

# Eora Journey

## Economic Development Plan

November 2016

# Acknowledgement

**The Council of the City of Sydney acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians of our land – Australia. The City acknowledges the Gadigal of the Eora Nation as the traditional custodians of this place we now call Sydney.**

**In 1788, the British established a convict outpost on the shores of Sydney Harbour. This had far reaching and devastating impacts on the Eora Nation, including the occupation and appropriation of their traditional lands.**

**Despite the destructive impact of this invasion, Aboriginal culture endured and is now globally recognised as one of the world's oldest living cultures. Aboriginal peoples have shown, and continue to show, enormous resilience coupled with generosity of spirit towards other peoples with whom they now share their land.**

**The Council of the City of Sydney recognises that, by acknowledging our shared past, we are laying the groundwork for a future which embraces all Australians, a future based on mutual respect and shared responsibility for our land.**

As acknowledged in Sustainable Sydney 2030  
City of Sydney's Community Strategic Plan.

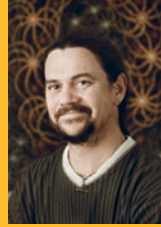
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The terms Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and Indigenous are used in this document synonymously and refer to the descendants of the traditional lands and waters that comprise Australia.

**Images** In many areas of Australia it is considered culturally inappropriate and offensive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to publish images of people who have passed away. We respectfully advise audiences that this publication may inadvertently contain such images.

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## Artist details – Brentyn Lugnan

The designs within this Plan have been created by Brentyn Lugnan, a proud Gumbaynggirr man and experienced artist from Urunga, New South Wales.

Brentyn has a strong connection with Sydney, having attended the Sydney College of Fine Arts, TAFE and the EORA Centre in Sydney. He has worked as a graphic designer for television with SBS, an animator for the ABC and is also the co-founder of a clothing and graphics business. His designs appear in buildings at Barangaroo and Darling Harbour, and his work has been exhibited in the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia.

Brentyn is a featured artist in the Saltwater Freshwater Arts Alliance Art Book and is affiliated with the National Aboriginal Design Agency, a social enterprise of Saltwater Freshwater.

The design on the front and back cover signifies connection, representing a river winding its way between groups or gatherings.

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# 01

## Lord Mayor's message

### Our city has an Aboriginal past, present and future.

The land on which this city stands is Aboriginal land – the land of the Gadigal of the Eora Nation.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and living culture are an integral part of what makes our city's character unique.

Many of Australia's longest-established and most significant Aboriginal organisations are based in Sydney. Redfern has an historic and continuing status as a focus of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life.

When we spoke to our communities to develop our future vision for Sydney we ensured that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and viewpoints were at the fore.

The resulting plan, Sustainable Sydney 2030, was shaped by those consultations and included a very clear call from our communities, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, for a stronger public presence and profile for Australia's first peoples.

This has led to the development of our Eora Journey program, which is focused on working towards cultural, economic and social sustainability for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in our local area.



The Eora Journey is being designed and delivered in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations. Working with artists and businesses, we have so far developed world-class artworks and events that celebrate living Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

Cultural recognition needs to be underpinned by economic opportunities.

We know that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who are one of the youngest demographic groups in the city, face unique challenges in accessing economic opportunities.

It is crucial that we work with partners to overcome any barriers to success in employment and entrepreneurship for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This action plan will guide our work in assisting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities achieve prosperity on their terms.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Clover Moore".

**Clover Moore**  
Lord Mayor

# 02

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel message

**The development of the City's Eora Journey Economic Development Plan has been thorough and consultative.**

The City has sought knowledge, expertise and perspectives from across our communities – from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, students, workers and business people; innovators, artists and academics; public servants, community organisations and community leaders.

The City's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel has been involved at every step of the process.



There have been deep discussions around the meaning of prosperity and economic opportunity to our communities, and of course, what actions the City of Sydney can take to work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and businesses in creating the conditions for all of our people to thrive.

We would like to acknowledge the input of current and past members of the Advisory Panel's Economic Development Working Group – Dr Lisa-Mare Syron, Mayrah Sonter, Nancia Guivarra, Norma Ingram, Patricia Adjei and Rebekah Raymond, who have spent many hours advising on and reviewing the plan in detail.

We look forward to the implementation of this important plan to support growing the prosperity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Sydney.

**Cass Goodwin and Warren Brown**

Co-Chairs

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel

# 03

## Executive summary

**This is the City of Sydney's first economic action plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.**

The Eora Journey Economic Development Plan sets an agenda for the City to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and businesses over the next 10 years to achieve prosperity.

It will help us deliver a range of initiatives to create and maintain the conditions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our area to thrive as students, employees or business owners.

This includes ways we can work more productively with community organisations, the private sector and business owners, other levels of government, and the wider community.

This plan has been developed through extensive consultation with local organisations and communities.

It also builds on our longstanding commitments to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resilience and wellbeing.

### Our local area

Our local area is home to a vibrant and diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population that comprises many language and clan groups from all over Australia.

The culture and connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to this land dates back tens of thousands years.

This area is of prime importance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It was the first place that long-standing ways of life were disrupted by invasion. It was and is an important gathering area for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, businesses and communities.

### A time to act

We live in a period of economic transformation, and with this comes new opportunities and challenges. Economic opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in our area require particular focus.

There have been recent improvements across Sydney in areas such as employment, business ownership and educational attainment. However, inequalities between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the population as a whole remain visible.

As our city transforms, we will continue to work with partners to strengthen and support economic opportunity to ensure the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heart of our city beats ever louder.

### Based on research and consultation

This plan has been developed through comprehensive engagement with organisations and communities across Sydney.

We have worked in partnership with Aboriginal experts and businesses to understand key issues and community views.

Our first step was to conduct foundation studies to identify and examine strengths, gaps and opportunities in the existing economic landscape.

We then undertook a comprehensive engagement program, the 'Eora Journey Prosperity Talk'.

This research and consultation confirmed that achieving prosperity, in its multiple forms, is a central aspiration for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in our local area.

It also helped clarify how our communities define prosperity and the economic challenges they face.





Colours of the Aboriginal flag as part of the Welcome to Country at New Year's Eve 2015  
Photo by Ryan Pierse\City of Sydney/Getty Images

## Our vision and guiding principles

This is an action plan for sustained prosperity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Sydney.

Based on our consultations, this action plan rests on four guiding principles.

### Work towards prosperity

- Expand economic participation and opportunities by enabling greater self-determination

### Reflect and respond to community needs

- Recognise the diversity of aspiration among individuals and communities
- Remain dynamic and responsive to changing needs and opportunities

### Create business opportunities through delivery

- Create business opportunities in delivering activities under this plan, not simply as the result of these activities

### Work together

- Coordinate between all partners – individuals, communities, government agencies and not-for profit organisations

## Four main themes

Based on the challenges identified in our engagement and research work, this plan focuses on four main themes.

### 1. Create an economic hub

Ensure support and capacity building for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business owners and prospective entrepreneurs

### 2. Maximise employment outcomes

Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can access opportunities, progress and thrive in the local economy. This focuses on issues such as pre-employment support, job seeking, job-readiness and support for stronger career pathways

### 3. Enhance tertiary opportunities

Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in accessing, completing and maximising the benefits of tertiary education

### 4. Grow key sectors of the economy

Support business ownership and employment opportunities in areas such as finance and professional services, tourism, retail, creative and digital businesses



*Discussions at an Eora Journey economic stakeholder workshop at Sydney Town Hall | Photo by Jamie Williams*

## Areas of action

Under each theme are several areas of action for the City:

### 1. Business owners and entrepreneurs

#### **Build skills by providing access to business advice and mentorship**

- Enhance entrepreneurial skills, business knowledge, and access to networks
- Ensure information on existing support services is communicated to business owners and prospective entrepreneurs

#### **Provide opportunities to access resources**

- Explore how we can improve access to resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business owners
- Work with partners to create a business hub for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business owners in Sydney

#### **Enable connections, collaboration and supplier diversity**

- Increase opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business owners to connect to other businesses, share knowledge and build strong networks
- Enhance our own procurement activity

#### **Promote Sydney as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business hub**

- Showcase success stories and further promote Sydney as a hub for successful Aboriginal businesses

### 2. Jobseekers and employees

#### **Lead by example through enhancing opportunities within our own organisation**

- Ensure we provide opportunities at all levels for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job-seekers
- Implement a City of Sydney Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment strategy

#### **Assist job-seekers in finding the correct pre-employment support**

- Work with partners to promote the employment services available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job-seekers in our local area
- Support access to mentor programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and job-seekers

#### **Promote pathways: into employment and onto career progression**

- Support programs and services that provide opportunities and improve skills
- Ensure our partnering arrangements create employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people





Bangarra dancers at the launch of YININMADYEMI: Thou didst let fall by Tony Albert, Hyde Park | Photo by Joseph Mayers

### 3. Students and tertiary education

#### Enhance Sydney's reputation as a centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learning

- Create more opportunities for organisations involved in tertiary education in Sydney to meet and coordinate activity
- Promote Sydney as a vibrant and welcoming place to study for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

#### Raise and help realise aspirations for further study

- Create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to learn about the range of career options available through further education
- Promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tertiary education success stories

#### Improve student experiences and networks

- Work with partners to create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to come together and build networks
- Develop and support programs to increase leadership skills and employment opportunities

### 4. Key sectors of interest

#### Finance and professional services

- Work with partners to develop actions that will further increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment participation

#### Tourism

- Work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism operators to create new visitor experiences and sustainable tourism products
- Raise the profile of Sydney as the gateway to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, arts and experiences.

#### Retail

- Facilitate access to affordable space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander retailers.
- Explore initiatives that respond to the impact of non-authentic products and services

#### Creative and digital

- Create more opportunities for organisations within the creative and digital sectors to meet, discuss issues, and develop actions to enable growth



Young people at launch of Bujari Gamarruwa signage at Reconciliation Park, March 2016 | Photo by Katherine Griffiths

## Implementing the plan and monitoring change

The Eora Journey Economic Development Plan is a dynamic 10-year plan. It is designed to be flexible and evolve as the needs of local communities change.

We will work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and organisations, other levels of government and the private sector to deliver this plan.

All of the actions in this plan have been designed to create measurable and positive change for, and with, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in our local area.

The areas we will measure over time include:

### Control

- Increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander control in areas such as ownership, leadership, and decision-making

### Visibility

- Ensuring the contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, employees and businesses are visible throughout Sydney, and this visibility increases over time

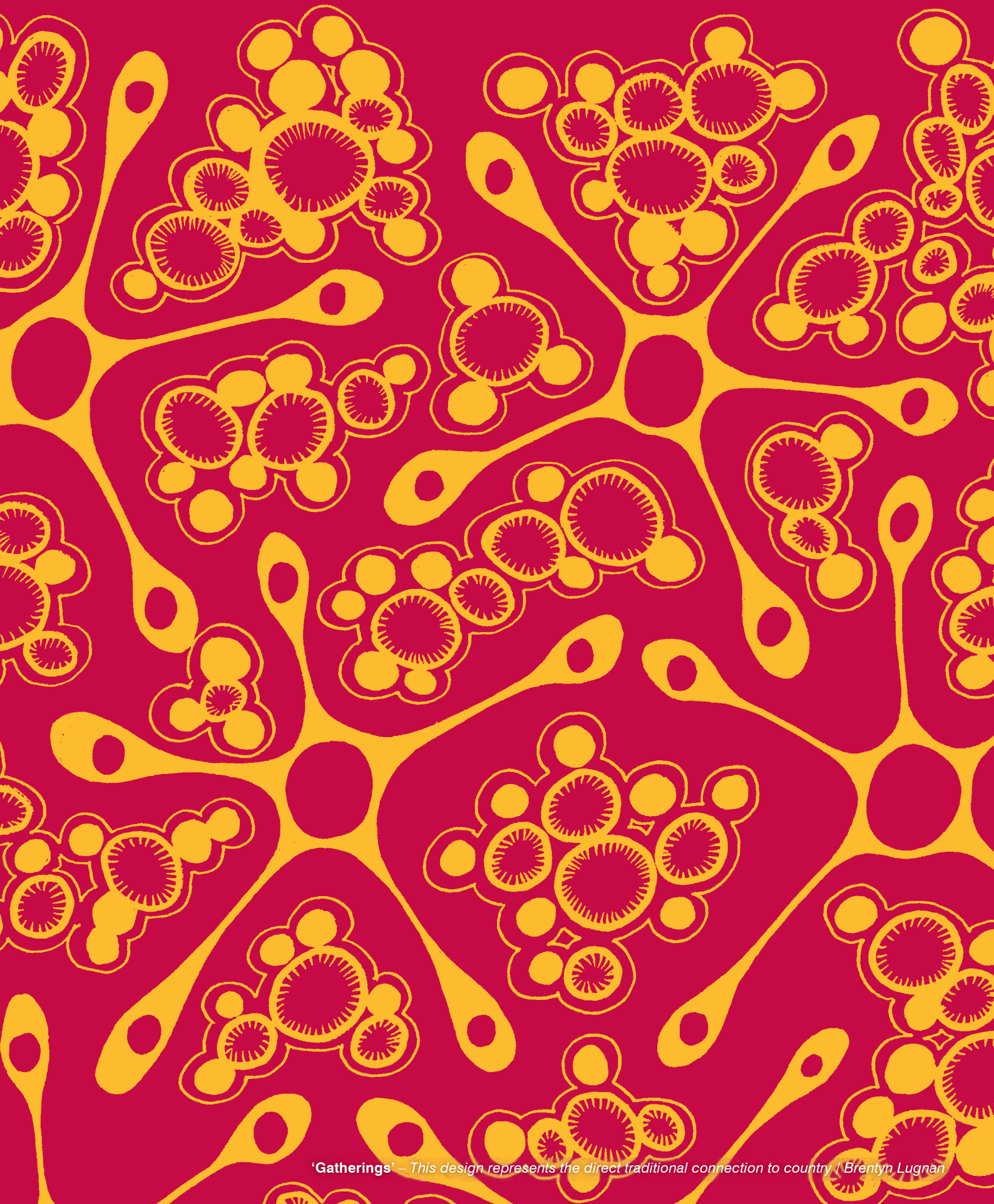
### Connection

- Promoting and maintaining connections between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal residents, businesses and organisations



