through the use of smaller work packages to improve access for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), engaging them for tenders that are adjacent to current experience (**Energy Connect case study**) or through the use of consultants that will transfer knowledge **(Altin Hydro case study)** • **Programs to install renewable energy** within Aboriginal communities and improve access to reliable, low-cost, clean electricity can be a powerful way for large-scale renewable energy projects to build connection, leverage their own expertise and improve community living standards (see **Bushlight case study**) • Investment of benefit funds in local infrastructure, such as the **Cape Yorke Region Package** which was a $50.5 million program of community infrastructure works selected by community representatives.
	Long-term financial opportunities	For many Aboriginal communities, a key aspiration is to develop long-term, independent income sources. Long-term employment through the development of careers with employment security, entitlements and pay is a key means of developing long-term financial security. Stable, on-going employment underpins financial stability and social purpose. Financial stability allows individuals and families the means to acquire land and property, to look after themselves in many ways including by accessing health, education, social and digital services; it reduces household stress creating an environment that is conducive to positive health, education and allows time to do the things that are important to them. Engagement in work gives employees a purpose, and stimulus, having a positive outcome on their own, and their family's physical and mental health, driving individuals, and their families to consider what else is important to them such as language and cultural practices. Long-term employment allows families to get their 'heads above water', determine what is important, what is needed, and then to obtain the means to tackle challenges or pursue aspirations themselves. Having a long-term business and community income stream is another pathway to self-determination. Being able to establish an independent income stream that support communities and businesses to become financially self-sustaining are objectives for some communities. The income that can be used for community purposes can lead to positive health, education, employment, livelihoods and justice, cultural outcomes, and digital inclusion for those communities. This can also support autonomy in the community decisions regarding addressing issues that the community deem most important. Aboriginal ownership or financial partnerships with Aboriginal communities will underpin the acceptance of large-scale energy developments and strengthens an organisation's 'social license to operate'. Some project examples include: • Ownership of renewable energy assets by Aboriginal corporations or trusts which develop local employment, skill and independent revenue streams to fund other social activities such as health services (**Ramahyuck Solar Farm case study)** or commercial enterprises in other sectors built upon the energy supply **(Tuaropaki Trust case study**) • Indigenous land-use agreements which create a long-term revenue stream based on a share of total project benefit instead of project costs, pre-determined procurement targets, arbitrary figures, or land value. A large part of

Engagement Principles		About
		agreement making is benefits sharing, for which best practice is the 'sharing-the-benefit' methodology. Ensuring that benefits are shared based on an agreed upon proportion of total activity benefit, will strengthen the relationship with the community making further engagement easier and more efficient (**Nhulunbuy Corporation and Gove Peninsula case study** and **Telfer Mine case study**). • Joint ventures with Aboriginal businesses to provide equity and transfer knowledge to develop local businesses (**North West Alliance case study)** or establishment of contracts as part of formal agreements **(Nhulunbuy Corporation case study**) Having equity in a project (i.e.owning shares in the business or project) can be an effective tool for community engagement and benefit-sharing. However this may require Aboriginal people to have disposable income available for investment which often does not exist widely across these communities. If a share ownership scheme is part of the project's engagement and benefit-sharing scheme with the local Aboriginal community, the project may need other engagement techniques and initiatives for the Aboriginal community to ensure they access benefits.



Renewable energy and Closing the Gap targets

The benchmarks for assessing progress for Aboriginal communities are the Closing the Gap targets agreed by the Commonwealth and State Governments. Whilst the relationship between large-scale renewable energy projects is indirect with many of these targets, they are able to contribute towards their development through a variety of initiatives such as employment and training, social and economic investment from community benefit funds, local business development and cultural initiatives.

Closing the Gap targets

Target	Aims	Outcome
Target 1	Close the Gap in life expectancy within a generation, by 2031	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy long and healthy lives
Target 2	By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies with a healthy birthweight to 91 per cent	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are born healthy and strong
Target 3	By 2025, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in Year Before Fulltime Schooling (YBFS) early childhood education to 95 per cent	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are engaged in high quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education in their early years
Target 4	By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) to 55 per cent	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children thrive in their early years
Target 5	By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (age 20-24) attaining year 12 or equivalent qualification to 96 per cent	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieve their full learning potential
Target 6	By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-34 years who have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate III and above) to 70 per cent	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students reach their full potential through further education pathways
Target 7	By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (15-24 years) who are in employment, education, or training to 67 per cent	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth are engaged in employment or education
Target 8	By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-64 who are employed to 62 per cent	Strong economic participation and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities

Target	Aims	Outcome
Target 9	By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing to 88 per cent	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people secure appropriate, affordable housing that is aligned with their priorities and need
Target 10	By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults held in incarceration by at least 15 per cent	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system
Target 11	By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10-17 years) in detention by 30 per cent	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system
Target 12	By 2031, reduce the rate of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care by 45 per cent	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are not overrepresented in the child protection system
Target 13	By 2031, the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is reduced at least by 50%, as progress towards zero	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and households are safe
Target 14	Significant and sustained reduction in suicide of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people towards zero	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing
Target 15	1. By 2030, a 15 per cent increase in Australia's landmass subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights or interests 2. By 2030, a 15 per cent increase in areas covered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights or interests in the sea	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people maintain a distinctive cultural, spiritual, physical and economic relationship with their land and waters
Target 16	By 2031, there is a sustained increase in number and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages being spoken	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages are strong, supported and flourishing
Target 17	By 2026, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have equal levels of digital inclusion	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to information and services enabling participation in informed decision-making regarding their own lives

Case studies undertaken for this guide

A range of case studies are contained in this guide to provide examples of best practice and areas for improvement. Some of these case studies are drawn from other sectors like mining or international renewable energy projects where there is a longer track-record of engagement with Aboriginal communities.

Altin Hydro is one of the best examples of an Indigenous energy project. It demonstrates the value of targeting mindsets, social outcomes, and culture to produce advancements in social indicators such as employment, income, and education. This project also demonstrates the importance of the relationship between Indigenous communities and project partners, particularly the need to align the mindsets of for the proponent and community and focus on building "on the job" capacity. This project offers a good example of a commercially viable project that produces a community controlled, own source revenue that can be diverted to those aspirations that the community deem the most important. This project also demonstrates the necessity to level the playing field to take advantage of opportunities, financial and otherwise, in order to overcome the historical disadvantage that Aboriginal communities have faced (in this case an above market unit price was negotiated with the utility to improve the project's commercial viability).

Bushlight and **Lockhart River** programs to install solar panels throughout remote communities is a best-practice example of a long-term initiative with deep engagement that reduced the social and energy equity gap for remote Aboriginal communities – and highlights how the use of community benefit funds for a distributed renewable energy program in Aboriginal communities could be a powerful way for large-scale renewable energy projects to build connection, leverage their own expertise and improve community living standards.

Bushlight is a particularly good example of adapting the engagement approach and content around community characteristics, including literacy, spoken language and cultural knowledge. **Lockhart River** provides an excellent example of demonstrating the commercial value of Indigenous knowledge, by incorporating it within a modern approach. This is an action that should be strived for in any project involving Aboriginal communities.

