



# Moving Ahead

A strategic approach to increasing the participation of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland's economy

**2016–2022**

Department of Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait Islander Partnerships





# Message from the Minister



For over 60,000 years, Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people across Queensland have engaged in various forms of trade and commerce, providing for the needs of their families and communities through traditional economies, and maintaining cultural connections. Despite historical injustices, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures proudly remain, and Queenslanders continue to benefit from the diversity and rich heritage of two of the world's oldest cultures.

Despite their valuable social, cultural and economic contribution to a rich and growing Queensland economy, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders continue to face ongoing challenges in accessing the contemporary labour market, and the gap in economic participation outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders and non-Indigenous Queenslanders remains.

The Queensland Government is committed to ending this disparity, and to improving economic participation outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. To do this, we will support the creation of sustainable jobs, provide training and support business growth and development.

*Moving Ahead — A strategic approach to increasing the participation of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland's economy 2016–2022* reflects a lifecourse approach, given that many activities throughout an individual's life affect their ability to participate in the economy, including their education, and experiences in accessing training and employment. The strategy also takes a whole-of-government approach, given the government acts in a range of capacities to improve economic participation outcomes, including as a funder; partner; provider or procurer; and direct employer.

The strategy has been informed by various stakeholders and contains a range of individual actions that will drive targeted change. Through the implementation of *Moving Ahead*, we will:

- improve the skills and diversity of the Queensland workforce, including ensuring greater representation of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people across the public sector
- support Indigenous businesses to have the relevant skills and knowledge to competitively tender for their fair share of government business
- increase opportunities and demand for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and ensure they have the skills necessary to engage in meaningful employment
- encourage business growth and innovation to support sustainable business development
- evaluate our efforts to ensure we can replicate our successes.

The vision of the strategy is 'Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people participate fully in Queensland's growing economy through skills, training and employment, and business growth and development'. This reflects the reality that increasing economic opportunities for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people will provide the opportunity to better invest in health, education and home ownership, promote greater independence and improve life outcomes.

*Moving Ahead* is a unique opportunity to work together to effect sustainable change. Therefore, I invite you to work in renewed partnership with the Queensland Government to ensure a better future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders, and the entire Queensland population.

## **The Honourable Curtis Pitt**

Treasurer  
Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships  
Minister for Sport



Cover artwork, and all related components, is based on the painting 'Standing Together' by artist Shara Delaney, a Quandamooka woman of the Noonuccal, Ngugi and Goenpul people – the traditional custodians of Quandamooka.

“This painting represents the land of Queensland and the sea of the Torres Strait. It incorporates design elements and colours representative of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. It shows people standing together with a combined vision.”

*Shara Delaney, January 2016*

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# Introduction

**Vision** : *Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people participate fully in Queensland’s growing economy through skills, training and employment, and business growth and development.*

The Queensland Government is committed to improving the lives of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people and supporting them to participate fully in Queensland’s vibrant economic, social and cultural life.

*Jobs Now, Jobs for the Future* is the Queensland Government’s employment plan to create jobs and reduce unemployment, and includes *Working Queensland*, a \$1.6 billion package to implement broader economic policies and implement specific, targeted programs.

In this context, it is important to recognise that economic participation is not just about finding a job: instead it is the sum total of activities that aim to develop the skills, education and experience necessary to build a sustainable career of choice, and support independence.

Therefore, to support improvements in economic participation, we need to assist individuals to access employment, build their careers, and develop their businesses, as well as working with industry and employers to increase the demand for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and Indigenous businesses.

We also acknowledge that many activities throughout an individual’s life affect their ability to participate in the economy, including their education and experiences in accessing training and employment.

Therefore, *Moving Ahead: A strategic approach to increasing the participation of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland’s economy 2016–2022* (Moving Ahead) reflects an integrated, whole-of-government approach to improving economic participation outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

The Moving Ahead strategy includes 27 actions, to be implemented by Queensland Government departments, and coordinated centrally, to drive targeted, sustainable change.

