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Business Nous
Indigenous business
development
opportunities and
impediment in the fishing
and seafood industry

FRDC PROJECT NO 2016-206

Jill Briggs

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The Fisheries Research and Development Corporation plans, invests in and manages fisheries research and development throughout Australia. It is a statutory authority within the portfolio of the federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, jointly funded by the Australian Government and the fishing industry.



We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land and water.

We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

FRDC-IRG funded projects use ethical methodologies and take place on Country with the consent of Traditional Owners.

This summary booklet was prepared by Leila Alkassab and Hanna Gallagher of Land to Sea Consulting Pty Ltd. as part of FRDC-IRG project 2018-183 'Identifying and synthesising key messages from projects funded by the FRDC Indigenous Reference Group.'

Artwork by Beau Pennefather Motlop

Background

In 2011 the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) sponsored a national Indigenous fisheries forum to discuss and identify issues impacting the involvement of Indigenous people in Australia's fisheries. An Indigenous Reference Group (IRG) then collated this work and developed a set of research priorities to guide research, development and extension.

These research priorities were subsequently endorsed in 2012 by the original national forum. Using these research priorities the FRDC-IRG have supported a number of projects focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander fisheries.

1 PRIMACY FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Indigenous people have certain recognised rights associated with and based on the prior and continuing occupation of country and water and activities (e.g. fishing, gathering) associated with the use and management of these.

3 SELF DETERMINATION OF INDIGENOUS RIGHTS TO USE AND MANAGE CULTURAL ASSETS AND RESOURCES

Indigenous people have the right to determine courses of action in relation to use and management of aquatic biological resources.

5 CAPACITY BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE ARE ENHANCED

Indigenous people have the right to access capacity building activities to further their aspirations in the use and management of aquatic biological resources..

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF INDIGENOUS CULTURAL PRACTICES

Indigenous people have the right to maintain and develop cultural practices to address spiritual, cultural, social and economic needs associated with aquatic resources and landscapes.

4 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES ARISING FROM INDIGENOUS PEOPLES CULTURAL ASSETS AND ASSOCIATED RIGHTS

Indigenous people have the right to engage in economic activity based on the use of traditional aquatic biological resources and/or the right to share in the benefits derived from the exploitation of aquatic biological resources.

About the Project...

The Business Nous project team developed an analysis tool to assess the success elements of fishing businesses, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. Twenty-two individuals across Australia were interviewed about their skills and knowledge in building a business. They also undertook a gap analysis of skills to develop Indigenous fishing businesses and drafted a business template with culturally appropriate materials aimed at enhancing capacities of Indigenous communities involved in fishing. These materials included a website, videos and presentations.

The project objectives aimed to address IRG priorities for research that focus on economic development (4) and capacity building (5).

What they found...

Knowledge gaps were identified in the following areas:

Government

- Which government organisations provide assistance.
- Understanding and accessing government assistance.

Purpose of business

- Small business structure and goal setting.
- Commercial viability knowledge (profit and loss).

Running a business

- Understanding legislative and regulatory frameworks.
- Understanding cultural and community obligations.

Business logics

- Pay-roll, employment contracts, sub-contracting.
- Legal and regulation obligations.
- Business plans and marketing plans.
- Growth trends and client intelligence.





What they found...

Standard principles and structures need to be implemented by Indigenous fishing businesses and an understanding of business concepts is also needed to manage an Indigenous fishing business.

For Indigenous business owners these elements are also paired with aspects specific to and important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER BEFORE STARTING A BUSINESS

- Why do you want to start this business?
- Is it a business or a hobby?
- What is going to be the structure of your business?
- Do you have a business plan and do you know why it is important?
- What support will you need and how will you access it?
- Will you employ anyone?
- What about family or friends?
- How will you manage your business finances?
- Have you thought of other business considerations that may apply?

THE KEY PRINCIPLES FOR OWNING AND/OR MANAGING A FISHING BUSINESS

- Payroll
- Book-keeping
- Regulations
- Cash flow
- Staff management
- Planning and marketing

ADDITIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR OWNING AND/OR MANAGING AN INDIGENOUS FISHING BUSINESS

- Community expectations
- Cultural obligations
- Guidance from Elders
- Consideration of Traditional Knowledge



Recommendations...

what makes a successful business?

INDIGENOUS BUSINESS OWNERS SAY...

- A good work environment
- Not reliant on government hand outs
- Diversified allowing for work in various areas
- Able to catch fish for family and community
- Moves people beyond welfare
- Sustainable – grows slowly and with patience and that everything doesn't have to be new

FISHING INDUSTRY SAYS...

- Make sure that you and others in your business know about running a successful business - keeping books, profit/loss, employment and payroll responsibilities all have to happen all the time.
- Keep learning – build the capacity of people through professional development for you and your staff is important
- Provide an affordable product to the client group
- Hire professionals to assist in areas you don't have knowledge.
- Build relationships and keep up to date with industry developments and technology improvements and understand the supply chain
- Have a structure that ensures “no worry” i.e. you go to work and no stress comes home with you.

Conclusions...

This project has worked on identifying knowledge gaps and enabling the development of business knowledge at the level of individual Indigenous fishing businesses.

It has provided a source of information through culturally appropriate platforms including a website, videos and presentations.

In addition it assists individuals who are considering opening a business or building a more successful one by providing essential information about key areas of business decision-making.

Please visit www.irgbusinessnous.com.au for more information.