North-West Alliance (NWA) is a joint venture business between Emunest and Veolia that is 50% Indigenous owned which delivers waste and water management services to sites across the Pilbara owned by BHP Billiton Iron Ore, Rio Tinto, Roy Hill Iron Ore and Woodside Energy. The North-West Alliance is a best practice model of how to achieve long-term financial gain for communities through jobs and the development of local businesses with Aboriginal ownership. This partnership is an excellent example of how Indigenous and non-Indigenous strengths can complement one another to derive shared value.

EnergyConnect is a high voltage transmission line being built by SecureEnergy to link the SA and NSW electricity markets. EnergyConnect is leveraging its scale, timeframe, and resources to implement an extensive program to increase long-term Aboriginal employment and businesses through a mix of strategic procurement, capacity-building, training and work planning. EnergyConnect provides a good case study on how upgrading community infrastructure can be beneficial to supporting large infrastructure developments but also bring long-term value to partner communities.

Ramahyuck Solar Farm is a 4.9 MW solar farm (Longford, Victoria) that is wholly owned and operated by the Ramahyuck District Aboriginal Corporation (RDAC). The solar farm has established an independent revenue stream for RDAC to enhance its primary healthcare, and social and family support services. There are opportunities for more projects like these to contribute to the achievement of, and leverage, Indigenous procurement obligations and corporate social responsibility targets.

Tuaropaki Geothermal Power Station, 75% owned by the Māori Tuaropaki Trust and 25% by Mercury Energy (a large New Zealand energy generation and retailing company), have used their geothermal developments to enable other commercial businesses to bring economic development and social progression to Tuaropaki Whanau. Establishing a corporation or trust to act as a commercial entity but to serve beneficial owners is a replicable business model for Australian Aboriginal communities.

Rio Tinto Alcan Gove Traditional Owners Agreement is an agreement between Rio Tinto and two First Nation entities, the Gumatj Future Fund and the Rirratjingu Aboriginal Corporation, that appropriately remunerates Traditional Owners according to 'benefit' rather than land value or loss and established a custodian type organisation. This acknowledges the dependency created by Rio's operations which is working with the community to develop a plan and take the steps that will create an independent, diverse and resilient economy.

Telfer Mine presents many learnings for working with local Aboriginal communities to generate long term work with a broad-ranging program to address structural barriers, including the use of local service providers to connect with difficult-to-reach job seekers, the use of skills registers to identify gaps to be addressed through training. Telfer also employs the benefits sharing model to more equitably remunerate Traditional Owner groups.

Cape York Region Package was a 5-year, $276m critical infrastructure program which delivered major benefits for the Aboriginal communities through the use of an agreement with key result areas and quantified targets to deliver long-term employment and capacity building supported by a community infrastructure fund with high levels of community input and participation. This project offers excellent learnings on how to capitalise on the economies of scale offered by large infrastructure developments to upgrade local communities' critical infrastructure.

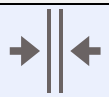
Bushlight Program

Project: Bushlight was a renewable energy program run by the Centre for Appropriate Technology. Between 2002 and 2013, 148 renewable energy systems were installed in 130 remote Aboriginal communities across Central and Northern Australia.

Aboriginal communities: a wide range of Traditional Owner Groups in Northern Australia across QLD, NT, and WA.

Key learnings: this program was developed with a long-term mindset involving an engagement-led approach and focussing on how renewable energy could best support community development and reduce the social and energy equity gap for remote Aboriginal communities. The use of community benefit funds for a distributed renewable energy program in Aboriginal communities would be a powerful way for large-scale renewable energy projects to build connection, leverage their own expertise and improve community living standards.

Engagement Principles		About
	Meaningful and ongoing relationships	The primary community aspiration was to develop reliable and affordable power to improve community well-being. Prior to Bushlight, most participating communities used diesel to generate electricity, firewood and bottled gas for cooking and heating, and solar thermal for water heating. This presented a range of social and economic issues that needed to be remedied including: • Continuous and reliable power for refrigeration, cooking, laundry, education, health, and entertainment to keep children occupied and at home • High fuel costs from diesel, gas, and firewood • Travel to buy goods and fuel The Bushlight program used a Community Energy Planning (CEP) Model with an end-to-end framework engaging Aboriginal communities through all stages: conceptualisation, design, construction, and operation (including on-going monitoring, support and training). The CEP Model is based on the premise that the most positive outcomes for

Engagement Principles		About
		communities are arrived at through an integration of tailored community engagement, joint decision making, and place-based technical design. Bushlight staff provided information to the community in a format that they could easily understand (e.g. visual aids to explain the benefits of energy efficiency and how to reduce energy consumption using familiar examples) and sat down with community residents to help choose the best energy services for them. Ensuring impacts were well understood, decisions were made by the community, technical solutions were fit-for-purpose, and the communities felt, and were, genuinely engaged.
	Cultural connection	There was a significant contribution made towards a cultural connection by this project. Bushlight incorporated community specific culture throughout the project including in the operational manual and engagement material. Cultural knowledge was also used to explain technical concepts such as energy efficiency, and cultural connection in general was improved due to the increased energy affordability and reliability - the community was in a better position to focus on cultural activities rather than being concerned about electrical reliability and affordability.
	Long-term financial opportunities	In addition to on-going employment, financial savings were achieved and funded other community purposes including health, education, employment, and community safety.
	Capacity development	One of the key community aspirations was to develop employment and local capacity. Initially, the project had difficulty employing suitably qualified local people because they did not have the required skill sets to do the work. Pre-training programs were implemented to develop the local workforce with supervision from qualified and experienced project contractors. This provided opportunities for locals to be employed for ongoing maintenance and operational roles after learning on the job. These maintenance and operational roles were mostly semi-skilled, similar to that of a technical assistant.
	**Closing the Gap targets**	Bushlight contributed towards Closing the Gap targets 3 (Year Before Fulltime Schooling), 4 (Children Development on Track), 5 (Year 12), 6 (Tertiary Qualification), 7 (Employment), 8 (Youth Engagement), 9 (Employment), 13 (Family Violence), 17 (Digital Inclusion).

Source: Centre for Appropriate Technology Website - Bushlight Archive, Energy and Renewable Resources, interviews with Bushlight participants

"Clean energy is the medicine that our people need. I dream of having solar on every house in town."
Norman Jupurrurla Frank

Lockhart River – Kuuku Ya'u, Wuthathi, Kanthanumpu, Uutaalnganu, Umpila and Kaanju Lands

Project: the Lockhart River Solar Public Housing Trial managed by Ergon Energy consisted of five installations totalling 209kW of solar and 60 kW of batteries in the Lockhart River Aboriginal Community. These assets were installed on public buildings and saved the community $90,000 per year which were shared amongst the community.

Aboriginal communities: the Kuuku Ya'u, Wuthathi, Kanthanumpu, Uutaalnganu, Umpila and Kaanju peoples. Some the key aspirations are more local businesses and jobs, improved social programs and recognition of the importance of cultural knowledge.