# Part A

## /Setting the Scene



**'Gatherings'** – This design represents the direct traditional connection to country / Brentyn Lughan

# 04

## Securing economic opportunities

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture maintains, and has always maintained, a strong and continuously evolving connection to the place we now know as Sydney.**

### A culture at the core of our city

The Gadigal of the Eora Nation are the traditional custodians of this place we now call Sydney. They were united by common language, strong ties of kinship and a rich economy.<sup>1</sup>

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities remain a growing and vital presence in Sydney today – as communities living in the city, and as individuals coming here daily for work, study or recreation.

Through our engagement and partnership work, we know community aspirations include resilience and prosperity.

We are also keenly aware that the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is developed from within, through empowerment and self-determination.

As a local council that governs an area which has Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture at its core, we also have a special role in supporting our communities towards prosperity.

### A shifting economic landscape

Sydney continues to grow rapidly and change. In terms of residential population, the city is forecast to grow 35 per cent, from 200,000 people to 270,000 people by 2030.<sup>2</sup> The economy is growing strongly too, with current economic output estimated at \$108 billion – close to 7 per cent of national GDP.<sup>3</sup>

As our city transforms, we will work to strengthen and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Without this concerted action, challenges such as gentrification of community precincts, barriers to economic access, and decreasing levels of housing affordability may lessen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander presence in the city.<sup>4</sup>

As our city transitions to an increasingly knowledge-based economy, this action plan includes a particular focus on building knowledge-based skills.

Within this new economy, values such as inclusivity, collaboration, and innovation are also growing in importance.

These values are embedded practices for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, businesses and organisations.





Tribal Warrior dancers / Photo by Sarah Rhodes

### Local, flexible and consultative approaches

It is vital that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are at the centre of planning for, and achieving, prosperity.

Aboriginal perspectives can differ significantly from non-Indigenous perspectives, and the City will work with a range of partners on the challenges outlined in this action plan.

Fundamental principles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic development include self-determination, reciprocity, and ensuring ongoing sustainability of resources.<sup>5</sup>

This includes placing value on economic activity for its benefits to the wider community, not just for the individual owner or enterprise.

Localised and flexible approaches, designed in partnership with local Aboriginal communities, have been highly effective approaches to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander development.

The City is well placed to implement this local, multi-partnered approach.

### Our approach to economic development

The unique economic and social issues experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia require a special focus.

We commend and support the efforts of all partners and levels of government to work alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to address economic and social challenges.

Much activity in recent years has focussed on reducing disadvantage and addressing gaps in equality. Achieving equity for all communities is vital, but it is important these efforts do not focus solely on 'servicing disadvantage' but also enable success.<sup>6</sup>

As the City of Sydney, we represent all of our local communities, but what we do in Sydney also influences at a metropolitan and international level.

This plan concentrates on creating the conditions for excellence to thrive within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

This plan forms part of our Eora Journey program. Through the Eora Journey, we want to celebrate and enhance the contribution and sustainability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in economic, social and cultural terms. See chapter 12 for more about the Eora Journey.

# 05

## **Economic challenges for key groups and sectors**



We consulted a wide range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, businesses and individuals in developing this plan. Through this we defined economic challenges for different groups and key sectors for employment and business growth. This chapter summarises the feedback we received and our areas of focus.



Indigenous Business Month launch event, Customs House October 2015 / Photo by Joseph Mayers

### Developing business skills

Many people don't know where to start when thinking about a new business or building business skills and capacity. While support exists, there is no central point of contact to access this.

### Importance of mentoring

One-on-one mentoring is useful for business owners, with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal mentors. Knowing where and how to develop these relationships is a challenge.

### Differing business motivations

Many entrepreneurs have different reasons for starting their business – with reciprocity and giving back to community often important. This creates different business pressures, including more outgoings and less capital upfront.

### Understanding the sector

No solid data exists on the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses operating in our area. This makes it difficult to plan services and set targets for growth.

## Business owners and future entrepreneurs

### Accessing resources

Sydney has high rental costs and it is difficult for small businesses to access space. Lack of access to capital particularly affects these businesses, which often start from a low asset base.

### Making connections

Many small businesses are keen to work with large corporate and government clients. However, many find it difficult to connect with buyers or convince them to change suppliers so these businesses can compete.

### Showcasing success

More needs to be done to promote Sydney as a hub for successful Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business activity.





Photo by Johnny Greig

#### Finding the right training opportunities

Training needs to have long-term employment outcomes. This is critical in designing training and development opportunities.

#### Importance of mentoring

Mentoring and peer support services are important in improving confidence and skills, but these can be difficult to identify or access.

#### Barrier to career progression

Identified positions within organisations pose challenges in terms of 'trapping' people with Aboriginal specific positions. Pathways for employee career advancement need to be explored and developed.

### Employees and job seekers

#### Pre-employment support

Many organisations in Sydney provide excellent pre-employment support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job-seekers, but it's difficult to know which provider will best suit an individual's needs.

#### Pathways into employment

More information sharing is needed to assist these job-seekers in understanding where opportunities exist in different economic sectors.

#### Creating opportunities

More focus needs to be placed on ensuring that the public sector (including the City of Sydney) creates appropriate opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander jobseekers when delivering projects and working in partnership.





### Pathways to university

Building aspirations and capacity to pursue further education needs to start from Year 9 or earlier. Providing more opportunities and resources for prospective tertiary students is critical.

### Cultural inclusion and welcoming

New students, especially those new to Sydney, can find the first few months overwhelming. Providing appropriate support and ways to connect with local communities is vital.

### Affordability

Meeting day-to-day living and accommodation costs is an issue for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

## Students

### Collaboration between Institutions

Sydney is a hub for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and all our universities run support programs for these students. Ensuring collaboration between these institutions on these programs is important.

### Positive promotion

More needs to be done to showcase Sydney as a welcoming, inclusive and inspiring place to study for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. As well as encouraging more people to study in Sydney, this will also help combat violence and discrimination.

### Importance of student support

Support systems are essential for maintaining low drop-out rates. Practical support includes advice on budgeting and time management as well as support in combatting violence and discrimination.



See Chapter 13 for details on the consultation process.

# Part B

## /Approach and Themes



# 06 Our approach

**The vision of the Eora Journey  
Economic Development Plan is:  
“Sustained prosperity for  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait  
Islander communities.”**

## Our vision

Our 'Eora Journey – Prosperity Talks' consultation program informed us that achieving prosperity, in its many forms, is a central aspiration for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in our local area.

We will work with partners to create the conditions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to thrive as students, employees and business owners.

## Defining prosperity

Understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities' vision of prosperity is vital to the development and delivery of the Eora Journey Economic Development Plan.

What we heard consistently throughout the consultation process is that whilst prosperity meant different things to different people it was not solely about amassing individual wealth.

Community wellbeing and shared wealth for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities was central to this vision of prosperity, alongside important aspects such as improved choice, independence, self-determination, health and happiness.

## Principles underpinning our actions

These guiding principles will direct the City's actions.

### Work towards prosperity

- Expand economic participation and opportunities by enabling greater self-determination

### Reflect and respond to community needs

- Recognise the diversity of aspiration among individuals and communities
- Remain dynamic and responsive to changing needs and opportunities

### Create business opportunities through delivery

- Create business opportunities in delivering activities under this plan, not simply as the result of these activities

### Work together

- Coordinate between all partners – individuals, communities, government agencies and not-for profit organisations





'40,000 years' mural in Redfern / Photo by Louise Hawson

### Key themes

Based on the challenges that arose during our engagement and research work, this plan focuses on four key themes.

#### 1. Create an economic hub

Ensure support and capacity building for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business owners and prospective entrepreneurs.

#### 2. Maximise employment outcomes

Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can access, progress and thrive through opportunities in the local economy. This focuses on pre-employment support, job seeking, job-readiness and support for stronger career pathways.

#### 3. Enhance tertiary opportunities

Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in accessing, completing and maximising the benefits of tertiary education.

#### 4. Grow key sectors of the economy

Support business ownership and employment opportunities in areas such as finance and professional services, tourism, retail, creative and digital businesses.

### An economic focus

This plan focusses on ensuring greater access to economic opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

It is intended to increase economic and social resilience with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our local area.

Two central aspects of economic opportunity, 'enterprise' and 'employment' are at the core of our actions:

- Enterprise referring to business ownership and entrepreneurship.
- Employment refers to accessing opportunities within all sectors of economy, at all levels and occupations.

We also recognise that education, particularly tertiary education, is a key pathway to success in enterprise and employment.

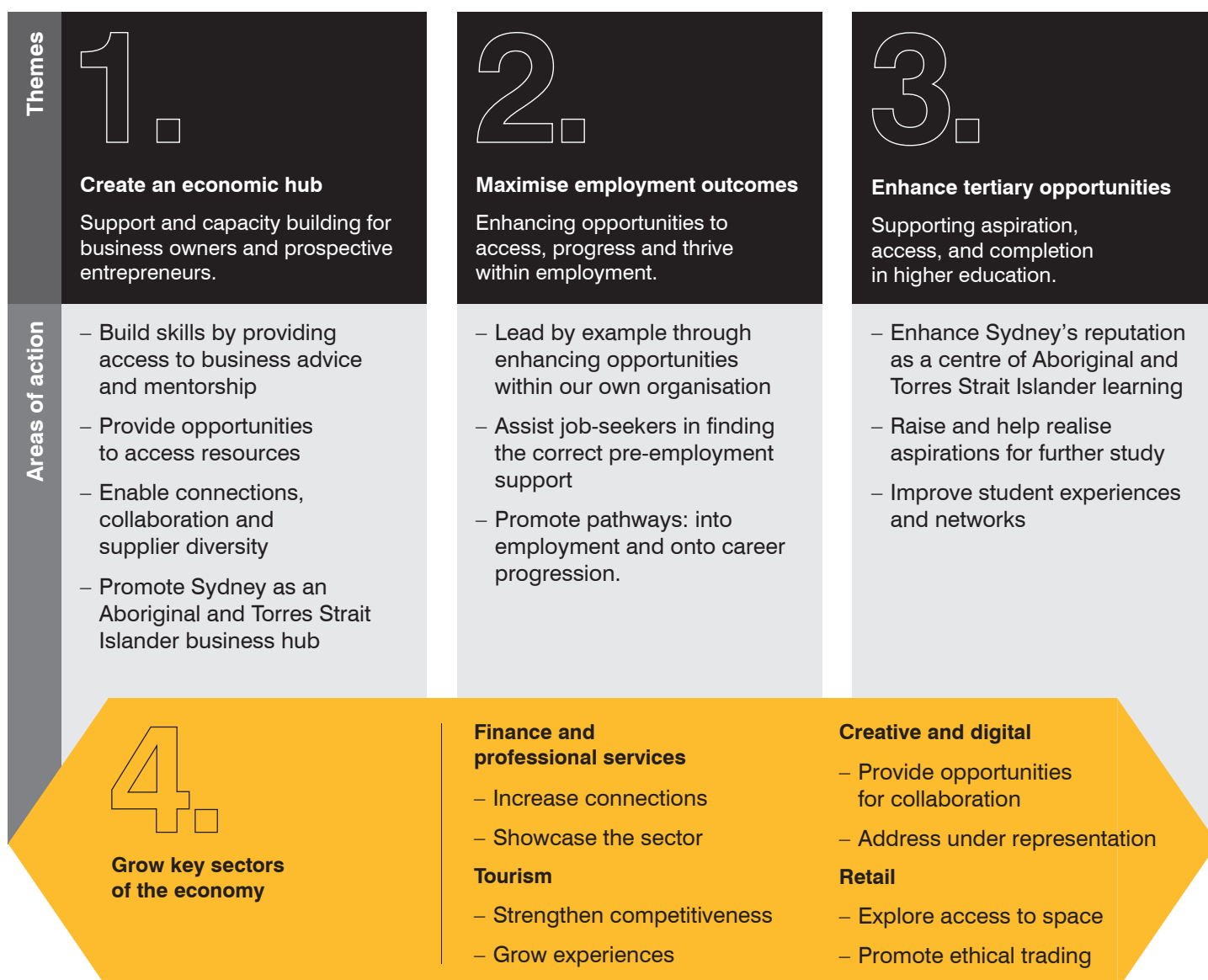
### Aligning with housing and affordability policy

We heard throughout our engagement that housing affordability is a significant challenge within our local area. This is keenly felt by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in important areas such as Redfern.

