

Consultations on the draft *Indigenous Business Sector Strategy: Supercharging Indigenous Business Start-up & Growth.*

A summary of the feedback received from the Indigenous business sector.

The draft Indigenous Business Sector Strategy

Part of the Federal Government's election platform, the Indigenous Business Sector Strategy ('the IBSS') will be a 10-year agenda that outlines practical initiatives to drive growth in the number, size and diversity of Indigenous-owned businesses.

Following a series of consultations with the Indigenous business sector in 2016, in May 2017, the Department of the Prime Minister & Cabinet released a consultation paper on the Draft IBSS which focused on a range of supply-side efforts designed to develop the capacity and strongly position the Indigenous business sector into the future.

The Draft IBSS focused initiatives around the following four priority themes:

1. **Better business support:** access to timely advice to identify and execute commercial opportunities.
2. **Improved access to finance:** building capital options for investible opportunities.
3. **Connections:** building stronger networks.
4. **Knowledge:** better sharing of information about commercial opportunities and better collection and sharing of data about Indigenous businesses.

The Discussion Paper on the Draft IBSS also included a range of discussion questions relating to each of the themes. These questions were designed to draw out robust and meaningful feedback from stakeholders across the Indigenous business sector.

National consultations: an overview

Between May & July 2017 86 stakeholders provided feedback on the Draft IBSS. This feedback was received by way of:

4

Roundtables held in Sydney & Darwin.

27

Written submissions on the draft IBSS.

12

Interviews with stakeholders in the Indigenous business sector.

Overall, the Draft IBSS received broad support across the Indigenous business sector. It is considered to respond well to the current and future needs of the Indigenous business sector, providing a needs-based, accessible and long-term vision for sector development. Subject to some nuancing, the initiatives outlined in the strategy were seen to result in significant development across the Indigenous business sector. This includes the sector itself taking a more active role in determining the final design and implementation of what will be Australia's first Indigenous Business Sector Strategy.

Importantly, consultations drew out a need for the four themes guiding the IBSS to include a more specific focus on developing programs and initiatives geared toward education, women and youth, and regional and remote Australia. Further development in these areas is seen to be critical to develop the sector overall.

The following page summarises the suggested improvements to the Draft IBSS.

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Theme	Feedback
 Business support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support to enable Indigenous businesses to win more contracts, access broader markets and provide goods and services to consumer markets.• Education plays a critical role in building the capability of the Indigenous business sector.• Business hubs should be offered in physical, virtual and mobile forms.• Regional and remote businesses must be enabled to access this support.• Strengthen guidance on appropriate joint venture arrangements.
 Capital.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to capital is critical, but limited. Support should be provided to Indigenous businesses to access mainstream capital markets.• Access to, and the provision of, capital should come with appropriate business support.• The Indigenous Entrepreneurs' Capital Scheme should be appropriately resourced, be run by people with the right skills, be risk tolerant and have a relationship-centric approach.
 Connections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support for peer-to-peer networking, mentoring and learning activities led by Indigenous businesses.• Actively encourage the participation of Indigenous women and youth in business and businesses in regional and remote Australia.
 Knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use the Annual Indigenous Business Summit as a forum for tracking the progress of, and receiving feedback on, the implementation of the IBSS.• Provide more useful information on planned major projects and capital works programs and opportunities for Indigenous businesses that may exist within these.• It is critical to have a clear measure(s) of success for the IBSS. Growth of the Indigenous business sector is a useful measure of this.
 Other.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support to access international markets.• Increase focus on building the capability of the demand-side to work with Indigenous business, including building opportunities for Indigenous business and agreeing on minimum standards for contracting with Indigenous business.• Look to better understand how to stimulate Indigenous youth entrepreneurship.