Key learnings: early community engagement was not effective but the use of local cultural knowledge, detailed community engagement and local employment built a successful relationship.

Engagement Principles		About
	Meaningful and on-going relationships	Despite poor initial engagement with the local Aboriginal community, a good relationship between the technical contractor (Australian Sustainable Energy, ASE), the local council and the community was established for this project. Initially, the community had limited visibility and input into the project. This relationship was remedied by a detailed community engagement undertaken in a way that was familiar to community, adjusting the project during installation process so the energy assets better supported the community and their needs. Engaging the community on their terms through ways that aligns with cultural protocols and procedures, was key to this project's success.
	Cultural connection	This project used Indigenous knowledge, 'bio-indicators' to aid with project management and construction, predicting weather changes to save costs, demonstrating the commercial value of Aboriginal knowledge, experiences, and practices. Bio-indicators include biological processes, species, or communities and are used to assess the quality of the environment and how it changes over time. They have been used in Aboriginal culture to guide traditional custodians to care for, and understand, their lands for 60,000 years. They are the environment's primary way to "talk" to those who are responsible for its care. Utilising traditional knowledge aids community engagement as the community feels like they are a valued part of the project.

Engagement Principles		About
	Long-term financial opportunities	The local employment agency, My Pathways, helped local jobseekers find work on the project. Often vulnerable community members, such as job seekers are hard to engage, so accessing local service providers can aid in connecting with these people. Two Traditional Owners were employed, participating in place of labourers assisting with the installation, and were considered an invaluable part of the project team. Employing local community members strengthened the community-contractor relationship and the locals were available to remedy any minor issues that arose after the principal contractor had left the community. The project provided a long-term benefit of energy savings of $90,000/yr which was shared across community, saving households approximately $100/yr and an improvement in air quality due to less diesel generation.
	Capacity development	There was capacity development of local workers through certification to work on the local utility's assets and the skills to work on a solar energy project.
	Closing the Gap targets	Closing the Gap targets 7 (Employment), 8 (Youth Engagement), 9 (Employment)

Source: For full version of case study, see Indigenous Energy Australia - Case Study: Lockhart River

North-West Alliance – Pilbara

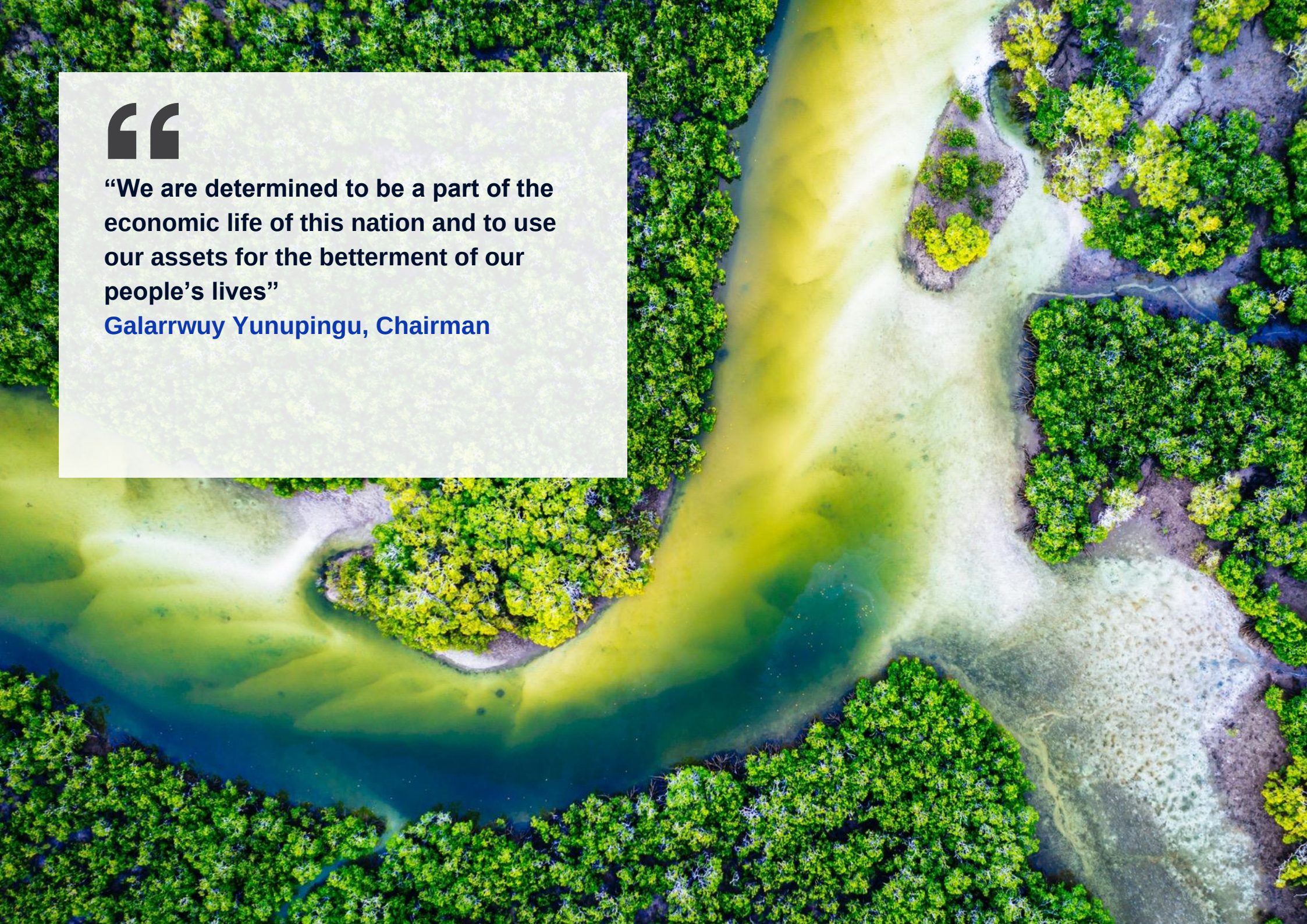
Project: North-West Alliance (NWA) is a 50/50 joint venture business between Emu Nest, a family owned, Palyku Traditional Owner business and Veolia, a global environmental services firm. The joint venture delivers waste and water management services to sites across the Pilbara owned by BHP Billiton Iron Ore, Rio Tinto, Roy Hill Iron Ore and Woodside Energy. North West Alliance has a significant operating presence across the Pilbara region with waste transfer stations in Port Hedland, Karratha, Tom Price and Newman. North West Alliance has achieved high Aboriginal and female employment rates and retained over $100M in revenue in the Pilbara region through local jobs and suppliers.

Aboriginal communities: The Aboriginal communities that NWA interacts with and operates on the lands are the 31 communities and traditional owner groups across the Pilbara. Some of the general aspirations of these communities are to drive improvement employment, health, housing, and education; to sustain, build on, and protect connection to culture and country, and to take advantage of the many opportunities that are offered by the natural resources and resultant development that is inherent to the Pilbara. Remaining custodians of the land, animals and natural features, and demonstrating this custodianship in business, is also a strong outcome held by these communities.