The City's Housing Policy will directly respond to the need for diverse and accessible housing options for all communities. The Eora Journey Economic Development Plan does not contain actions that directly address housing affordability and accommodation.

## Figure 1: Themes and areas of action for the Eora Journey Economic Development Plan

Chapters 7-10 explore these themes in detail.



# 07

## Theme 1 – create an economic hub

**Sydney is ideally placed to  
become a thriving economic hub  
for Aboriginal and Torres Strait  
Islander business.**

This section details City support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business owners and entrepreneurs.

### Why we need to act

#### Business ownership as a path to self-determination

Successful Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses offer many advantages to individuals and their wider communities. As well as generating income, they offer employment opportunities, provide role models to others, and develop capacity and skills.<sup>7</sup>

The qualities necessary for successful business ownership, such as entrepreneurial drive, management expertise, and sound business practice are also crucial in moving towards greater economic self-determination.<sup>8</sup> In this sense, business ownership and private enterprise can provide a path to equity and reconciliation that is more effective than any government action.<sup>9</sup>

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have historically been largely excluded from building businesses due to adverse political and economic conditions.<sup>10</sup> This has had lasting negative effects, including lack of access to the advantages of transgenerational wealth and knowledge.<sup>11</sup>

This historic inequality has meant that for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people integration into the mainstream economy has occurred slowly and business ownership rates have been low. But there has been a recent increase in numbers of Indigenous businesses and evidence of increasing aspirations towards entrepreneurship.

#### Growing entrepreneurial aspirations

Across Australia, the estimated number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people nominating as self-employed has risen dramatically, from 4,600 in 1991 to 12,500 in 2011.<sup>12</sup> This growth has been focused in urban areas, with the bulk of successful entrepreneurs “being owners and managers of stand-alone commercial enterprises in urban environments”.<sup>13</sup>

Many factors have motivated this move towards Indigenous entrepreneurialism. Success in business can offer an alternative to employment, increase autonomy and flexibility, support family and community, and act to overcome the barriers of disadvantage.

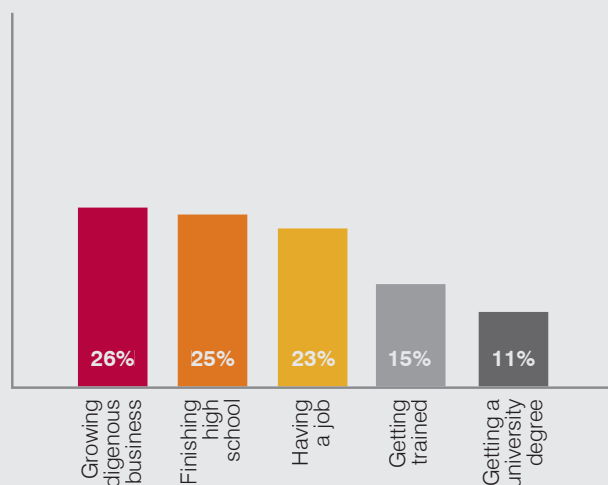
There is also an increasing awareness that preserving culture and integration into the mainstream economy are not incompatible.<sup>14</sup> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business owners are increasingly discovering ways to form businesses that are both commercially viable and culturally affirming, often offering a commercial advantage through providing a culturally authentic product or service.<sup>15</sup>

All of these factors have led to a growing realisation that business ownership offers a beneficial economic pathway towards prosperity. Polling undertaken for our ‘Eora Journey – Prosperity Talks’ consultation confirms this is the case in our local area (see Figure 2).

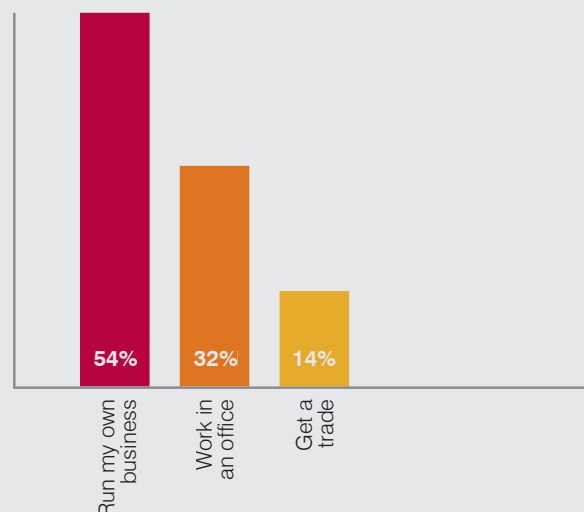
Despite these aspirations, there is still more to be done by all partners to enable entrepreneurship. At a national level, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have lower rates of self-employment than non-Indigenous people (7 per cent compared to 11 per cent), and as a proportion of total employment only 5.8 per cent of the working age Indigenous population in non-remote areas are self-employed (compared to over 10 per cent of the non-Indigenous population.)<sup>16</sup>

**Figure 2 – Establishing aspirations**

**What is most important for growing 'Eora Prosperity'?**



**What is your aspiration in terms of employment or enterprise?**



*Polling undertaken as part of Eora Journey Prosperity Talk consultation program – 440 respondents*

## Entrepreneurship provides sustainable employment

Increasing rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in small business ownership will lead to an increase in economic participation more broadly for these local communities.<sup>17</sup>

A key reason for this is the flow-on benefits in employment rates, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-run businesses offering significant employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job-seekers. Research examining Queensland alone showed that the proportion of Indigenous employees in Indigenous enterprises is on average 72.4 per cent while in non-Indigenous businesses it is only 0.7 per cent.<sup>18</sup>

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employers can provide working conditions that are sympathetic with the needs and preferences of employees due to increased cultural awareness and competencies.

## What we will do

Building on the challenges we heard during the research and engagement programs (see Chapter 13), there are several areas we can focus on to support business owners and prospective entrepreneurs in Sydney.

### Build skills by providing access to business advice and mentorship

Services providing culturally appropriate business advice and ongoing support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses are essential for business success.<sup>19</sup> Several studies indicate a lack of advice, both in business strategy and financial guidance, can be particularly detrimental to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entrepreneurs.<sup>20</sup>

Areas of focus for skills and capacity development include advice on business planning, marketing and promotion, budget and cashflow management, forming networks and partnerships, inventory management, and human resources.<sup>21</sup>

For business owners and prospective entrepreneurs in Sydney, many of the City's partners are already providing established and successful advice services. These partners include state and federal departments, Aboriginal-focused organisations, and the private sector.

However, the sheer number and complexity of programs and services can be confusing for emerging entrepreneurs.<sup>22</sup> The City can collaborate with partners to better target prospective entrepreneurs and increase awareness of these support services.

Business mentoring services are particularly important – for accessing short-term advice and beneficial longer-term relationships. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprises often have to operate within an environment of complex social and cultural obligations.<sup>23</sup> Access to an experienced mentor who understands these issues can be crucial.

The City will work with partners to maximise opportunities for business owners and prospective entrepreneurs to connect with experienced and successful Aboriginal experts in our local area.





### **Provide opportunities to access resources**

Access to the resources and infrastructure that make it possible to start, run and grow a business is particularly important. Prospective entrepreneurs are often unable to rely on essential commercial “starting points” such as transgenerational assets, easy access to capital, and prior business exposure.

Access to affordable space in appropriate and viable locations is crucial.<sup>24</sup> Space is central to the successful operation of any business activity, whether that is customer or client interaction, operational facilities, business planning and administration, storage, or co-working and collaboration.

Through this plan we will investigate the provision of accessible space for co-location of businesses, how this could function, and where these could be based.

Access to credit can also be problematic. Negative perceptions about credit worthiness, however unwarranted, are still experienced by some entrepreneurs.<sup>25</sup>

Through this plan we will work with business owners to maximise grant and sponsorship opportunities, and assist entrepreneurs in locating appropriate financial advice and de-risking services.

### **Enable connections, collaboration and supplier diversity**

The importance of ‘social capital’ to business success is well-established.<sup>26</sup> Recent research into success factors for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses highlights the central importance of effective business networks.<sup>27</sup>

For early stage businesses, networks of business owners are beneficial due to reciprocal sharing of information and contacts.<sup>28</sup> As a large local government body with close connection to businesses and business-facing organisations, we can assist with connection between businesses through using our spaces (both physical and digital) and resources to develop opportunities for businesses to meet and share information.

For established Indigenous businesses, and businesses seeking to grow, research shows it is critical for businesses to “break-out” and engage in larger, non-Aboriginal business networks to ensure growth.<sup>29</sup> While many small Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses are keen to partner with corporate and government clients, they still face significant challenges in connecting with these new clients and customers.

This desire for connection between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business and larger corporate and government organisations works both ways. Aspiration levels of large non-Aboriginal businesses to make these connections have been shown by the Business Council of Australia (BCA) to grow yearly. BCA also reported that its members had spent nearly \$2bn on Indigenous businesses and joint ventures in 2014.<sup>30</sup> Reported outcomes from these connections include increased staff awareness, enhanced corporate culture, reputational benefits, strengthened community relationships and greater workforce diversity.<sup>31</sup>

As an inaugural member of Supply Nation (formerly AIMSC formed in 2009), we have long recognised that enabling supplier diversity has a significant impact on achieving economic prosperity. We can further assist businesses looking to connect through working with partners such as Supply Nation, Office of the Small Business Commissioner, and Indigenous Business Australia to develop networking opportunities, tools and resources to assist businesses navigate procurement processes.

We will also examine how best to leverage our own purchasing power. As a large local government body every year we purchase a large amount of goods and services from a wide array of businesses. Increasing the proportion of our first-tier and second-tier spend with Indigenous business is a procurement priority for our organisation.

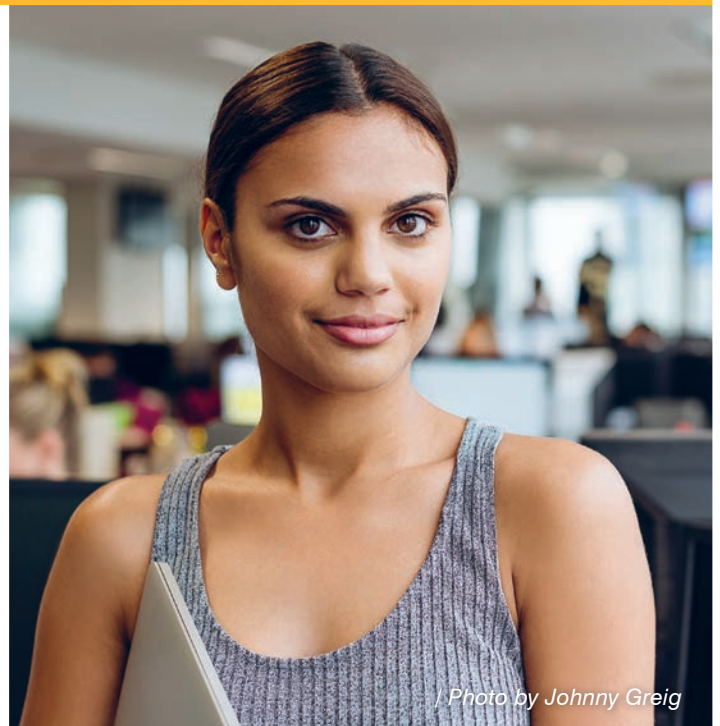
### **Promote Sydney as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business hub**

Marketing and promotion is a core business activity, yet research has shown it can often be poorly or ineffectively utilised by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.<sup>32</sup>

We know through our partnerships that our local area contains a large grouping of leading Indigenous businesses and organisations.

As a large capital city government we have well-established marketing and social media channels that can be used to send the message that Sydney is a successful and vibrant hub for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business.

Suppliers can also be showcased through our large events and festivals. We will work with businesses to ensure that these opportunities are maximised.



*Photo by Johnny Greig*

## Major commitments

### **The City will:**

- Facilitate access to affordable space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and entrepreneurs.
- Contribute to the establishment of a business hub for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses in Sydney.