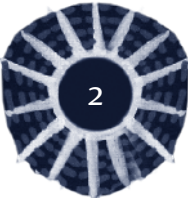
While these actions do not represent an exhaustive list of all Queensland Government initiatives, they represent a comprehensive program of work that focuses on achieving increased economic participation, through training or employment, and business growth and development opportunities.

Moving Ahead also needs to be seen in the context of other Queensland Government strategies that address disadvantage, or promote and enable inclusion such as Advance Queensland, the Queensland Women’s Strategy, the Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy, *Advancing Education – an Action Plan for Education in Queensland* and the 10 year Queensland Health strategy, *My Health, Queensland’s Future*, as well as developing initiatives such as the new Housing Strategy and Youth Strategy.

Moving Ahead will enable the Queensland Government, in partnership with individuals, communities, industry and other levels of Government, to deliver on the strategy’s vision that “*Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people participate fully in Queensland’s growing economy through skilling, training and employment, and business growth and development*”.

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The Moving Ahead strategy includes the following priorities:

- 1 Build a more skilled and diverse workforce
- 2 Focus on youth and plan for future success
- 3 Build our partnership with industry
- 4 Increase entrepreneurship, business growth and innovation
- 5 Overcome barriers and realise opportunities to completion.



# The case for change

⋮ *A new approach is required to ensure Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people are better able to participate in Queensland's economy.*

At present, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders:

- **are significantly less likely to be employed** (around one in every two are working) compared with non-Indigenous Queenslanders (around three out of every four) (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2011 Census of Population and Housing)
- **have an unemployment rate of 18.1 per cent** (15 to 64 year olds), more than three times the rate of working age non-Indigenous Queenslanders (5.9 per cent) (ABS, 2011 Census of Population and Housing)
- **are young** – the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of Queensland has a median age of 20 years compared to 36 years for non-Indigenous persons. More than one-third (34.3 per cent) of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander working age population were aged under 25 years, compared to one-fifth (20.1 per cent) of the non Indigenous population (ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing).

There are significant social and economic benefits in improving economic participation outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders that extend to individuals, families, communities, businesses and government, including:

- enhanced economic outcomes, including lower expenditure on government services (health, justice, public housing and social services), and increased taxation revenue
- a larger pool of workers, and a better trained and more qualified workforce
- higher personal and household incomes, improved satisfaction and better social cohesion
- some level of safety net against future episodes of disadvantage.

Working also promotes positive intergenerational effects, given children who grow up in households where at least one adult member is working are: less likely to be living in poverty; more likely to have higher rates of educational attainment; less likely to have contact with the juvenile justice system; and more likely to be employed in the future.



## Benefits for all Queenslanders

Increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation can create a significant benefit to the Queensland economy.

At the time of the 2011 Census, 43.8 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders aged 15 years and over were in employment. In comparison, the labour force employment participation rate of non-Indigenous persons was 18.5 percentage points higher at 62.4 per cent.

Non-participation in the labour market implies costs for individuals, their families and the community: individuals and families may experience lower personal and household incomes, while communities may experience lower social cohesion, and not receive the intergenerational benefits of employment.

Queensland Treasury has estimated that if Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders had the same employment characteristics than non-Indigenous Queenslanders, the Gross State Product (GSP) could have been 0.9 per cent or around \$2.4 billion greater in 2010–11.

Even incremental improvements in participation can deliver significant benefits to the Queensland economy. Closing the 18.5 percentage point gap in employment participation by just one percentage point in 2010–11 could have increased the GSP by up to \$129 million<sup>1</sup>. This could have accounted for an extra 950 jobs for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people.

## The value of a job

Economic participation is a complex issue. Many Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people face multiple difficulties in finding employment. This represents an enormous challenge for government and the broader community and highlights the need for an integrated whole-of-government approach.



<sup>1</sup> Queensland Treasury, 2014, *Internal report for DATSIP – The Economic Cost of the Gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous employment participation*. The analysis in this report is based on a range of assumptions and, as such, is intended to provide an indicative estimate of the economic cost of the employment gap. For the purposes of this analysis, equivalent employment participation is defined as having similar employment participation rates and similar average productivity per unit of labour. Estimates do not necessarily provide an indication of the possible benefits that would be achieved by any specific policies to reduce the gap, including the Queensland Public Sector Workforce Strategy.