Key Learnings: North-West Alliance is a best practice model of how to achieve long-term financial gain for communities through jobs and the development of local businesses with Aboriginal ownership. It is exemplar of an Indigenous-non Indigenous partnership that allows community the ability to obtain high value, and high barrier to entry contracts, in this case in the waste industry. This project also offers significant learnings in adjusting employment conditions based on employees' needs two specific groups that were successfully engaged were women with children, and people exiting the justice system.

Engagement Principles		About
	Meaningful and on-going relationships	The NWA partnership relies on frequent communication and a clear shared objective that delivered joint value for both parties . Central to the relationship was the establishment of an industrial waste business as a partnership between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal businesses.
	Cultural connection	NWA sponsors a number of Aboriginal community programs including local sporting events, aiding communities in yearly clean ups of country, and delivering a waste education program to local schools free of charge. Targeting existing community programs, as this project did, ensures that benefit is being directed towards something that is important to the community and more efficient then establishing new programs, as existing programs have established connections throughout the community, including to segments that may be hard to engage. Focusing on multiple programs also improves the likelihood of benefits being evenly distributed. However, existing programs will have varying degrees of priority. The supported (sport and community clean up) programs did not appear to be the most critical outcomes for the community. An improvement may have been to provide more continuous support and support programs that targets livelihood improvement and economic development, including health, education, critical infrastructure, income, culture.
	Long-term financial opportunities	Establishing a commercially viable partnership with Aboriginal communities is highly desirable as it creates an independent income stream that can be autonomously spent on what community deem as important. Approaching this partnership with the intent to establish majority or 100% Aboriginal ownership is desired, however the 50:50 equity split achieved is a vast improvement on the status quo and builds capacity. There remains opportunity for Veolia to increase Aboriginal equity in the business while building capacity within their partner – Emunest. While partnerships between non-Indigenous and Indigenous groups are important, there is a huge under-representation of 100% owned Indigenous businesses. Increasing the number of wholly owned Indigenous businesses should be a goal of all industries. Partnerships with shared equity are a good stepping-stone to this point, but Aboriginal Australians aspire to independence and self-determination. However, often commercial realities make the desire for 100% Indigenous owned businesses not practical. Building capacity within Aboriginal businesses as was done here, has a significant multiplier effect, as this capacity is more likely to be developed within, or provide benefit to, Aboriginal Individuals.
	Capacity development	This example shows how partner skill sets can complement one another. Veolia gained local knowledge, context, networks, a connection to the 'Country' of their service territory, and the advantage of qualifying for Indigenous procurement specifications set by large corporate and industrial customers. Emunest gained economies of scale, experience and the capacity offered by a multi-national like Veolia.
	Closing the Gap targets	Closing the Gap targets 6 (Tertiary Qualification), 7 (Employment), 8 (Youth Engagement), 10 (Criminal Justice), 11 (Criminal Justice, youth), 13 (Family Violence), 14 (Suicide). The establishment of an independent income supports all 17 targets,

Source: North-West Alliance Website



“We are determined to be a part of the economic life of this nation and to use our assets for the betterment of our people’s lives”

Galarrwuy Yunupingu, Chairman

EnergyConnect

Project: EnergyConnect is a high voltage transmission line being built by SecureEnergy to link the SA and NSW electricity markets and assist in transporting electricity from the South-West Renewable Energy Zone to major demand centres. EnergyConnect is the NSW component valued at $1.5 billion consists of four substations, 1600 transmission towers and 1400km of line.

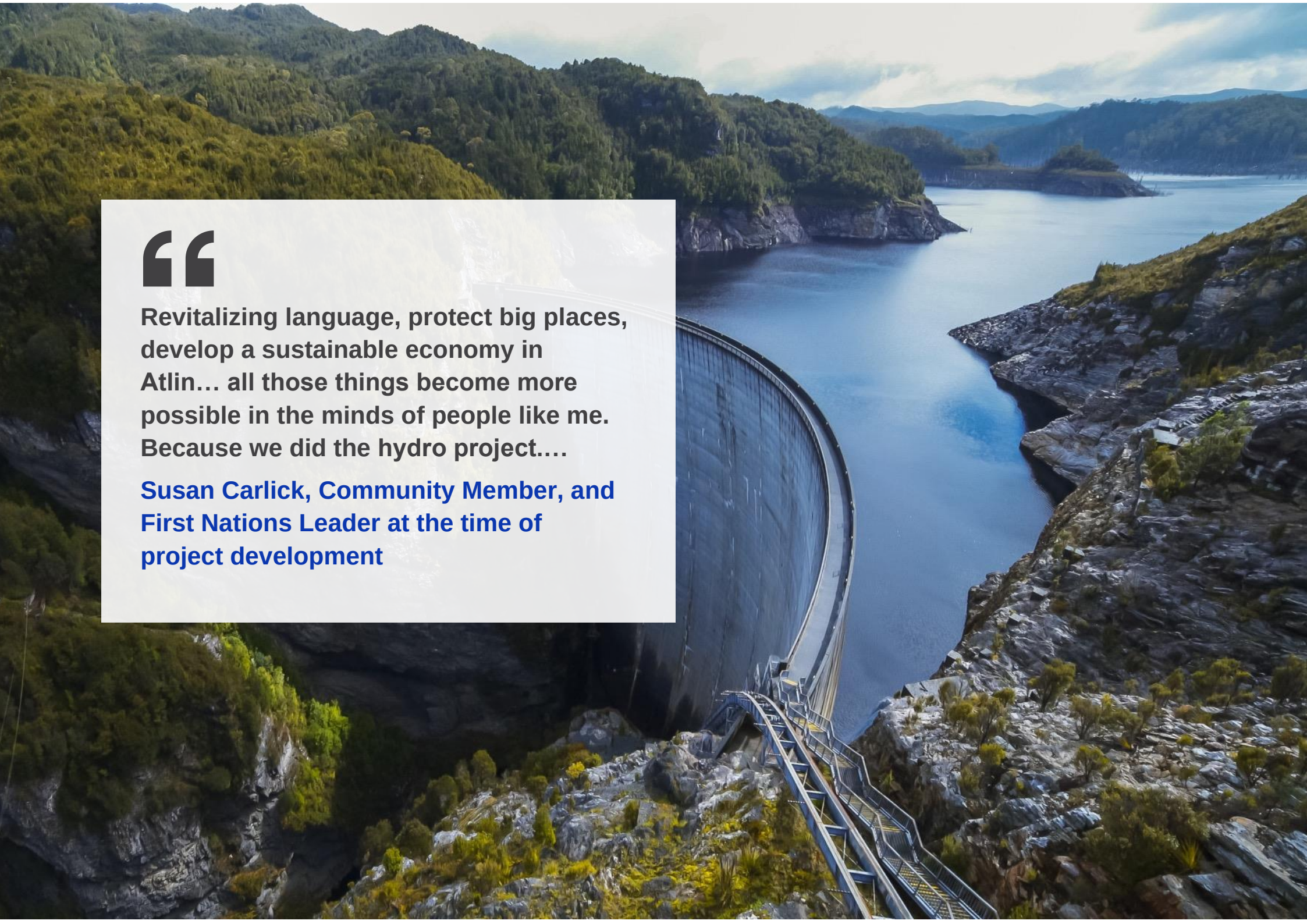
Aboriginal communities: the line spans across six different Traditional Owner groups. Some of the key aspirations include improving life expectancy, reading, writing and numeracy level of Indigenous students, years 1 to 10 school attendance and closing the employment gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Key Learnings: EnergyConnect is leveraging its scale, timeframe, and resources to implement an extensive program to increase Aboriginal employment and businesses through a mix of strategic procurement, capacity-building and training and work planning to create longer-term employment opportunities.