## Supporting activity

### **We will also:**

- Work with partners to ensure information on existing support services is shared with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business owners and prospective entrepreneurs.
- Build capacity within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business owners through supporting opportunities that enhance entrepreneurial skills, business knowledge, and access to networks.

- Work with partners to increase access to mentor programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.
- Increase opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business owners to connect with non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses, share knowledge and build strong networks.
- Increase the City's procurement spend with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.
- Celebrate and raise awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business success stories.
- Increase opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses at the City's events and festivals.

**Further detail on all activity is in section 14.**

# 08

## Theme 2 – maximise employment outcomes

**On a national level Indigenous employment rates have improved by approximately 20 per cent over the period 1994 to 2008.**

Success in employment is a central aspect of economic prosperity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This section details City support for employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

### Why we need to act

#### Benefits of employment

Accessing sustainable employment is seen by many within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities as the fundamental component of improving opportunities.<sup>33</sup>

Benefits from employment include both direct economic benefits and flow on economic, social, and health benefits.<sup>34</sup> These include improved mental and physical health and wellbeing, improved developmental outcomes in young people, higher rates of home ownership, higher-quality housing, lower rates of incarceration, and lower likelihood of being a victim of crime.<sup>35</sup>

Also, we recognise that employment and the income it generates provides substantial wider benefits to communities and families. For this reason, it is important not to solely consider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment on an individual level.

Often, an individual's success in work is closely related to the role of the community in that person's life.<sup>36</sup>

Paid employment can also provide the economic independence and autonomy that allow people to explore their own aspirations and be self-determined.<sup>37</sup> Business and community leaders are more likely to emerge from a community with high employment levels, as it is often the experience gained in paid employment through which people can develop the skills and ideas for leadership.<sup>38</sup>

#### A current disconnect to economic opportunities

Recognition of these substantial benefits has led to significant efforts from Aboriginal organisations, as well as more broadly government, the not-for-profit sector and the private sector, to improve employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

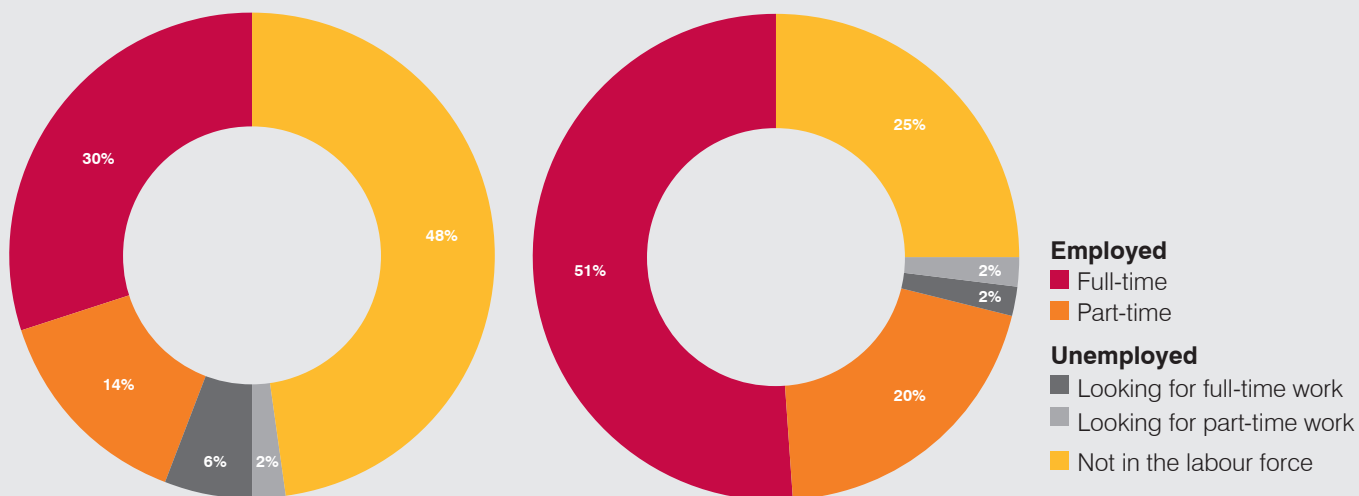
These efforts have led to some tremendous success stories, with recent years showing significant increases in levels of employment. On a national level Indigenous employment rates have improved by approximately 20 per cent over the period 1994 to 2008 in non-remote areas across Australia.<sup>39</sup> Looking at our own local area, labour force participation rates of our residents who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander increased by 20.6 per cent between 2006 and 2011.<sup>40</sup>



**Figure 3 – City of Sydney Labour Force Participation Rates**

**City of Sydney Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents**

**City of Sydney resident population as a whole**



ABS 2011

There is much still to be done however. A recent estimate based on 2011 figures suggests that to reduce the nationwide employment gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people an additional 116,000 Indigenous people would need to move into employment.<sup>41</sup>

In our own local area, levels of employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents of working age remain significantly below the population as a whole (only 44.1 per cent compared to 70.9 per cent – see Figure 3).<sup>42</sup>

This is also a clear disconnect between the sectors in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents are finding employment and our economy as a whole.

The three most common sectors of employment for our population as a whole are 1) Professional, Scientific and Technical services, 2) Financial and Insurance Services, and 3) Accommodation and Food Services. However, in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander proportion of the workforce, the dominant sectors of employment were 1) Public Administration and Safety, 2) Health Care and Social Assistance, and 3) Education and Training.<sup>43</sup>

Further action is crucial to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are able to access suitable employment and have the necessary skills to fill available vacancies.

## Acknowledging multiple barriers

To develop appropriate action requires a clear understanding of the barriers faced by people both seeking employment, and advancing within employment.

The term ‘social exclusion’ acknowledges the many causes of disadvantage that exclude particular groups from full engagement in the social, political and economic life. This is acutely felt by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.<sup>44</sup>

Many jobseekers face barriers to finding and sustaining paid employment. These include poor outcomes in education and health, discrimination, intergenerational effects of discriminatory government policy, and higher rates of interaction with the criminal justice system.<sup>45</sup>

For job seekers experiencing multiple barriers to finding employment, intensive assistance is required. Several organisations in our local area address these difficult issues, including Aboriginal Employment Strategy (AES), Babana Men’s Group, Koori Job Ready, and Eora Tafe. We will support these efforts through this action plan.



*City staff from Redfern Community Centre in front of 'Welcome to Redfern' mural by Reko Rennie and young Aboriginal artists / Photo by Joseph Mayers*

### Increasing youth employment

Youth employment requires attention when looking to enhance economic opportunities. At a national level, employment rates for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population aged 15-24 years are particularly low.<sup>46</sup>

Demographic trends mean more young Indigenous people will seek to enter the labour market over the next 20 to 30 years. Supporting these young people to possess the skills and attributes needed for success in the labour market and in business is critical.

This means creating meaningful local employment opportunities for young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Job opportunities for young people experiencing disadvantage must be matched with support, both in the community and in the workplace, to enable long-term job retention.<sup>47</sup>

Making information available to young people about employment pathways, and developing the skills and confidence of young people to navigate these pathways, is also central to addressing educational and vocational challenges for young people.<sup>48</sup>

### What we will do

Building on the challenges we heard during the research and engagement programs, there are several areas of action that we can focus on to maximise employment outcomes for job-seekers and employees in our local area.

#### Enhance opportunities within our own organisation

The first place we will act to improve employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be within our own organisation.

We are a place-based employer that can offer secure and diverse occupational opportunities.<sup>49</sup>

We value the different cultural perspectives, experience and knowledge that are contributed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, and recognise that our diverse workforce adds substantial value to the development and provision of our services.

We will develop an employment strategy to increase the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the City.

This will include inclusive recruitment processes and piloting of different approaches to broaden the pool of people applying for roles here at the City, and working with our existing staff to investigate and increase pathways for career development opportunities.





/ Photo by Xavier Arnau

### **Assist job-seekers in finding the correct pre-employment support**

Recent research undertaken by Mission Australia asserts that employment focussed action should not solely focus on creating more jobs, but also on establishing and improving the connections between people and the existing programs and services which facilitate access to training and employment opportunities.<sup>50</sup>

Action to assist job-seekers in finding the correct pre-employment support should include a focus on the following key areas: a) appropriate advice regarding searching and applying for employment opportunities; b) finding effective training opportunities; and c) the importance of mentoring and peer support.

Our 'Eora Journey Prosperity Talk' engagement program found that knowing who to turn to for initial support to find jobs and traineeships was a real barrier for job-seekers.<sup>51</sup> Compared with non-Indigenous Australians, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job-seekers rely disproportionately on friends and relatives as a source of information about jobs and how to access them.<sup>52</sup>

Outside of these important family and community connections, there are a number of leading Aboriginal-focussed organisations active in our local area who work to successfully provide pre-employment support to job-seekers. Through this plan we will provide opportunities to bring together these key employment focussed organisations to collaborate, share issues and knowledge and raise awareness.

In regards training opportunities, frustrations highlighted through our engagement include the number of ineffective programs that are not linked to employment outcomes and too many instances of "training for training's sake" being experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander jobseekers.<sup>53</sup> Working with employment-focussed organisations to link job-seekers to appropriate training opportunities is a key action here for the City.

Ensuring mentoring and peer support services are available to jobseekers is also important.<sup>54</sup> We will work with employment-focussed organisations to ensure job-seekers are aware of the peer support services available in our local area.

### Promote pathways: into employment and onto career progression

Increased corporate focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment has occurred over recent decades through the efforts of key organisations such as Reconciliation Australia working alongside leading corporates. However, there is still some way to go until this translates into significant employment outcomes.<sup>55</sup>

Working with key partners to share further information with job-seekers will identify where opportunities exist within different economic sectors. This will ensure our workforce benefits from all opportunities offered by our economy.

However, as well as getting people into work, this employment must be rewarding and sustainable.

We heard through our consultation that employees are often frustrated by a lack of cultural awareness from their employers and that 'identified positions' effectively trap people in specific roles with little opportunity for advancement.

Multiple and complimentary support mechanisms are often needed to improve the job retention, satisfaction, and opportunities for these employees. This includes ongoing mentoring and support, flexible work arrangements to allow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to meet their work, family or community or cultural obligations, and initiatives such cross-cultural training.<sup>56</sup>

As well as supporting our own Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees through the development of an Employment Strategy, we also will work with organisations seeking to increase workforce diversity to ensure best practice is shared.



/ Photo by David Freund

## Major commitments

### The City will:

- Work with service providers to identify and promote the range of services that are available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job-seekers in our local area.
- Work with partners to explore issues and develop initiatives focused on employment opportunities and career progression for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees within key sectors of the city's economy.

## Supporting activity

### We will also:

- Implement a City of Sydney Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment strategy.

- Increase access to mentor programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and job-seekers.
- Explore opportunities to partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and skills between City staff and organisations.
- Support programs and services that provide opportunities and improve skills for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and jobseekers.
- Ensure City's partnering arrangements, such as grants and sponsorships, procurement and venue hire, create employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait people.

**Further detail on all activity is in section 14.**

# 09

## Theme 3 – enhancing tertiary education opportunities

**Higher education provides  
the skills and capacity that allow  
people to drive change from  
within their communities.**

Achievements in education are often crucial factors in future enterprise and employment success.

Tertiary education has become increasingly important as our economy becomes more knowledge-based.

This section details City support for tertiary education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

### Why we need to act

#### Tertiary education to access the knowledge economy

Strategies to improve educational outcomes have had a significant positive influence on schooling completion rates over recent decades at both a primary and secondary level. This remains an important focus for many of our partners which we will support wherever possible.<sup>57</sup>

Developing capacity to fully access all opportunities provided within the City's economy is linked to improving tertiary education opportunities. Ensuring transitions to further study that build upon the excellent progress made in school retention and year 12 completion rates is increasingly vital to ensuring increased economic participation and enhanced self-determination.

Higher education provides the skills and capacity that allow people to drive change from within their communities.<sup>58</sup> Through preparing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduates for leadership roles, tertiary education has a vital role to play in raising employment, education and associated social outcomes for the communities as a whole.<sup>59</sup>

Sydney's economy is recognised as the leading knowledge-based economy in Australia.<sup>60</sup>

With only 14.6 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents in our local area holding a bachelor degree or higher (which compares 48.3 per cent for LGA population as a whole<sup>61</sup>), without further action a large proportion of people within our local area may be limited to unskilled or entry-level positions.

Producing graduates qualified to take up professional leadership positions across community, government and corporate sectors is fundamental to ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to create and benefit from economic opportunities.