## The strategy

*A whole-of-government, integrated approach is necessary to target investment at key points across an individual's lifecycle to better support individuals, communities, businesses and the Queensland economy.*

The strategy aims to ensure that Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people can better participate in Queensland's economy, and equitably share in its benefits by accessing relevant skills, training and employment, and business growth and development.

By articulating this vision, we recognise that economic participation is more than getting a job – it's the sum total of activities that support individuals to engage in economic activity, and build successful careers and businesses. Therefore, we need to support quality education outcomes, sustainable careers, skill development and business growth.

The strategy contains 27 actions that will be implemented by relevant Queensland Government departments; aligned with the following five priorities:

- build a more skilled and diverse workforce
- focus on youth, and plan for future success
- build our partnership with industry
- increase entrepreneurship, business growth and innovation
- overcome barriers and realise opportunities to completion.

Significantly, these priorities reflect the results of recent consultation processes, and broadly align with the following five policy channels of *Jobs Now, Jobs for the Future*:

- enhancing productivity and efficiency of business
- improving skills and training
- fostering emerging and innovation industries
- growing our regions
- boosting government services.

The Working Queensland Interdepartmental Committee (WQIDC) will monitor the progress of all actions and oversee the implementation of the strategy.

Further, in implementing the strategy, we will:

- respect the culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders, including diversity within cultures
- acknowledge that genuine, sustained improvements in economic participation outcomes are only achievable through a partnership approach
- invest across an individual's lifecycle, given a number of critical transition points exist in determining whether individuals, families and communities participate in the economy
- develop and implement clear performance measures to ensure individual Queensland Government departments are accountable for their relevant actions
- evaluate our work to replicate our successes and guide future investment.



## Build a more skilled and diverse workforce

*Improvements to training and upskilling within a population provide a significant opportunity to increase workforce participation, improve productivity and create opportunities for growth by meeting the labour demands of industry now and into the future.*

Growing the Queensland economy requires an investment in skills. Training and skills development play an important role in increasing economic participation and enhancing productivity. They are also key drivers of economic growth and enable current and future labour demands of industry to be met.

However, some disadvantaged learners and job seekers, including Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people, need additional assistance to develop the skills and confidence to get on a path to training, skilling and future employment.

The Queensland Government is committed to improving training and employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders, through an investment in skilling strategies, accredited training and assessment services that show value for money and clear pathways to employment.

These actions require a commitment to partnership and working together across community, employers, industry and all levels of Government.

### Actions

1. **Support Queenslanders who are under-utilised or under-employed in the labour market**, as well as build the skills of young people, Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability, mature-age job seekers, women re-entering the workforce, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and assist into work through a suite of targeted skills and training programs delivered through the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative, with \$60 million available through 2016–17 (*Department of Education and Training*).
2. **Provide \$1 million per financial year to 2017–18 to support the Indigenous Vocational Education Training (VET) Partnership** to enable funding for projects to assist Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people that require support to train for a real employment outcome, which is linked to local industry need and identified skills gaps (*Department of Education and Training/Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships*).
3. **Create a more qualified and culturally competent early childhood workforce by:**
  - Increasing the number of qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services through initiatives such as the Certificate III Guarantee program and Higher Levels Skills Program.
  - Increasing the pedagogical and leadership capability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators through professional development and mentoring (*Department of Education and Training*).
4. **Partner across all levels of government to increase the economic participation** of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland's economy by:

- Demonstrating greater cooperation between all three levels of government
- Reducing the complexity for individuals accessing public services
- Better meeting the needs of job seekers and Indigenous businesses (*Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships*).

The Queensland Government employs over 245,000 people, and is one of the largest employers in Queensland. Therefore, we have a unique opportunity to model best practice in the attraction, recruitment, retention and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and promote the Queensland Government as an employer of choice. Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people are underrepresented in Queensland public sector employment. This initiative provides the opportunity for the Queensland Government to demonstrate its commitment to building diversity. Queenslanders deserve a public sector that reflects the diversity of our population. Diverse and inclusive organisations are high performing organisations that foster innovation and drive greater gains in productivity and efficiency.

