IMPACT EVALUATION

Cultural Markets

Project: T.4.2223008
Cultural Market Systems Development

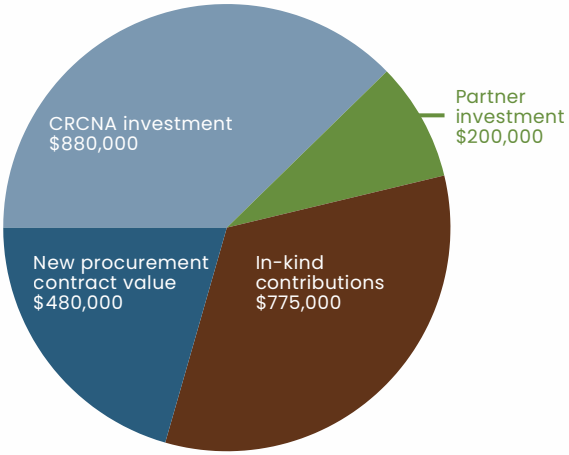
Research program
4 - Activating the First Nations Estate

Project timeframe
2023 to 2026

Partners
- Indigenous Connection Pty Ltd
- Tracks Indigenous Services Pty Ltd
- National Australia Bank Ltd

Project locations
Northern Australia

Project return on investments



Return on investment to date has been at least a 0.55 times return on the CRCNA's investment of $880,000.

Employment activity

6.67 FTE years during the 3 year project

80+ Cultural Knowledge Providers employed

55 Cultural Knowledge Providers engaged in paid Indigenous Connection employment

140+ Senior Leaders across 35+ communities engaged

Project summary

Led by Indigenous Connection, the Cultural Market Systems Development (CMSD) project investigated opportunities to strengthen First Nations economic participation through paid cultural knowledge services.

The research engaged more than 140 Senior Leaders across 35+ remote communities and 300+ representatives from over 100 government and corporate organisations.

It identified strong willingness among First Nations people to provide cultural knowledge services, but limited institutional readiness to procure them.

The research identified two key barriers to economic participation: infrastructure insecurity and systemic exclusion.

Key outcomes included a place-based Cultural Market Systems Development Index (CMSD-I), a future scenario modelling tool and four recommendations to support culturally informed market systems, investment and service delivery.



Cultural Knowledge Provider Workshop, Galiwin'ku credit Indigenous Connection

Project impacts to date

First Nations economic participation

- Employed 80+ Cultural Knowledge Providers across remote Northern Territory and Kimberley communities, with approximately 55 participating in paid project activities.
- Received a further 130 expressions of interest, demonstrating strong demand for culturally appropriate employment opportunities.
- Secured endorsement from 140+ Senior Leaders across 35+ communities to develop paid cultural knowledge services.
- Established cultural knowledge services as a paid professional service, creating new pathways for First Nations economic participation.

Reduced costs

- Developed the CMSD framework and place-based index to identify systemic barriers and inform more effective government and corporate investment.
- Identified opportunities to improve service delivery through culturally informed engagement, institutional relationships and procurement practices.

Future scenario modelling

Modelling identified potential reductions in welfare expenditure through improved economic participation. One illustrative scenario identified the potential for:

- 11,096 new jobs on Country across remote northern Australia.
- Increased median personal income from $318 to approx. $900 per week.
- Reduced housing overcrowding from 34% to 17%.
- Improved school attendance from 59% to 63%.
- Potential welfare expenditure reductions of approximately $250 million annually.

New investment facilitated

- Generated $480,000 in new procurement contract value through paid cultural knowledge services.
- Engaged 300+ representatives from 100+ government and corporate organisations across approximately 15 market systems.
- Demonstrated practical procurement of cultural knowledge services through collaboration with the NT Government's Remote Water Team.
- Established opportunities for further institutional procurement, commercial partnerships and culturally informed service delivery.

"The opportunity set out in this report is ultimately a positive one: to build more culturally intelligent, place-based and economically inclusive market systems that recognise capability on Country and value cultural knowledge."

Sally Auld,
Executive Chief Economist, NAB

Wellbeing improved

- Strengthened recognition of First Nations cultural knowledge, authority and leadership through culturally governed employment and engagement.
- Supported Cultural Knowledge Providers to share expertise through water security and emergency management projects on Country.
- Identified housing, essential infrastructure and systemic exclusion as key influences on community wellbeing and economic participation.
- Strengthened relationships between First Nations communities and government organisations through culturally informed engagement.

Projected impacts beyond 2026

- Expansion of paid cultural knowledge services as governments and businesses adopt culturally informed procurement practices.
- Increased First Nations employment and income opportunities through improved market participation and institutional engagement.
- Further application of the CMSD-I to inform place-based policy, infrastructure investment and service delivery.
- Improved government and corporate engagement through stronger institutional relationships and recognition of First Nations cultural knowledge.
- Potential improvements in housing, education, economic participation and community wellbeing through redesigned market systems.

"We invite government and corporate people to open up the space for our thinking, and our voice to be heard. It is not pushing your system away, it is bringing your system there to work with our system."

Ian Mongunu Gumbula,
Senior Yolŋu Leader, Galiwin'ku and
Cultural Knowledge Provider



Access full project details and reports:
crcna.com.au/projects/cultural-market-system-development/



CRCNA
DEVELOPING NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

Australian Government
Department of Industry, Science and Resources

Cooperative Research Centres Program

Research for **sustainable** and **inclusive** development of **northern Australia**.

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This impact assessment has been developed in collaboration with the CRCNA and project partners. It draws on project reporting, stakeholder input and available evidence to assess project outcomes and potential longer-term impacts. Projected impacts are indicative and based on reasonable assumptions at the time of publication. Information contained in this assessment was considered accurate at the time of publishing.