The private sector is also increasingly recognising the important role that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduates play in business success. In 2014, the Business Council of Australia reported that support for education initiatives outranked employment initiatives as the top activity for companies seeking to support Indigenous economic development.<sup>62</sup>





/ Photo by Steve Debenport

### **A disconnect between need, aspiration and achievement**

Increased recognition of the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher education has led to action by government, university and private sector partners that has increased enrolments across Australia by 53 per cent in the decade between 2003 and 2013.<sup>63</sup>

There is still much to be done however, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff remaining vastly underrepresented across the higher education sector. Students who self-identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander on enrolment made up only 1.0 per cent of all university enrolments in 2012<sup>64</sup>, despite comprising 3 per cent of the total Australian population.<sup>65</sup>

In exploring factors that have resulted in this underrepresentation, a number of barriers have been identified that prevent students from accessing and succeeding in higher education.

Mission Australia found that levels of aspiration towards further education amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people is significantly lower than among their non-Indigenous peers.<sup>66</sup> For those students who have the aspiration to pursue further education, barriers can include the significant financial burden of study, the pressures of living away from home, health-related problems, instances of racism and prejudice, lack of understanding about how to navigate education pathways, and low levels of academic readiness.<sup>67</sup>

These multiple barriers create two main areas of challenges for addressing underrepresentation in higher education; 1) increasing rates of participation, and 2) increasing completion rates and the quality of outcomes.<sup>68</sup>

The negative effects of underrepresentation in higher education work both ways. Lower levels of participation means that the unique perspectives and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not being shared as widely within education institutions as they could be, limiting the important role they can play in providing new and dynamic approaches to learning, research and innovation.<sup>69</sup>

### **Sydney as a leader in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learning**

Sydney has a central role to play in furthering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher education. A number of major education institutions are based within or adjacent to our local area, including the University of Sydney, University of Technology Sydney, University of NSW and TAFE Sydney Institute.

Many of these education institutions have established leading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher education centres to further support and drive Indigenous learning, such as The Koori Centre, Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning, and Nura Gili. These centres are critical in providing student support and provision of a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and also for determining strategies for education and leadership in higher education.<sup>70</sup>





Earth Oven at NAIDOC in the city | Photo by Joseph Mayers

Our local area is also home to leading standalone institutions focussed on the education and training of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including Tranby College and Eora TAFE. Key organisations that focus on improving educational outcomes and attainment, such as the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) and Australian Indigenous Education Foundation (AIEF) are headquartered in our local area too.

New South Wales accounts for 34 per cent of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments across the country<sup>71</sup>, strongly indicating that our local area is one of Australia's main centres for Indigenous further education. Through this plan, we want to ensure that Sydney's role as a vibrant hub for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learning can continue to develop.

## What we will do

To increase access to tertiary education opportunities, and address the challenges that we've heard within the sector during our research and engagement programs, we will look to work with all parties, including education institutions and our student community.

### Enhance Sydney's reputation as a centre of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learning

A key challenge that we heard through our engagement program is that more could be done to encourage collaboration between all institutions within our local area in regards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher education<sup>72</sup>.

The City has signed individual Memorandums of Understanding with the University of New South Wales, University of Sydney and the University of Technology Sydney. We will leverage these existing relationships and convene opportunities for education providers and education focussed organisations to come together to

share knowledge on programs and issues. This will enable strategic exploration of how services can work better together to support students to succeed in Sydney.

Showcasing Sydney as a welcoming, inclusive and aspirational place to study for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is a role for the City. Positive promotion of our city as a hub of Indigenous learning will further encourage people to explore further education and also act to combat discrimination and lateral violence that students may face.

We also know that students in Sydney face significant issues around affordability. One of the main barriers facing students seeking to study in Sydney is the costs of study, relocation and finding suitable and affordable accommodation. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, who often come from more disadvantaged backgrounds, are disproportionately affected by affordability issues.

### Raise and help realise aspirations for further study

Aspiration performs a highly significant role for young people in regards their pathways from secondary education to higher education. The development of aspirations that are formed in adolescence are strongly influenced by a young person's schooling and access to information, as well as their family, community and local area.<sup>73</sup>

We know that encouraging young people to develop aspirations for the future and equipping them with the knowledge to actualise these aspirations is crucial in increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher education attainment rates.<sup>74</sup> We will work with the sector to ensure information regarding expectations and pre-requisites is available to all prospective students.

Schools are the primary avenue through which most people enter higher education, and we will look to provide opportunities that informs higher education choices.

We also know that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher education students enter university in a variety of ways, including a higher proportion of mature students, with 54.4 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in university in 2010 being aged 25 years and over, compared to 38.2 per cent of non-Indigenous students.<sup>75</sup> We will look to work with education institutions, employers and professional associations to encourage support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to undertake higher education.

### Improve student experiences and networks

When looking to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher education outcomes, solely focusing getting more students into university is not sufficient. Focus is also needed to improve completion rates and the quality of educational outcomes for our students.<sup>76</sup>

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander retention and completion rates within higher education are lower than for non-Indigenous students. In 2010, 40.8 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who commenced a bachelor course in 2005 had completed their course, compared to 68.6 per cent of non-Indigenous students.<sup>77</sup>

Ensuring a quality student experience and providing adequate support networks are success factors for students in higher education. It is critical to not only widen access but to enhance this to ensure that students have the best chance of success.<sup>78</sup>

We will work with our education providers and education focussed organisations to bring together information detailing support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in our local area, including information on mentoring, financial support such as scholarships and income support schemes, and accommodation services.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who lack appropriate networks and cultural support can experience social or cultural alienation brought about by the challenges of moving to a large city for the first time, or due of clashes between cultural values such as differing teaching styles, course content and levels of available support.<sup>79, 80</sup>

We will assist by providing opportunities for students from across all institutions to meet, share experiences, and form networks with key support organisations. Building on the success of our International Student Leadership and Ambassador program, we will also extend programs to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students that focus on networking and collaboration, mentoring, leadership skills training, and community support.

Quality education experiences are essential if Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduates are to be competitive for the best jobs, with employment in the graduate labour market being an important outcome of higher education.<sup>81</sup> Transitions from further education to employment can also be very difficult for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. We will create opportunities for internships and work experience for students within our own organisation to improve employability and develop aspirations.

## Major commitments

### The City will:

- Work with education partners to create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to come together and build networks.
- Develop leadership programs and networks for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

## Supporting activity

### We will also:

- Ensure information on existing support services is shared with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and work with partners to improve alignment between services.
- Promote Sydney as a vibrant and welcoming place to study for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

- Create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school children to learn about the range of career options available through further education.
- Promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tertiary education success stories to reinforce the attainability of particular career paths and training requirements.
- Increase opportunities for Aboriginal students to connect with business owners and improve knowledge on entrepreneurship.
- Provide internship and work experience opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and recent graduates.

**Further detail on all activity is in section 14.**



10

## Theme 4 – grow sectors of the economy



The finance and professional services, tourism, retail, creative and digital sectors are crucial to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic development in Sydney. This section details how we will work with partners to develop business ownership and entrepreneurship in these sectors and increase employment participation.



Discussions at an Eora Journey economic stakeholder workshop at Sydney Town Hall | Photo by Jamie Williams



## Finance and professional services

Increasing participation in our dominant economic sectors.

### Why this sector is important

These sectors represent the dominant sectors of employment in the city, accounting for more than 39 per cent of all employment.<sup>82</sup> The city is home to 21 per cent of the entire Australian finance sector.<sup>83</sup> Despite this, only 12.5 per cent of our local area's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce is employed in this sector.<sup>84</sup>

Increasing participation in this sector will provide access to financially secure career opportunities. This will bring significant benefits to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, local businesses and the broader economy.

### What we will do

**Increase connections** – Many large corporate businesses have long championed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic participation, committing significant resources and developing sophisticated Reconciliation Action Plans. However, through our engagement we heard that connections between corporates in the finance and professional service sectors, and between corporate businesses and Aboriginal employment organisations, were not strongly established. We will provide structured forums for organisations to come together, share best practice and strategically plan.

**Showcase the sector** – A further issue we heard during our engagement program was a lack of awareness of opportunities and aspiration among young people to work in this sector. By showcasing opportunities and profiling champions within the sector we will work to raise awareness of the opportunities it provides.

## Major commitments

- Create more opportunities for industry leaders from the finance and professional services sectors to meet, discuss issues, and develop actions that will further increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment participation.

## Supporting activity

- Raise awareness of careers in Finance and Professional Services among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander jobseekers and students.





A Bush Tucker tour of Sydney Park | Photo by Quentin Jones



## Tourism

Strengthening competitiveness and growing experiences in the tourism sector.

### Why this sector is important

In a highly competitive international and domestic tourism market, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture has the potential to provide a key point of differentiation. Sydney's Aboriginal historic and living culture is what sets it apart from competing global cities around the world.<sup>85</sup>

Tourism offers more to a business owner than simply the potential to run profitable business. It also enables people to share their culture with visitors from around the world, while maintaining and strengthening community identity.<sup>86</sup>

Sydney, as the international gateway to Australia, has an opportunity to be a leading area in providing authentic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences to visitors.

### What we will do

**Strengthen competitiveness** – Issues facing tourism operators include a lack of product awareness, and difficulties in standing out in a crowded market place.<sup>87</sup> Operators are continually challenged to provide a product that does not compromise cultural authenticity yet responds to the demands of the visitor market. We will work with partners to strengthen competitiveness in the Indigenous tourism sector in Sydney.

**Grow experiences** – We will support tourism operators in developing products and experiences that are reflective of contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture while balancing visitor demands and expectations.

## Major commitments

- Work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism operators to create new visitor experiences and sustainable tourism products.

## Supporting activity

- Raise the profile of Sydney as the gateway to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, arts and experiences.
- Build capacity within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism operators through supporting opportunities that enhance entrepreneurial skills, business knowledge, and access to networks.





NAIDOC in the City lawn library / Photo by Joseph Mayers



## Retail

Growing opportunities and promoting ethical practices within the retail sector.

### Why this sector is important

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entrepreneurs, retail business offer opportunities to trade unique and culturally authentic products that communicate Indigenous culture and heritage to a large consumer base. The market for culturally-specific products has grown significantly to include clothing and fashion, souvenirs and gifts, arts and crafts, gourmet foodstuffs, and beauty products.<sup>88</sup>

As the retail sector transforms with new technologies and digital approaches, there are ever greater opportunities for retailers to provide 'experiential' and culturally authentic retail experiences to consumers.

### What we will do

**Explore access to space** – Key challenges facing operators within the retail sector include high running costs and lack of access to affordable space. We heard from many retail business owners that finding and accessing appropriate space in our local area is difficult. We will explore models that promote further access to space for retailers.

**Promote ethical practices** – A significant challenge is the impact that non-authentic products, often cheaply mass-manufactured outside of Australia, have on the market for authentic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander products.

Businesses that sell non-authentic products as authentic pose a significant detrimental effect on retailers' bottom lines. We will work with partners to educate consumers and try to reduce these business practices.

## Major commitments

- Explore models to facilitate access to affordable space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander retailers.

## Supporting activity

- Work with partners to explore initiatives that respond to the impact of non-authentic products and services.



Indigenous Digital Excellence initiative at the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence / Photo by Katherine Griffiths



## Creative and digital

Providing opportunities for collaboration and participation in the creative and digital sectors.

### Why this sector is important

The creative sector includes a diverse range of activity such as performing and visual arts, publishing, architecture and design, music, film and digital content. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations, creative activity can offer significant commercial or competitive advantage, due to their ability to offer unique, culturally authentic products that meet strong customer demand.<sup>89</sup> More than simply creating a profit, creative activity has been a key component in the movement towards cultural expression, empowerment, and self-determination.<sup>90</sup>

Sydney has the potential to be a leading hub for Aboriginal creative and cultural organisations in Australia. Creative organisations based in our local area use performance, music, and art, to entertain and educate audiences and create products and services valued by customers worldwide.

### What we will do

**Provide opportunities for collaboration** – We know through our engagement program that organisations within the creative sector are committed to ensuring that Sydney continues to develop as a national gateway to Indigenous culture, experiences and perspectives. Bringing organisations together, including important advocacy groups, to collaborate to ensure industry growth was seen as a key role for the City in this sector.

**Address underrepresentation** – Underrepresentation and misrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is a negative aspect of mainstream media. To address this the City will work with partners to develop initiatives that increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in the media.

## Major commitments

- Facilitate greater recognition of Aboriginal history and culture in the public domain.

## Supporting activity

- Increase access to creative opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.
- Work with partners to explore issues and develop initiatives that addresses underrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and stories in the media.



# Part C

## /Sydney Context



*'Family Spirit' – This design represents connection to family extending over distance / Brentyn Lugnan*



# 11

## Aboriginal economic development and Sydney

**Sydney has always been an important economic, social and cultural hub for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.**

### An unbroken connection to this place

Aboriginal people have an unbroken and ongoing connection with this place we now call Sydney.

Sydney Harbour was an economic and social focus for Aboriginal people for many thousands of years, providing a rich saltwater-based economy for the Gadigal and the other Aboriginal clans that lived around the harbour.