The Queensland Government also has a responsibility to model best practice in cultural capability, to ensure policies and programs demonstrate the necessary respect for the cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders, and have the best chance of success.

Therefore, we will also:

5. **Implement a whole-of-government workforce strategy** to increase the proportion of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people working in the Queensland Public Sector. Under the strategy, all Queensland public sector departments will be required to improve their existing practices in attracting, recruiting, retaining and developing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, and contribute to an aggregate 3 per cent target on the direct employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff by 2022 (*All departments*).
6. **Implement Cultural Capability Action Plans** to ensure all Queensland Government departments have a plan to guide the culturally appropriate delivery of policies, programs and services (*All departments*).
7. **Develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework (2016–2026) for implementation** to increase the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce across the Queensland Government health sector, including in clinical, non-clinical and leadership roles (*Queensland Health*).

### Case study: Indigenous Career Progression Program

The Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry recognised that more qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff working in child protection improves the delivery of culturally appropriate services and supports families to live safe, healthy and strong lives. Therefore, it was recommended the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services implement the Indigenous Career Progression program (ICPP). The ICPP aims to:

- Assist Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people to attain the requisite tertiary qualifications to become Child Safety Officers (CSO).
- Provide professional and career development opportunities for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people with the department.

The ICPP has two components:

- The cadetships program engages with and supports final year Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Bachelor of Social Work and Bachelor of Human Services students.
- The scholarship program provides support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander departmental staff to undertake a Bachelor of Social Work or Bachelor of Human Services.

ICPP participants receive financial and academic support, participate in a facilitated mentoring program, and are assisted to gain a CSO position, which they are asked to commit to for two years, post-graduation.

The ICPP has successfully helped university students and staff to gain valuable knowledge and experience for rewarding careers as CSOs. The ICPP aims to recruit 15 scholarship holders and 10 cadets each year.



## Focus on youth and plan for future success

*The cohort of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders is large and growing – we need to prioritise the improvement of economic participation outcomes for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders, and build a pipeline of future opportunity.*

As indicated in Graph 1, as at 30 June 2014, around 36.1 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders were under 15 years of age (compared to around 19 per cent of non-Indigenous Queenslanders). All young people can experience some level of vulnerability in the labour market through a combination of a lower level of skills and education and/or limited experience. However, the situation for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders may be compounded given evidence of on average poorer school attendance, and difficulties in transitioning to further education, training or employment.

Data shows:

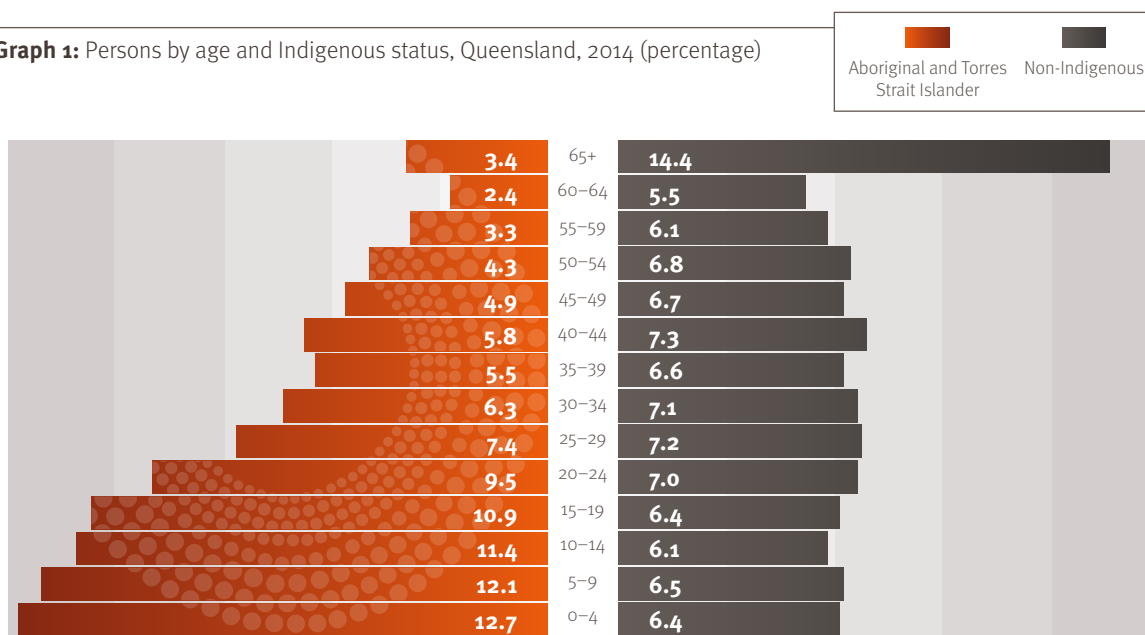
- a 26.5 per cent unemployment rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders aged 18 to 24 years old, compared with 11 per cent for non-Indigenous young people in the same age cohort
- non-Indigenous Year 12 completers were significantly more likely than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 12 completers to commence a Bachelor Degree
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 12 completers were more likely than non-Indigenous Year 12 completers to be looking for work.