Engagement Principles		About
	Meaningful and on-going relationships	EnergyConnect has an Engagement Plan and a Local Indigenous Participation Plan, reinforced by Indigenous employment targets and Indigenous procurement targets, with a raft of capacity development and accessibility actions to be implemented over time. This forms the basis for a meaningful, long-term relationship over the lifetime of an 8-year project.
	Cultural connection	Given the size of the EnergyConnect project there is a good opportunity to also divert benefits or leverage project activities towards initiatives that improve cultural connection such as land access and knowledge of language.
	Long-term financial opportunities	EnergyConnect will employ over 1500 people in construction, 700 people on an ongoing basis, and is working towards targets of 1.5% for Aboriginal employment and procurement expenditure. Achievement of these targets on such a large project will realise long-term financial opportunities within Aboriginal communities and demonstrate what can be achieved.

Engagement Principles		About
	Capacity development	A key focus of EnergyConnect is to develop the capacity of the Aboriginal businesses through: • Breaking work into smaller 'packages' to enable local businesses to do work that would otherwise be too large, especially for standard works undertaken by many Aboriginal businesses (e.g. fencing, grounds maintenance, cleaning, etc). • Ongoing or regular works to create a stream of work for local businesses and support their longevity • Direct, non-competitive contracts • Collaborative contracts where building capacity in the company is an objective of the partnership, which includes improving business' ability to prequalify for work and • Engaging businesses to complete specialised work that sits outside their current abilities e.g a general fencing company installing and maintaining specialised fencing for high voltage power lines. EnergyConnect will also implement initiatives to facilitate long-term employment of Aboriginal persons. • aligning group work providers with future TransGrid works and coordinating with other large infrastructure projects such as Inland Rail to extend employment beyond the project to create long term employment opportunities • Skills gap bridging through pre-employment training (as many Aboriginal community members do not have the skills for entry level positions), engagement of interns, trainees, and apprentices and up-skilling for existing employees • Engaging an existing service provider, CareerTrackers, an established business that helps "Indigenous young adults to attend and graduate from university, with high marks, industry experience and bright professional futures." (Career Trackers, 2021) There is an opportunity to address shortages (e.g. engineers), whilst supporting young professionals in engineering and science roles which can be used in projects in regional and remote Australia. Entering these sectors gives young Aboriginal people the opportunity to develop a career and remain in touch with their culture and on Country. The development of internships for university students could be a promising mechanism for creating employment opportunities and reducing industry skill shortages. EnergyConnect will also upgrade local infrastructure within local communities to support construction and operation, these upgrades also enables community economic development and social progression.
	Closing the Gap targets	EnergyConnect will address targets 5 (Year 12), 6 (Tertiary Qualification), 7 (Employment), 8 (Youth Engagement), 9 (Employment). The focus on independent income and upgrading community infrastructure will impact all 17 targets.

Source: Project EnergyConnect website, NSW Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Report 2018, Career Trackers Website, interview with EnergyConnect project team member.



> **Revitalizing language, protect big places, develop a sustainable economy in Atlin… all those things become more possible in the minds of people like me. Because we did the hydro project.…**
>
> **Susan Carlick, Community Member, and First Nations Leader at the time of project development**

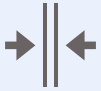
Ramahyuck Solar Farm – Gunai and Kumai Lands

Project: Ramahyuck Solar Farm is a 4.9 MW solar farm (Longford, Victoria)

Aboriginal communities: on the land of the Gunai/Kurnai people, the solar farm is wholly owned and operated by the Ramahyuck District Aboriginal Corporation (RDAC). RDAC provides primary healthcare, and social and family support services.

Key Learnings: the main outcome of this project was to establish a sustainable, independent revenue stream for RDAC to enhance their ability to deliver healthcare. There are opportunities for more projects like these as they contribute to the achievement of Indigenous procurement obligations and corporate social responsibility targets.

Engagement Principles		About
	Meaningful and on-going relationships	Primarily this project adapted an energy development to an existing community operation. Doing this ensures the project is fitting into the community's plan for generating revenue and is contributing to the achievement of self-determination. For the off-taker, there is an on-going relationship and value because the project is contributing to the achievement of corporate responsibility and Indigenous procurement obligations.
	Cultural connection	There was no specific focus on cultural outcomes in this project, however the priorities were driven by the Aboriginal communities. The cultural connection aspect for this community was of lesser priority than the other revenue outcomes or was being satisfactorily addressed.
	Long-term financial opportunities	The development of this solar farm was centred entirely around generating a sustainable revenue stream for the Ramahyuck District Aboriginal Corporation (RDAC). This is a commercial project that accessed government funding to develop project feasibility, but then sought debt funding for construction and ongoing operation of the solar farm. The profit generated from the development will be redirected to education and health outcomes: • $15,000 p.a. per fulltime secondary scholarship and or payment of private school fees for an Aboriginal student • $60,000 per part time scholarship for an Aboriginal tertiary student over three years, or $120,000 for a fulltime tertiary scholarship

Engagement Principles		About
		• $100,000 p.a. funding the RDAC's Aboriginal employee training requirements for one year • $150,000 p.a. per fulltime Aboriginal Health Practitioner operating from a fully serviced clinical room and/or with the resources to provide culturally safe health services in a patient's home • $250,000 p.a. funding a dental chair operating at 0.75 FTE, providing free dental treatment for Aboriginal patients • $250,000 p.a. funding two mental health clinicians, together with the required operational funds for domestic violence prevention, and alcohol and other drugs dependency management services Taking a commercial focus to project development, and then diverting profits to outcomes that communities are already pursuing, is a good approach to ensure that income is sustained and more independent then relying on philanthropic or government funding. Doing this improved the community's financial resilience and gave the community better financial autonomy.
	Capacity development	The project's financial benefits contributed to capacity development in health management. However, the general approach was to find expert advisors, consultants and contractors with similarly aligned mindsets. The community leveraged an Indigenous grant to engage consultants to help develop a technical and economic feasibility plan, negotiate a purchase price with the network operator, and establish a project working group made up of private and public organisations, all with the objective of developing the project in a way that best benefitted the community.
	**Closing the Gap targets**	The outcomes and impacts of the activities of the Ramahyuck would contribute to Closing the Gap targets 1 (Life Expectancy), 2 (Birth Weight), 3 (Year Before Fulltime Schooling), 4 (Children Developmentally on Track), 5 (Year 12), 6 (Tertiary Qualification), 7 (Employment), 8 (Youth Engagement) 13 (Family Violence).