Before invasion, it was a place for the trade and exchange of natural resources and hand-crafted commodities including stone tools and hatchets.<sup>91</sup>

### Resilience and entrepreneurialism

In the colonial post-contact period, Aboriginal people remained living in Sydney as the colony grew. Throughout the 19th century, there were informal camps on Gadigal land around the harbour, including at South Head, Rose Bay and Rushcutters Bay. Aboriginal people also lived at Manly, and along the Georges River and its tributaries, towards Liverpool.<sup>92</sup>

These 19th century Sydney people were mobile, adaptable and resilient in the face of dispossession and in response to the new capitalist economy imposed upon them.

Drawing on knowledge of the local environment and traditional cultural practices, many Aboriginal people responded to this new economy through entrepreneurial activity.<sup>93</sup>

Aboriginal people made a living by collecting and selling natural resources including fish, wildflowers, shells, wild honey, gum, octopus skeletons for making jewellery moulds, and mangrove timber for making boomerangs.<sup>94</sup>

Aboriginal men worked as guides and trackers in the early 19th century and also as mariners in the sealing and whaling industries. Many became farm labourers on the large pastoral and agricultural estates on the fringes of Sydney.<sup>95</sup>

Aboriginal entrepreneurship grew alongside the development of Sydney. Using skills based on craftwork and knowledge of the natural environment, pioneers created shellwork objects, typically shell baskets, which were sold on city streets and door to door in Sydney's centre and suburbs.<sup>96</sup>

The Timbery and Simms families based at La Perouse established successful businesses making handcrafted boomerangs for the growing local tourist trade by the 1950s and 60s, sourcing timber from mangroves growing locally and along the Georges River.<sup>97</sup>

These early entrepreneurs paved the way for a wide range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business owners who thrive in Sydney today.



May Day procession in Sydney in the 1950s / Noel Butlin Collection, Australian National University – hdl: 1885/8925

### Employment in industrial Sydney

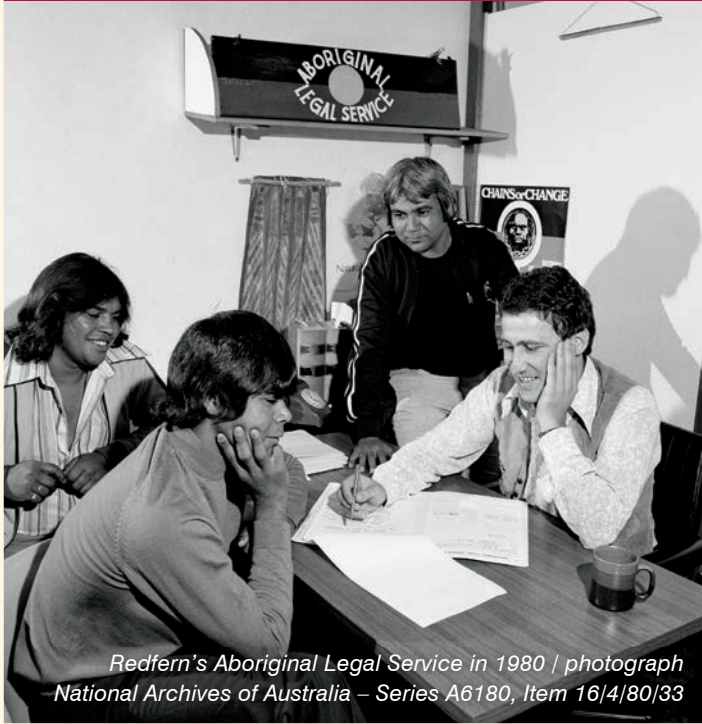
The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of Sydney continued to increase over the 20th century. Sydney's inner suburbs became a magnet for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from around NSW and Australia seeking work opportunities and housing.

Sydney's southern suburbs offered low-cost housing and proximity to industry and jobs. By the mid-20th century, many Aboriginal men found jobs relying on manual labour. Aboriginal employment grew in privately-run industry and in government jobs in timber mills, factories, brickworks and on the railways across Sydney. Key employers were also building sites, and the wharves on the waterfront at Walsh Bay and Darling Harbour.

Aboriginal women found employment opportunities too, with some travelling to Sydney from around Australia to train in nursing at the large metropolitan hospitals, including Royal Prince Alfred and Crown Street.<sup>98</sup>

Aboriginal women in South Sydney worked at the Federal Match Factory in Alexandria. Other private industries in Sydney's southern suburbs where Aboriginal people worked were the Henry Jones & Co IXL Jam Factory on Golden Grove Street in Chippendale, Francis Chocolates on Stirling Street in Redfern, and the Australian Glass Manufacturers on South Dowling Street at Waterloo.

Today Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Sydney work across a broad range of occupations and professions, in business and in government.



*Redfern's Aboriginal Legal Service in 1980 / photograph  
National Archives of Australia – Series A6180, Item 16/4/80/33*

### Self-determination

As the community grew, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people joined forces with social movements in Sydney in the struggle for civil rights.

Sydney was the home to the Aboriginal Australia Fellowship, the Federal Council for Aboriginal Advancement (later known as FCAATSI) and the Foundation for Aboriginal Affairs, all vital organisations in the nationwide struggle for rights for Indigenous peoples.

Aboriginal people became involved in the trade union movement fighting for equal rights as workers. Indigenous and non-Indigenous students from Sydney University mobilised to hold the 1965 Freedom Ride to demonstrate against racism towards Aboriginal people. Land Rights conferences and rallies were held in Sydney throughout the 1970s. Aboriginal-run organisations based in Sydney have led the way. The first Aboriginal Legal Service and Aboriginal Medical Service started in Redfern in the 1970s, along with the Aboriginal Housing Company and Murrawina childcare centre.

**Sydney has a legacy of leading, nationally-important Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and businesses.**

Tranby Aboriginal College in Glebe has provided an independent place of learning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people since 1957. The Eora Centre, a TAFE campus providing education to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was established in Redfern in 1984.

The Black Theatre, Radio Redfern, Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre and Boomalli artists cooperative led the way in Indigenous arts.

Other prominent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations in the City of Sydney include the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council, Gadigal Information Service and Koori Radio, National Centre of Indigenous Excellence, Wyanga Aboriginal Aged Care, Tribal Warrior and Bangarra Dance Company.

These Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses, organisations and services continue to be models of excellence and places to connect with and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identities and cultures. This legacy of nationally-important Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and businesses is a key strength for our local area in taking a leading role in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and enterprise.



# 12

## City of Sydney's role

### Our role

This is the City's first action plan to focus specifically on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic development.

However, this work builds on long established projects and partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in and around Sydney.

The City adopted our first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in June 2015. Our Innovate RAP provides a framework how we will work with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to trial new approaches to building relationships, showing respect, and improving opportunities.

Our flagship program to celebrate Aboriginal culture and history, and promote reconciliation, is the Eora Journey program.

### The Eora Journey

The Eora Journey is part of our long-term strategic plan, Sustainable Sydney 2030. It is our commitment to achieving recognition for Australia's First Peoples.

Eora means 'the people' in the language of the Gadigal, so the Eora Journey is 'the people's journey'.



*Eora Journey information tent at NAIDOC in the City, Hyde Park | City of Sydney*

It includes four elements:

#### 1. Recognition in the Public Domain

An innovative program of public art, funded by a commitment of over \$5million of funding to create 7 major new public art projects symbolising the Eora Journey.

#### 2. Significant Cultural Event(s)

We will continue to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and culture, including NAIDOC Week and Yabun.

#### 3. A Local Knowledge and Cultural Centre

We will investigate and advocate for a local centre to act as a place of learning, employment, cultural celebration and understanding.

#### 4. An Economic Development Plan

Underpinning all three of these workstreams is the development of the Eora Journey Economic Development Plan, the City's first strategic action plan to focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and enterprise.

### Our broader work

As well as work under this economic development action plan, the City undertakes a wide range of activity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

An overview of our work is overleaf.

**Figure 4: Overview of the City of Sydney's existing support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities**





/ Photo by Supply Nation

### Case study 1

#### The City as a leader in social procurement

Through our social procurement policy we have committed to use our purchasing power to “enhance social inclusion, diversity, and equality and promote environmental, economic, and social benefits” to all of our communities.

Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business is a focus of this work.

The City was an inaugural member of Supply Nation (formerly AIMSC). We have engaged over 20 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses in the past two years, (inc. both Supply Nation certified and non-Supply Nation-certified enterprises). These businesses have successfully delivered goods and services for the City in areas as diverse as expert consultancy services, IT services, graphic design, construction workwear and cultural performance.

These partnerships have brought substantial benefits to our projects and our communities. Through all of our work we sought to provide opportunities for growth and capacity building within the companies we’ve partnered with.

In 2015, the City was awarded the Social Procurement Recognition Award by Procurement Australia, specifically recognising our contribution to furthering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement.



YININMADYEMI: Thou didst let fall by Tony Albert / Photo by Paul Patterson

### Case study 2

#### Enabling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Public Art throughout our local area

City has long enabled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander public art to take pride of place across the City, whether through directly commissioning art or enabling others to create art through our planning processes.

The Eora Journey – Recognition in the Public Domain will deliver seven major artworks throughout the City showing respect to the histories, cultures and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Sydney.

To date, the City has delivered three works, Welcome to Redfern, a community based street art project by Reko Rennie and young local artists, Born in darkness before dawn, a temporary projection artwork by Nicole Foreshew and YININMADYEMI Thou didst let fall by Tony Albert, honouring, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women who served their country.

The City has also enabled a wide range of other artworks to be publicly displayed across our local area, including murals such as United we stand, divided we fail the future by Bronwyn Bancroft and Dale Jones-Evans Hugo Street, Redfern, and Always was always will be by Reko Rennie in Taylor Square, Darlinghurst and the Redfern Community Centre mural by Adam Hill.





Model of the city and key Aboriginal cultural heritage sites, Customs House / Photo by Paul Patterson

### What is the City's role in economic development?

The City's 2013 Economic Development Strategy provides a framework for the how the City can support the economy of our area.

In developing this plan we have explored the wide range of roles we can play in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and enterprise.

These include:

#### As a project leader

...directly leading on the delivery of projects, initiatives, and programs that benefit people, organisations and businesses.

#### As a facilitator

...bringing stakeholders together to discuss issues and ideas, agree actions and review progress.

#### As an employer

...taking a proactive role in increasing levels of employment within our organisation and with contractors at all levels working on City-led projects.

#### As a procurer of goods and services

...strengthening employment and business through our procurement processes and increasing the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses in the delivery of programs, services and capital projects.

#### As a property owner

...using our property portfolio and facilities to assist and enable businesses and organisations.

#### As a partner and enabler

...contributing funding, resources and expertise to enable partners to deliver projects and programs that benefit communities.

#### As a service provider & capacity builder

...developing initiatives to support people and their communities in enabling the economic and social capacity of our communities.

#### As a promoter

...building awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and promoting Sydney as a successful hub of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business.

#### As an advocate

...proactively making representations to other levels of government on key issues affecting communities in our local area.

# Part D

## /Development and Implementation



# 13

## Developing the plan

The City has worked extensively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in developing the Eora Journey Economic Development Plan.

For the plan to reflect the aspirations of communities in our local area, we took a bespoke approach.

We also sought to achieve these outcomes:

- A plan that has been developed in true partnership with communities in our local area.
- A plan that addresses economic issues, but is aware of the social and cultural impacts of these.

- A plan that takes into account the actions of other levels of government, the not-for-profit and private sector, the education sector and the aspirations of the community.

- A plan that is innovative and exemplifies leadership.

To achieve the above outcomes, we followed a structured process that included extensive research and consultation.

This section details this process. The main stages are summarised below in Figure 5.

**Figure 5: The Development Process for the Eora Journey Economic Development Plan**







Attendees at a City of Sydney Procurement Workshop for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business, October 2016  
/ Photo by Joseph Mayers

### Stage One: Research to set the context

The first step in the development of the Eora Journey Economic Development Plan was to conduct a number of interlinked foundation studies to provide context for Indigenous economic development within the city.

The research, undertaken by Cox Inall Ridgeway, was intended to identify and examine strengths, gaps and opportunities in the existing economic landscape, and begin to investigate what kind of role the City might play in improving socioeconomic outcomes for communities in our local area. This involved four main elements:

1. Community profile – Examining the Socio-demographics of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
2. Theoretical approaches – Examining specific theoretical approaches needed to be considered in designing an economic action plan with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focus.
3. Programs projects and services analysis – Identifying and analysing projects, programs and services aimed at the education, training and economic development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
4. Best practice – Analysing the role of local government in activities to improve the socioeconomic experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and identification and analysis of major transformative policy initiatives for Indigenous communities around the world.

### Stage Two: Community needs analysis – the ‘Eora Journey Prosperity Talk’

After the initial research, the City committed to a comprehensive consultation process, and commissioned Fivegrants Consulting (a Supply Nation-certified consulting firm with expertise in engagement and economic development) to design and undertake an independent community engagement program.