Therefore, we need to better support young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders at these vital transition points. Further, in developing our future approach, we also need to understand the nature of the modern economy, including growth sectors and areas of potential workforce shortage. Ideally, we should demonstrate a flexible and agile approach to ensure resources can be positioned to capitalise on emerging opportunities and growth sectors, and build a pipeline of future opportunity.

### Actions

1. **Improve student transitions to further education, training and employment**, through the Youth Employment Program to:
  - engage with Year 12 students
  - provide assistance and support in the year after Year 12 including provision of job readiness training, pre and post-employment support
  - engage with local businesses and community organisations to identify and link candidates with real jobs (*Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships*).
2. **Continue implementation of the Solid Pathways Program** to improve the tertiary pathways, aspirations and outcomes for high performing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and provide academic extension activities (*Department of Education and Training*).
3. **Assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to develop the skills and knowledge for jobs of the future**, through support of the Digital Careers Program (*Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation*).

**Graph 1:** Persons by age and Indigenous status, Queensland, 2014 (percentage)



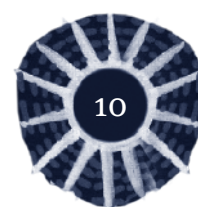
Source: Queensland Government Statistician's Office, Queensland Treasury.

### Case study: School-based actions to increase Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) attainment

In 2015, 94.9 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students completed Year 12 with a QCE or Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement, compared to 96.8 per cent of non-Indigenous students; significantly exceeding the Department of Education and Training's Service Delivery Statement target of 93 per cent certification.

Schools took many different approaches; however, it was the frequent and close monitoring of students which resulted in this achievement. Some particularly successful approaches included work to:

- improve line of sight on student's achievement – data walls identifying individual student's progress were used in some state schools. This allowed staff to track student progress and intervene early, allocating or redirecting resources to better support students at risk of not achieving success
- provide effective case management for at-risk students – teachers and leaders were able to gain a more holistic understanding of factors impacting students' progress across all subjects and Vocational Education and Training courses
- improve school leadership and collaborative practice – school leadership teams identified areas for growth and developed the capabilities and knowledge of teachers to better support Year 12 attainment, through a focused approach toward improvement
- increase student engagement and ownership – students were empowered to engage in the process of tracking their own progress by identifying areas of growth, and clear expectations were communicated and goals were set in partnership between staff and students.



## Build our partnership with industry

*Industry is a key partner with significant resources and expertise to contribute to closing the gap in economic participation outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.*

Industry is a vital partner, and significant opportunities exist to better coordinate our efforts to achieve enhanced outcomes.

