

# Indigenous business booming: New data reveals sector's success

May 3 2021, by Stephanie Juleff

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Credit: University of Melbourne

The extent of Indigenous businesses' contribution to the Australian economy has been revealed—at least \$4.88 billion—in a first-of-its-kind research snapshot of the sector's diversity and impact.

The inaugural [Indigenous Business Snapshot Study](#) establishes the economic power of Indigenous businesses, using data pooled from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and numerous custodians of Indigenous [business](#) data to form the Indigenous Business Longitudinal Analysis Data Environment (I-BLADE).

Its content can measure the sector's scope and offers [policy makers](#) comprehensive data to identify and focus upon areas that need most assistance, closing a blind spot that has hindered the potential growth of Indigenous businesses.

Head of the University of Melbourne Indigenous Business Research Group and research lead, Associate Professor Michelle Evans, said for the first time, comprehensive evidence had quantified the Indigenous business sector's economic strength, providing insights into its social and cultural impact in Australia.

"This research is truly unprecedented. It shows us that Indigenous businesses bring not just significant economic impact, but far more. They contribute employment and deliver services to Indigenous communities including health and [education services](#) in a culturally sensitive manner that is essential for ensuring trust and accessibility of service for Indigenous people that rely on them," Associate Professor Evans said.

"They also often punch above their weight when compared to non-Indigenous businesses in terms of size, employee numbers and higher wages. On top of that, the sector is growing more quickly."

The study examined data from financial year 2006 to financial year 2018. Over that time there was a 74 percent increase in the number of Indigenous businesses, 115 percent growth in gross income, and more than 22,000 jobs created—a 100 percent increase. In 2018, gross income

for the sector was \$4.88 billion, more than Australia's beer industry (\$4.3 billion).

Associate Professor Evans said while the figures in this research proved the significance of Indigenous business to Australia, over coming years it would paint an annual picture of the sector's scope and strength, with contributions from those in the community itself playing a key role in its future success.

"This snapshot will capture an image of the Indigenous business sector each year—from community, government, corporate, banking, education, to investment stakeholders—informing the sector ecosystem. Critically, it will show the impact of focused sector support, such as the introduction of Indigenous preferential procurement programs," she said.

**More information:** [Indigenous Business Snapshot Study](#)

Provided by University of Melbourne

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