The engagement program sought to move away from previous governmental approaches that sought to identify and quantify disparity within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, as it was recognised such approaches often result in a negative narrative of problems and need. The agreed approach by Fivegrants adopted a solutions focus and was termed the ‘Eora Journey Prosperity Talk’. This was designed around an overarching question of “what would a prosperous Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the City of Sydney look like?”

By focusing on a positive vision of success, the engagement explored what existing services are currently supporting or contributing to this vision, and what additional support could be needed to achieve this.



*Eora Journey Prosperity Talk engagement website / Fivegrants Consulting*

The consultations aimed to inform the City about what the economic development priorities are for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who live, work, study and visit the city.

The methodological approach taken by the consultation involved a range of digital and non-digital engagement methods to collect and share information from a diverse range of stakeholders. A 'triangulated' method was employed to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at an organisational, community and grassroots level.

The consultation program was undertaken throughout 2014, and was successful in engaging with a wide range of communities including Elders, young people, women, men, and organisational representatives as well as industry and government stakeholders.

This was achieved through the completion of 440 digital polls, widespread social media engagement (417 facebook likes, 64 web subscribers, 59 tweets) 'pop-up' engagement at five community/business events, five themed community focus groups, one-to-one interviews with key organisational stakeholders and a roundtable with experts.

### Stage Three: Development of the plan

To ensure that this plan responded fully to findings of the extensive research and community engagement, a process of further consultation and consideration was undertaken. One-on-one engagement with our key partners has continued, and will continue as we deliver against the actions within the plan.

The City's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel have been involved in guiding the key areas of focus in the plan. We have established an economic development working group of city staff, nominees from our Advisory Panel, and representatives from key partner organisations.

In 2015, we convened a large stakeholder workshop at Sydney Town Hall to report back on the findings of the research and consultation. The workshop allowed us to test with key partners the directions and priorities taken in the development of the plan. The response and contribution of partners during the workshop was overwhelmingly positive, and has been vital in shaping the plan and firming up our actions.

Going forward, the principles that underpin this plan (detailed with section 6) will ensure that we continue to be collaborative, the plan remains dynamic, and our role in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic development continues to grow.

# 14

## Implementation

### Timeframe and Delivery

The Eora Journey Economic Development Plan is a 10-year plan.

We have prioritised the projects in this plan according to the current needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and the City's resources and capacity.

Indicative timeframes for the various projects are:

- **Now:** projects and programs underway or commencing in the near future
- **Next:** projects and programs commencing in the medium term
- **Later:** projects and programs to commence in the medium to long term.

Each year, we will confirm commencement dates for projects led by the City.

As priority projects are further developed, we will work in partnership to agree arrangements to ensure delivery, and allocate the budgets and resources that are required.

We will report to Council twice yearly regarding our progress with identified projects.

We will undertake a major review at the end of the first five years of the action plan being implemented.

### A dynamic plan

The challenges identified through the consultation for this plan represent a snapshot in time.

As the social and economic experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities will continue to change and develop, this plan is intended to be flexible and evolve as the needs of local communities change.

Progress towards our targets and the identification of trends will be reported on regularly.

Priorities will be assessed annually based on the outcomes achieved and as new information becomes available.

### Our partnerships

Working in partnership to deliver transformative change sits at the centre of the City's overarching Sustainable Sydney 2030 vision.

Our approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic development reflects this.

The fundamental aspirations of all of our partners are to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in moving towards prosperity. This cannot be achieved through fragmented policy, differing funding approaches and competing priorities. The economic challenges faced by communities will be significantly greater if organisations are not able to work together to maximise their strengths.

This plan is driven by partnership. It means working with Aboriginal organisations, other levels of government, the business community, and community members.





Glebe Youth Centre attendees with the Reconciliation Rainbow mural | Photo by Amanda James

### **Areas of partnership 1 – Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and organisations**

Our most crucial areas of partnerships for this plan are those with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, businesses and organisations.

Ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander involvement in, and responsibility over, the actions in this plan will be critical to its success.

Appropriate and meaningful involvement in all actions is central to ensuring that each action is delivered in a truly beneficial and culturally appropriate manner. A secondary outcome of investing the City's resources and expertise in partnerships is that overtime these partnerships will act to build organisational capacity within all parties.

### **Areas of partnership 2 – Aligning with government at all levels**

This plan has been developed to align with the aspirations of other levels of government at all levels.

Key areas of policy at an international, national, and state level have been considered during the development of this plan.

### **Areas of partnership 3 – Working with the private sector**

While government is an important contributor to the direction of economic development, it is the private sector that has the greatest influence on the economy of Sydney.

The success of private business in Sydney across all sectors, whether they are Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal, is crucial to ensure employment opportunities and areas of collaboration continue to develop and evolve.

We will continue to work collaboratively with the private sector in all that we do, and through these partnerships encourage and facilitate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic outcomes through employment and training, business development, and connection with community.

# 15

## Measuring success

### Overview

The themes and actions set out in this plan have been devised to create and maintain the conditions in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities can achieve sustained prosperity.

We understand however that sustained prosperity will not solely be influenced by the actions set out in this plan. A wide range of efforts from many organisations both public and private, and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, will all contribute.

Broader factors such as national economic conditions and federal government policies will also play an important role.

Despite these complexities in measuring success and attributing outcomes to particular actions, it will be important to understand and monitor broad trends within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic progress.

This information will be vital to the City and all of partners in reviewing commitments and influencing priorities and actions.

### New approaches to measurement

For many years Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic development has not been measured by successes in business growth or cultural and community accomplishments but instead by levels of demographic disadvantage.

This 'deficit thinking' can become dominant, reinforcing negative stereotypes and not celebrating successes or providing positive role models.<sup>99</sup> Moving away from a discourse focussed on deficit, and replacing negative representations with strength-based ones can reinforce positive change.<sup>100</sup>

Through this plan, the City will seek to measure positive change within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

### Indicators of positive change

Consultation with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel has revealed there are three main areas where positive change needs to be realised and measured.

These interrelated areas are control, visibility, and connection:

#### Control

- Increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander control in areas such as ownership, leadership, and decision-making.

#### Visibility

- Ensuring the contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, employees and businesses are visible throughout Sydney, and this visibility increases over time.

#### Connection

- Promoting and maintaining connections between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal residents, businesses and organisations.

### Ensuring our actions deliver change

All of the actions in this plan are designed to deliver outcomes that contribute to increasing control, visibility and connection.

To guide this, we have developed the framework for measuring success overleaf.

This will allow us to measure and record outcomes from each of our actions and ensure that they contribute towards the vision of this plan.

## A framework for measuring success

The indicators below are based around the areas of control, visibility and connection, and will serve to assist us ensuring that each of actions contribute to measurable, positive change within our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Measurable Outcomes (Short – Medium)		Outcomes (Long term)	Ultimate outcomes (Vision)
Actions within this Eora Journey Economic Development Plan	<b>Employment (number)</b>	Increased levels of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in the LGA.	<b>Increased control</b>  Increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander control in regards to areas such as leadership and decision-making, and also more tangible factors such as business ownership and home ownership
	<b>Employment (type)</b>	Increased instances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in decision-making roles.	
	<b>Business Ownership</b>	Increased instances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business ownership LGA and increased business success rate.	
	<b>Tertiary Education</b>	Increased tertiary education attainment and completion rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.	
	<b>Income</b>	Increased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individual income and household income.	
	<b>Ownership</b>	Increased instances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land and property ownership.	
	<b>Cultural activity</b>	Increased instances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural events, artworks and performance in the LGA.	<b>Increased visibility</b>  Ensuring that the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, employees and businesses are visible throughout Sydney, and visibility increases over time.
	<b>Business sectors</b>	Increased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business ownership within key sectors such as tourism, retail, hospitality and creative.	
	<b>Residents</b>	Increased numbers of people living in Sydney who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.	
	<b>Workforce</b>	Increased numbers of people working in Sydney who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.	
	<b>Media</b>	Increased number of positive media stories focussed on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, businesses, and students.	
	<b>Brand and reputation</b>	Improved brand and reputation for Sydney in regards visitor experiences, as an education hub, and a business hub.	<b>Increased connection</b>  Promoting and maintaining connection between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal residents, businesses and organisations.
	<b>Networking (Aboriginal businesses)</b>	Increased opportunities for connection between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	
	<b>Networking (non-Aboriginal businesses)</b>	Increased opportunities for connection between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	
	<b>Connection between students</b>	Increased opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students across all education institutions to build networks.	
	<b>Procurement</b>	Increased level of public-sector contracts awarded to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business.	
	<b>Civic engagement</b>	Increase in number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who report satisfaction with civic engagement opportunities.	
	<b>Connection between organisations</b>	Increased opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations to come together.	
			<b>“Sustained prosperity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities”</b>



# 16

## Our actions

### Theme 1

#### Create an Economic Hub through supporting business owners and prospective entrepreneurs

Helping start and grow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses in the City of Sydney area. Ensuring support and capacity building for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business owners and prospective entrepreneurs.

#	Action	Which partners do we need to make it happen?	On-going	Now	Next	Later
Area of Focus 1A – Build skills by providing access to business advice and mentorship						
1.1	Create more opportunities for policymakers, program deliverers and service providers to meet and coordinate activity that supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Office of Small Business Commissioner (OSBC)</li> <li>– Indigenous Business Australia (IBA)</li> <li>– Aboriginal Affairs NSW</li> <li>– Supply Nation</li> <li>– Private sector</li> </ul>			✓	
1.2	Work with partners to ensure information on existing support services is shared with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business owners and prospective entrepreneurs.	As above		✓		
1.3	Build capacity within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business owners through supporting opportunities that enhance entrepreneurial skills, business knowledge, and access to networks.	As above			✓	
1.4	Increase opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business owners to connect with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses, share knowledge and build strong networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– OSBC</li> <li>– IBA</li> <li>– Supply Nation</li> <li>– Peak bodies and chambers</li> </ul>			✓	

#	Action	Which partners do we need to make it happen?	On-going	Now	Next	Later
1.5	Work with partners to increase access to mentor programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– OSBC</li> <li>– IBA</li> <li>– Aboriginal Affairs NSW</li> <li>– Supply Nation</li> <li>– Private sector</li> </ul>			✓	
1.6	Incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into the City's business support activities.		✓			
1.7	Work with peak bodies and industry associations to increase opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entrepreneurship and employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Business representative groups (peak bodies, chambers, industry associations)</li> </ul>			✓	
Area of Focus 1B – Provide opportunities to access resources						
1.8	Facilitate access to affordable space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and entrepreneurs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– State and federal government</li> <li>– Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and organisations</li> </ul>		✓		
1.9	Contribute to the establishment of a business hub for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses in Sydney.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– As above</li> </ul>			✓	
1.10	Provide opportunities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to access space at the City's venues, festivals and events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and organisations</li> </ul>	✓			

## Eora Journey Economic Development Plan



Business owner Auntie Beryl Van-Oploo at Gardener's Lodge Cafe in Victoria Park / Photo by Jamie Williams

#	Action	Which partners do we need to make it happen?	On-going	Now	Next	Later
Area of Focus 1C – Enable connections, collaboration and supplier diversity						
1.11	Increase opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business owners to connect with non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses, share knowledge and build strong networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Supply Nation</li> <li>– Peak bodies and chambers</li> </ul>			✓	
1.12	Connect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to international markets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and owners</li> </ul>			✓	
1.13	Ensure opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses through the delivery of the City's Eora Journey.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and owners</li> </ul>	✓			
1.14	Increase the City's procurement spend with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.		✓			
1.15	Assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses in understanding and navigating public sector procurement processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– NSW Gov.</li> <li>– Supply Nation</li> <li>– NSW Business Chamber</li> </ul>		✓		
Area of Focus 1D – Promote Sydney as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business hub						
1.16	Celebrate and raise awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business success stories.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and owners</li> </ul>		✓		
1.17	Include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business content within the City's marketing and promotion channels.		✓			
1.18	Enhancing opportunities for successful Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to be recognised for their achievements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– NSW Business Awards</li> </ul>		✓		