Source: Brief: Ramhyuck Solar Farm, PV Magazine Ramahyuck Article, Ramahyuck website

The Tuaropaki Power Company

Project: Tuaropaki Geothermal Power Station is a combination of two geothermal power stations totalling 113MW. Both power stations are owned by the Tuaropaki Power Company which is 75% owned by the Māori, Tuaropaki Trust, and 25% by Mercury Energy (a large New Zealand energy generation and retailing company).

Aboriginal communities: Tuaropaki Trust have used their geothermal developments to enable other commercial businesses to bring economic development and social progression to Tuaropaki whanau. Tuaropaki use both energy and income to enable a portfolio of commercial ventures, and to support a portfolio of social grants and programs. Key aspirations were to develop the economic wellbeing of the community by investing in commercial ventures that do not impact the land or the ecosystem.

Key Learnings: Access, ownership, and development of land and resources enabled by strong government policy, and partnerships that place the community as an equal, have developed the capacity of the trust to participate in this energy project. Establishing a corporation or trust to act as a commercial entity with a purpose of serving beneficial owners is a replicable business model for Australian Aboriginal communities. The establishment of a trust means that income can be diverted to other commercial ventures where there is opportunity of compounding benefits, but also diverted to community social and economic programs that are philanthropic in nature.

Engagement Principles		About
	Meaningful and on-going relationships	The Tuaropaki Trust was founded in land rights/ownership, starting with the coming together of 297 landowners, which later became the basis to form a An Ahu Whenua – The Tuaropaki Trust. The original Tuaropaki landowners worked with the Department of Māori Affairs for decades to develop Tuaropaki's interests, including the Tuaropaki Development Scheme loan and the direct purchase of geothermal wells on Tuaropaki land from the Crown. The Tuaropaki Trust improved its financial position and therefore the benefits gained by its beneficiaries, through a long history of engagement and partnerships with government and various private organisations. This slow, incremental, sustainable economic development model has delivered excellent results for Tuaropaki.
	Cultural connection	The Tuaropaki developments produced revenue that was directly diverted to cultural grants for community members, having a significant effect on improved cultural connection. The revenue and subsequent livelihood improvement generated from such an extensive portfolio as the Tuaropaki Trust's, enables community to focus on other aspirations besides the essentials such as income, food, water, energy, health, etc.

Engagement Principles		About
	Long-term financial opportunities	The Tuaropaki Trust was developed through a series of financial partnerships including Pastoral Farming, a series of businesses that use heat energy from Tuaropaki's geothermal assets including Gourmet Moraki (a greenhouse), Tuaropaki Dairy, Miraka Limited (a state-of-the-art whole milk powder plant co-owned with other Māori investors) and Halcyon Energy (a green hydrogen production pilot project in a joint venture with Obayashi Corporation, a Japanese construction company). All of these developments produced a long-term income for the community which is used to fund community program and grants and to develop commercial partnerships including communications ventures and the purchase of MB Drilling (an end-to-end geothermal energy engineering business).
	Capacity development	The commercial style of development enabled local capacity building. Sequencing partnerships and ventures in an incremental manner meant that each milestone could enable the next so that benefits compounded, and the community had existing strengths that could be leveraged. An example is the geo-thermal plant powering the dairy which in turn supplies milk to a dairy processing plant that produces milk powder. Tuaropaki also funds other social and economic programs and facilitates the progression of rightful descendants through various avenues including education, kaumatua (Elder) and cultural grants.
	Closing the Gap targets	The outcomes and impacts of the activities of the Tuaropaki Trust would address Closing the Gap targets: 3 (Year Before Fulltime Schooling), 4 (Children Developmentally on Track), 5 (Year 12), 6 (Tertiary Qualification), 7 (Employment), 8 (Youth Engagement) 9 (Housing Crowding), 13 (Family Violence), but would impact all 17 targets given the focus on independent incomes.

Source: Tuaropaki Trust Website, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise Website: Renewable Energy, Waikato Regional Council Website: Mokai geothermal System.

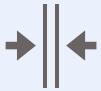
Nhulunbuy Corporation and Gove Peninsula – Yolŋu and Ɗäpaki Lands

Project: the Rio Tinto Alcan Gove Traditional Owners Agreement is an agreement between Rio Tinto and two First Nation entities, the Gumatj Future Fund, and the Rirratjingu Aboriginal Corporation, that represent several Traditional Owner groups across the Gove Peninsula.

Aboriginal communities: the aspirations of the Yolŋu people include respect for their land and culture, that the Yolŋu and Ɗäpaki will live and work together in harmony in Nhulunbuy, maintaining connection with culture and country, a diverse economy building on its special location and history and developing Infrastructure ready for the future.

Key Learnings: the Nhulunbuy Corporation and Rio Tinto Alcan Gove Traditional Owners Agreement are an example of a collaboration which builds significant capacity and independence within the community. Establishing a custodian type organisation that actively leads the community to develop a more diverse and resilient economy is not a common initiative but is exemplary.

Engagement Principles		About
	Meaningful and on-going relationships	The Gove Peninsula community developed financial dependence on the Gove Alumina Refinery and Bauxite Mine. Ahead of closure, a not-for-profit development corporation, Developing East Arnhem Limited (DEAL), was established by Rio Tinto and the Northern Territory Government. The Nhulunbuy Corporation, a partnership with Rio Tinto, was also established to act as a quasi-council providing a wide range of services including building, property and development maintenance, finance, operation, and maintenance of infrastructure including roads, electricity, sewerage, and the Gove Airport.
	Cultural connections	There is significant passive impact on the cultural connection, given the level of involvement of Indigenous community members. An example of this is the establishment of the Gulkula mine. As the mine is Indigenous owned and operated, the Indigenous culture has been woven through the commercial enterprise from strategic decisions to operational tasks. The other impact on cultural connection that the Peninsula partnership would have been driven by the establishment of DEAL. Given the Indigenous representation and input into DEAL, it is highly likely that the solutions developed to improve

Engagement Principles		About
		economic diversification and resilience, will be influenced by the Indigenous way and culture, and may actually directly address cultural connection through tourist operations like cultural centres and experiences, etc.
	Long-term financial opportunities	The primary term of the Traditional Owners Agreement is that Rio Tinto will pay these two organisations $18M and $15M until 2053. Rio Tinto also supported the Gulkula mine by buying their bauxite. Gulkula mine is wholly owned by Gumatj Corporation Ltd, affiliated with Gumatj people who are one of the Traditional Owner groups on the Gove Peninsula. This mining operation aims to deliver sustainable economic benefits to the local Yolngu people and provide on the job training to build careers in the mining industry. It is the first Indigenous owned and operated bauxite mine. The agreement guarantees a significant revenue for the community over a timeframe that allows adequate time for the community to explore alternative avenues and diversify their economy. Where a community is financially tied to an asset, end of life can be an existential risk to economic and social prosperity. Negotiating long-term agreements such as this one is an excellent model.
	Capacity development	DEAL aims to drive economic development across East Arnhem and create opportunity for its people, by leading collaboration across the region. DEAL acts as the front door to investment in the region. DEAL set out to drive economic diversification of the region decoupling the community's economy from the Rio's operations. DEAL has been instrumental in securing vital industry and infrastructure investment across the region. Adjacent to the Gulkula mine is the Gulkula Regional Training Centre is operated by Gulkula mining staff and provides a broad range of training to young Yolngu men and women. Rio Tinto also supports this centre and invested $2.4M to aid its establishment. The lessons that can be learnt from Gulkula Regional Training Centre is a focus on capacity development beyond short-term needs. This centre not only equipped the local community to be involved in current mining operations, but also provided diverse and widely applicable skills so that community could work across many sectors and be equipped to transition to new sectors in line with the community's broader diversification. The Nhulunbuy corporation provides an example of a meaningful and ongoing relationship founded in capacity development of a community.
	**Closing the gap targets**	The establishment of DEAL and the breadth of Nhulunbuy Corporation operations, services, and social programs impact all 17 targets.

Source: Nhulunbuy Website, Invest East Arnhem 2020, Rio Tinto Operations: Gove, Minerals Council Australia: Case Studies, Traditional Owners' Vision for Nhulunbuy and Gove Peninsula, Nhulunbuy Itinerary - OECD, Gulkula - The Indigenous Mine Pioneering Sustainability in the Aluminium Supply Chain

Telfer Mine – Martu Lands

Project: Telfer Mine is a copper and gold mine 100% owned by Newcrest Mining in the Great Sandy Desert, Pilbara (WA). NewCrest signed an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) with the Martu people over 5 years ($18M), followed by a revenue or 'Total Project Benefit' based payment.

Aboriginal communities: the key aspirations for the Martu people are looking after and caring for country, keeping language strong, unity and harmony between Martu, strengthening community with a higher standard of living and better respect and relationship with 'whitefellas'.

Key Learnings: in addition to the ILUA, Telfer presents many learnings for working with local Aboriginal communities to generate long term work with a broad-ranging program to address structural barriers, including the use of local service providers to connect with difficult-to-reach job seekers, the use of skills registers to identify gaps to be addressed through training.

Engagement Principles		About
	Meaningful and on-going relationships	A meaningful and long-term relationship was developed based on "genuine and deep participation" (Minerals Council of Australia, 2021). As noted in their case study "Leading the Way in Indigenous Relations", "listening to understand is the basis of constructive, trusted, and long-term working relationships. This deep participation and commitment are often more effective than top-down approaches to community development." (Minerals Council Australia, 2021) Given the many initiatives and activities that form a part of this engagement, it is clear that an inter-generational and multi-pronged approach to Aboriginal inclusion and employment is being taken.
	Cultural connection	Partnerships with community-based sports and recreation organisations, such as the one with Ngurra Kujungka, can act as an avenue of communication to communities. In most Aboriginal communities, sport has a high social and cultural value and often becomes a community connection point.

Engagement Principles		About
	Long-term financial opportunities	The relationship between Newcrest Mining and the Martu People was formalised in an A$18 million, five-year Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) that centred on achieving mutual benefit is to support employment and skills development outcomes. This 5-year period was followed by a payment based on revenue or total project benefit. The revenue-based payment is an excellent example of best practice benefit sharing, as often benefits are based on project costs, pre-determined procurement targets, arbitrary figures, or land value. Basing benefit sharing on an agreed proportion of Total Project Benefit is widely considered (O' Neil et. al. 2021) the best and only way to fairly share benefits. The Telfer mine has employed 500 Martu men and women over the past 15 years, with 102 Indigenous people currently employed fulltime.
	Capacity development	Newcrest implemented a program to address structural barriers to employment amongst through the Martu people by: • Working with local community groups to identify interested candidates, maintain a skills-register of 'work-ready' individuals, and conduct gap analyses to identify specific training needs. The skills gap analyses and development of specialised training programs was crucial to equip individuals with specialised skills to improve employability and add to the stock of specialist skills in a remote region • Developing specialised training programs allowing individuals to gain skills that will enable them to fulfil certain roles. • Committing to provide eight full-time trainee positions annually with employment at the end of the program which is important as short-term work ultimately contributes little to economic wellbeing • Understanding that 12-hour days and full-time positions are not suitable for everyone, so short-term employment is offered to allow people to trial employment at the mine • Employing full-time staff to assist employees and trainees adjust to living and working on site, which was integral to the program's success and gaps bridging to improve suitability of tenderers • Providing financial support for Martu staff's transport to site and for other barriers such as food and accommodation • Developing a partnership with Ngurra Kujungka a community-based organisation The ILUA includes a focus on Indigenous governance by developing institutional capacity within the Martu community. Strengthening governance and the institutions of a community is a key outcome, that is seemingly unrelated to large infrastructure project, but it can be the first step for communities to take full advantage of other benefits that may come from developments. If a community does not have strong governance structures, distribution and utilisation of benefits is very difficult and highly problematic.
	Closing the Gap targets	The Telfer Mine partnership addresses targets 1 (Life Expectancy), 2 (Birth Weight), 6 (Tertiary Qualification), 7 (Employment), 8 (Youth Engagement), 15 (Land Rights and Interest), 16 (Culture) - and all 17 targets given its focus on long-term employment and community development.

Source: Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa Outcome Report, Newcrest Website: Telfer and Practical Programs Drive Indigenous Employment, Leading the Way in Indigenous Relations: Newcrest Case Study, ANU - Ensuring Indigenous Benefit From Large-Scale Renewable Energy Projects: Drawing On Experience from Extractive Industry Agreement Making.

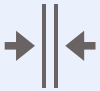
Cape York Region Package – Traditional Owners Cape York Peninsular, Australia

Project: The Cape York Region Package (CYRP) was a 5-year, $276m critical infrastructure program mainly consisting of two road projects (works to seal 173km of the Peninsula development Road between Laura and South Weipa and works to seal sections of the Endeavour Valley Road between Cooktown and Hope Vale). A third program of works was added; the Indigenous Community Infrastructure Work - a $50.5 million program of community infrastructure works selected by representatives from each of the relevant local government council areas through the Torres Cape Indigenous Council Alliance.

Aboriginal communities: There are numerous Traditional Owners of the Cape York Region. Given the political intricacies and social dynamics that arise from this region, there are no one set of community aspirations, but some of the key priorities are advancement of health outcomes, economic development, strengthening culture through language and access to land, education, long-term employment, eliminating the overrepresentation of Aboriginal youth and adults at risk of being, and engaged in, the criminal justice system and reducing suicide rates in Cape York communities.

Key Learnings: The primary lesson from the CYRP is the delivery of major benefits for the Aboriginal communities through the use of an agreement with key result areas and quantified targets to deliver long-term employment and capacity building, supported by a community infrastructure fund with high levels of community input and participation which delivered benefits across these communities.