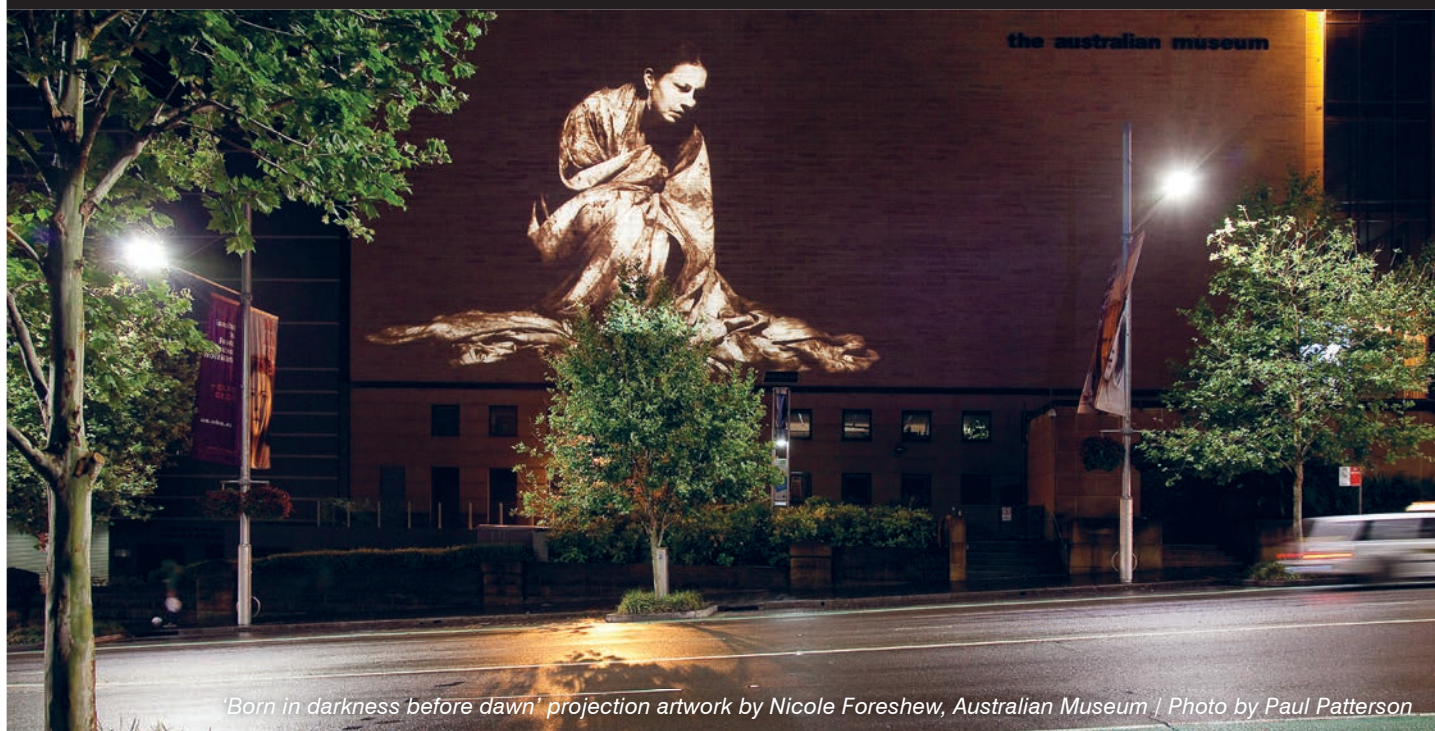
## Theme 2

### “Maximise Employment Outcomes” through ensuring access to opportunities offered by our economy

Focusing on ‘supply side’ employment issues such as pre-employment support, difficulties in job seeking and lack of career pathways.

#	Action	Which partners do we need to make it happen?	On-going	Now	Next	Later
Area of Focus 2A – Lead by example through enhancing opportunities in our own organisation						
2.1	Implement a City of Sydney Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment strategy. This strategy to include activity to:	– Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment experts		✓		
2.1a	Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander jobseekers are able to access employment opportunities at the City at all levels.			✓		
2.1b	Create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and students to gain workplace experience at the City.			✓		
2.1c	Develop activities that support career development among our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.			✓		
2.1d	Develop approaches that increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and retention throughout our organisation.			✓		

## Eora Journey Economic Development Plan



#	Action	Which partners do we need to make it happen?	On-going	Now	Next	Later
Area of Focus 2B – Assist job-seekers in finding the correct pre-employment support						
2.2	Work with service providers to identify and promote the range of services that are available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job-seekers in our local area.	– Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment organisations		✓		
2.3	Increase access to mentor programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and jobseekers.	– Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment organisations			✓	
2.4	Explore opportunities to partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and skills between City staff and organisations.	– Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment organisations			✓	
Area of Focus 2C – Promote pathways into employment and onto career progression						
2.5	Support programs and services that provide opportunities and improve skills for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and jobseekers	– Private sector employers – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment organisations		✓		
2.6	Ensure City's partnering arrangements (such as grants and sponsorships, procurement, venue hire) create employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait people.		✓			
2.7	Work with partners to explore issues and develop initiatives focused on employment opportunities and career progression for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the city's main economic sectors.	– Private sector employers – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment organisations		✓		

## Theme 3

### “Enhancing Tertiary Opportunities” to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

City of Sydney is becoming a predominantly “knowledge-based economy” and there is a need to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in accessing, completing and gaining maximum benefit from tertiary education.

#	Action	Which partners do we need to make it happen?	On-going	Now	Next	Later
Area of Focus 3A – Enhance Sydney's reputation as a centre of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learning						
3.1	Create more opportunities for tertiary education institutions and key organisations to meet and coordinate activity that supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tertiary education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Universities</li> <li>– Education organisations</li> </ul>		✓		
3.2	Promote Sydney as a vibrant and welcoming place to study for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Universities</li> <li>– Education organisations</li> </ul>			✓	
Area of Focus 3B – Raise and help realise aspirations for further study						
3.3	Work with partners to support education opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.			✓		
3.4	Create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school children to learn about the range of career options available through further education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Universities</li> <li>– Primary and Secondary Schools</li> </ul>			✓	
3.5	Promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tertiary education success stories to reinforce the attainability of particular career paths and training requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Universities</li> </ul>			✓	



## Eora Journey Economic Development Plan



#	Action	Which partners do we need to make it happen?	On-going	Now	Next	Later
Area of Focus 3C – Improve student experiences and networks						
3.6	Work with education partners to create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to come together and build networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Universities</li> <li>– Education organisations</li> </ul>		✓		
3.7	Develop leadership programs and networks for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Universities</li> <li>– Education organisations</li> </ul>		✓		
3.8	Increase opportunities for Aboriginal students to connect with business owners and improve knowledge on entrepreneurship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Universities</li> <li>– Education organisations</li> </ul>			✓	
3.9	Ensure information on existing support services is shared with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and work with partners to improve alignment between services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Universities</li> <li>– Education organisations</li> </ul>			✓	
3.10	Provide internship and work experience opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and recent graduates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Business owners and entrepreneurs</li> </ul>		✓		

## Theme 4

### Growing key sectors of the economy

Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business ownership and employment opportunities in key sectors of interest such as Finance & Professional Services, Tourism, Retail and Creative and Digital Businesses.

#	Action	Which partners do we need to make it happen?	On-going	Now	Next	Later
Sector of focus 4A – Finance and Professional Services: Increasing participation in our dominant economic sectors						
4.1	Create more opportunities for industry leaders from the finance and professional services sectors to meet, discuss issues, and develop actions that will further increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Finance Sector</li> <li>– Aboriginal employment organisations</li> </ul>		✓		
4.2	Raise awareness of careers in Finance and Professional Services amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander jobseekers and students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Finance Sector</li> </ul>			✓	
Sector of focus 4B – Tourism: Strengthening competitiveness and growing experiences in the tourism sector						
4.3	Work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism operators to create new visitor experiences and sustainable tourism products.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Tourism Operators</li> <li>– NSW State Gov.</li> </ul>			✓	
4.4	Raise the profile of Sydney as the gateway to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, arts and experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Tourism Operators</li> <li>– NSW State Gov.</li> </ul>		✓		
4.5	Build capacity in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism operators by supporting opportunities that enhance entrepreneurial skills, business knowledge, and access to networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Tourism Operators</li> <li>– NSW State Gov.</li> </ul>		✓		
Sector of focus 4C – Retail: Growing opportunities and promoting ethical practices in the retail sector						
4.6	Explore models to facilitate access to affordable space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander retailers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– State and federal government</li> <li>– Aboriginal retail sector</li> <li>– Supply Nation</li> </ul>			✓	
4.7	Work with partners to explore initiatives that respond to the impact of non-authentic products and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Eastern Region Local Government</li> <li>– Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Forum (ERLGATSIF)</li> <li>– Retail Sector</li> </ul>		✓		

#	Action	Which partners do we need to make it happen?	On-going	Now	Next	Later
Sector of focus 4D – Creative and digital: Providing opportunities for collaboration and participation in the creative and digital sectors						
4.8	Facilitate greater recognition of Aboriginal history and culture in the public domain.	– Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists	✓			
4.9	Create more opportunities for organisations within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander creative and digital sectors to meet, discuss issues, and develop actions to enable growth within the sector.	– Creative/ digital sectors – NSW State Gov.		✓		
4.10	Increase access to creative opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.	– Creative sector		✓		
4.11	Ensure City activity (such as spaces, grants and sponsorships, events, procurement) creates opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait creative and digital businesses.	– Creative/ digital businesses		✓		
4.12	Work with partners to explore issues and develop initiatives that addresses underrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and stories in the media.	– Media partners – MediaRING	✓			

## Delivering the plan

Ensuring delivery of the plan can be implemented and is well-governed and measurable.

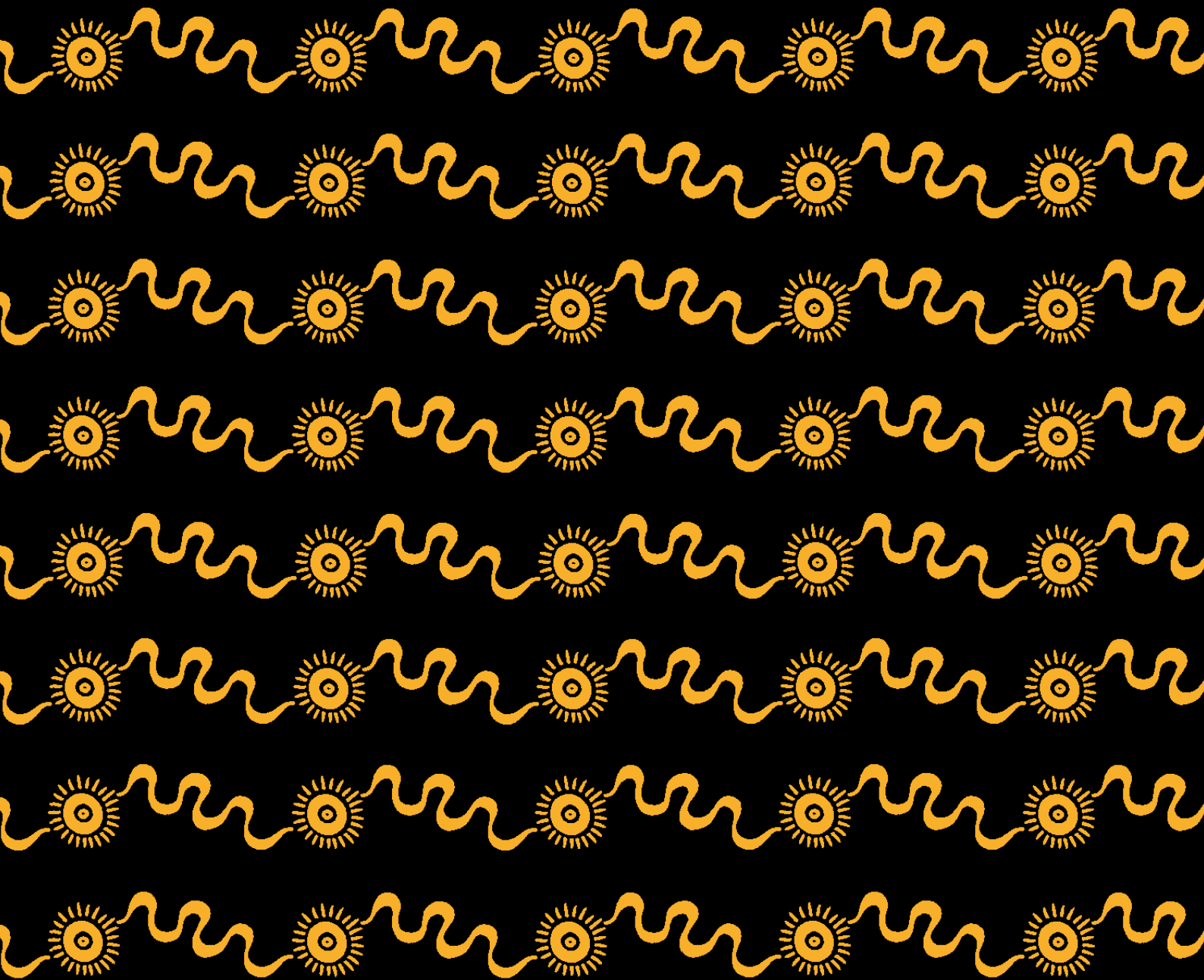
#	Action	Which partners do we need to make it happen?	On-going	Now	Next	Later
i.1	Ensure delivery of the Eora Journey Economic Development Plan is guided by structured engagement with key partners from business, industry and community organisations.	– Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel		✓		
i.2	Monitor Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic development in the City of Sydney.			✓		



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