Engagement Principles		About
	Meaningful and on-going relationships	Giving a community a voice is critical to maintaining a meaningful relationship. The community had a role in selecting infrastructure works to be undertaken which meant that the works and upgrades the community considered important were being addressed. The level of community involvement in all the works also contributed significantly to the sense of ownership in the project and therefore the maintenance of a meaningful relationship with communities. Outcomes of the project were monitored and evaluated and shared with the community which is an area many other projects could learn from.
	Cultural connection	108 local Traditional Owners were employed to provide over 10,000 hours of cultural heritage monitoring. This demonstrates a recognition and understanding of the importance of Indigenous culture and associated protocols to the local community.
	Long-term financial opportunities	All PDR works were carried out under the Peninsula Developmental Road Indigenous land use agreement. This agreement between the Queensland Government and several Cape York Traditional Owner groups set key result areas (KRAs) across economic opportunities, training, and local industry participation, employment, business development and cultural heritage. These KRAs produced unprecedented results:

		• 84 Aboriginal trainees in civil construction who commenced or completed nationally recognised competencies for different civil construction equipment and machinery • 152,000 hours of Aboriginal training and employment • 321 Aboriginal workers employed to deliver works on the PDR • 19 local Aboriginal businesses engaged to work in civil construction, vegetation, and road maintenance works • $42.6 million worth of work completed by Aboriginal businesses • $84 million spent on local Cape York businesses.
	Capacity development	Training and employment outcomes focussed on capacity development and long-term employment which increased the ability of the participating individuals and community ability to remain financially independent after the program of works finished. An ancillary package of Indigenous Community Infrastructure Work was developed to leverage the roadworks. Communities selected upgrades and improvements to key infrastructure including roads, barge and boat ramps, water, and sewerage treatment plants. Capacity development like this, that is driven by the community, provides unparalleled benefit.
	**Closing the Gap targets**	The Cape York Regional Package addresses Closing the Gap targets 1 (Life Expectancy), 2 (Birth Weight), 6 (Tertiary Qualification), 7 (Employment), 8 (Youth Engagement), 15 (Land Rights and Interest), 16 (Culture) and impact all 17 targets given the focus on long-term employment and community development.

Source: Cape York Regional Package: Website

Altin Hydro Project – Taku River Tlingit First Nation, Canada

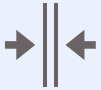
Project: the Altin Hydro Project is a 2.1 MW hydro power station which is a 100% Indigenous owned and operated project.

Aboriginal communities: Taku River Tlingit. The Tlingit community has aspirations common to Aboriginal communities to achieve financial Independence, improve physical and mental health, employment, food security, cultural continuity and connection.

Key Learnings: this project is an excellent example of a community achieving self-determination by leveraging energy infrastructure to establish a sustainable own-source revenue.

Engagement Principles		About
	Meaningful and on-going relationships	There were several steps taken to ensure there was a meaningful and on-going relationship between the project and the community. A focus on engaging like-minded consultants and contractors throughout the project was and is a good foundation for a strong and mutually beneficial relationship. One significant thing the community did to strengthen the relationship between the community and the project was to focus on fundamental social and economic determinants. This meant trying to impact things such as individual mindsets and life skills, health, culture, and education. This was done proactively, but when issues arose such as a disinterest from community members to participate in the operation of the hydro plant, the root cause of these issues were identified and addressed, generally these root causes were also fundamental social or economic problems. More opportunities were generated from the hydro project by reinvesting revenue into focus social and economic determinants. These uses or diversions of the revenue were directed by the Joint Clan Meetings – open meetings where all Aboriginal residents can provide their input and participate in discussion and decision making. Allowing the community input in how a project is developed and how benefits are allocated is an excellent way to improve community relationships. The project took a focus on monitoring and evaluation, focusing on monitoring key social and economic determinants such as the social determinants of health. Interviews were conducted with 50 Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members and a small-town hall meeting was arranged to gauge the impact of the project and community sentiment. Again,

Engagement Principles		About
		focussing on issues that affect community members everyday lives, and asking community to evaluate performance establishes a value of the community and makes clear the project aims to address the issues they deem priority. The inspiration this project drove was the final relationship builder; the project instilled confidence and pride within the community that they could develop commercial ventures, which also had a positive effect on the relationship held with the community.
	Cultural connection	A Canadian survey of Indigenous clean energy projects, "Powering Reconciliation" (Lumos Clean Energy Advisors, 2017) found that "most beneficial aspect of community participation in these clean energy projects is the strengthening of pride in the community and the assertion of Indigenous rights and territories". Seminal research has found "youth suicide rates are six times higher in Aboriginal communities where fewer than 50 per cent of residents have knowledge of an Indigenous language, compared with Aboriginal communities where at least 50 per cent of residents have knowledge of an Indigenous language" The focus on achieving self-determination produced several observable outcomes which included a renewed community pride, revitalised interest in the Tlingit language and traditional practices, greater recovery among residents with substance abuse problems, and better non-Indigenous and Indigenous relationships. The broad, long-term and root cause approach of this project ultimately led to a renewed and revitalised community that was ready to regain language and culture and embark on new culturally aligned business ventures that will allow the Taku River Tlingit First Nation to continue to connect with and protect their land (Country).
	Long-term financial opportunities	The project produced a significant annual revenue for the development corporation ($450k/year) which was reinvested into existing social and economic programs, and new business ventures such as the Altin Hydro Expansion Project to allow the community to sell excess power into the grid. Revenue was diverted to the existing community fund, the Tlatsini Fund, and used to support the Land Guardian Program and contributes to Aboriginal Obligations under the Taku River Tlingit/British Columbia Land Use Plan implementation. This program emulates the community's motto of "Our Land Our Future", by engaging Aboriginal residents to monitor Tlingit different land uses.
	Capacity development	The revenue was also invested directly by the development corporation into existing community programs. A key program that this revenue was directly diverted towards is the ***Skills Training Employment Program (STEP)***. This program took a broad focus not just aiming to transfer skills to participants but aims to develop life skills and employment readiness skills in participants. To do this the program focusses on life skills, self-esteem, essential skills, industrial employment skills, and cultural activities. STEP also aligns with future work in the community, ensuring that participants develop the skills relevant to their community's pipeline of work. Most programs were already established, so the main benefit that the additional revenue from the hydro project provided was to tailor programs for the individual needs of participants, in the case of STEP the program was able to "meet participants where they are" and allowed the program to work at a pace that was most conducive to participants entering and remaining in the workforce.

Engagement Principles		About
		Capacity was also developed so that other commercial venture could be pursued, this was mainly in the form of human resource capacity, where the development corporation focussed on self-education to develop the skills to obtain grant funding for a feasibility study, engaging of consultants/contractors with the right mindset to transfer knowledge 'on the job' such as project management, hydrology, administration, and technical, as well as in the construction and operation of the project. Other capacity was developed by purchasing specialised equipment and completing training, that allowed the community to take on civil and construction projects.
	**Closing the Gap targets**	The Altin Hydro project was completed in Canada, however if the same approach was replicated it would contribute to Closing the Gap targets 2 (Birth Weight), 6 (Tertiary Qualification), 7 (Employment), 8 (Youth Engagement), 10 (Criminal Justice, adult), 11 (Criminal Justice, youth), 14 (Suicide), 15 (Land Rights and Interest), 16 (Culture) - and impact all 17 targets given the purposeful pursuit of culture and community pride.

Source: Case Study: The Altin Hydro Project, Powering Reconciliation, Economic Policy Research, Working Paper. https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/handle/1885/242825.

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