Procurement is an excellent example. At present, Queensland Government procurement is an under-utilised growth opportunity for Indigenous enterprises. During 2014–15, total Queensland Government procurement expenditure was estimated at \$18 billion; however known Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprises successfully bid for only approximately \$60 million (less than 1 per cent); and only 170 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprises were involved in supplying to the Queensland Government.

Therefore, it is critical to consider existing procurement arrangements, and determine how Indigenous businesses can be better supported to supply high quality goods and services to the Queensland Government.

It is important to realise that industry groups face a range of commercial realities, and that the Queensland Government needs to determine and communicate opportunities of mutual interest.

It is important to realise how industry is changing. Natural variations in growth sectors provide additional opportunities, and it is vital to ensure that our efforts and resources are appropriately positioned for maximum benefit.

### Actions

1. **Develop a whole-of-government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement policy** to significantly increase and grow Indigenous businesses in Queensland. An Indigenous Procurement Policy will set a Queensland Government target for procurement with Indigenous businesses by 2022. The target parameters will be developed and implemented following whole-of-government advice and will be delivered to ensure alignment with the Australian Indigenous Procurement Policy and the Queensland Procurement Policy (*All departments*).
2. **Continue to implement the Queensland Government's Building and Construction Training Policy** to ensure eligible Indigenous projects commit to supporting employment opportunities and skill development (*Department of Education and Training*).
3. **Partner with industries including the tourism and resources industries, to increase the economic participation of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people** and deliver real change and improved outcomes (*Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships*).
4. **Continue to implement the Land and Sea Rangers Program** to provide employment through host organisations for Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people in land and sea management, and increase access to Country (*Department of Environment and Heritage Protection*).
5. **Realise opportunities under the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders (*Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games*).



6. **Deliver quality artistic outcomes and opportunities for artists and art workers through the Capacity Building Strategy** as part of the ongoing Backing Indigenous Artists initiative, to enhance the sustainability of the Indigenous art economy (*Arts Queensland*).
7. **Collaborate with the non-government sector to implement the Queensland National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) non-government organisation (NGO) Workforce Strategy** (*Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services*).
8. **Realise opportunities from the Queen's Wharf Brisbane Development project** to maximise the outcomes, jobs and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders and Indigenous businesses, including the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan and an Indigenous Participation Plan (*Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships*).

### Case study: Peninsula Developmental Road

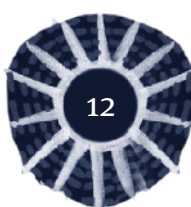
Under the Cape York Region Package, a total of \$260.5 million is being provided by the Australian and Queensland Governments for critical infrastructure upgrades on the Cape York Peninsula. This includes an allocation of \$200 million to seal priority sections of the Peninsula Developmental Road on the section between Laura and Weipa, over five years. This package of work is being delivered by the Department of Transport and Main Roads.

During 2015, 34.4km of road has been sealed at four locations on the Peninsula Developmental Road, 21 water storage structures have been constructed, and gravel investigation has been carried out.

The work will improve the accessibility of Cape York, support the growth of local industry and secondary opportunities, and strengthen local and Indigenous communities.

The successful tenderer for the 2015–2016 Mein Deviation pave and seal contract on the Peninsula Developmental Road has implemented an Indigenous economic opportunities plan which includes on-the-job training, a Certificate III in Civil Construction, and specific plant hire opportunities for Indigenous businesses.

Governance of the project is provided by the Cape York Region Package Board and the Cape York Region Package Taskforce, which includes representatives from Federal and State Governments, and stakeholders from Cape York.



## Increase entrepreneurship, business growth and innovation

*Indigenous entrepreneurs and small businesses need to be supported to develop and access relevant market opportunities in order to create jobs now and into the future.*

Entrepreneurs and small business are vital to harnessing innovation, driving productivity and creating new jobs. 97 per cent of all businesses in Queensland are small (employing less than 20 staff). Together, this accounts for 43 per cent of the State's private sector workforce and over \$100 billion of Gross State Product (GSP).

The Queensland Government has clear ambitions to see more businesses start, innovate and grow to their potential. Businesses that innovate are more likely to increase their profits, access new markets and create jobs. Businesses and communities across Queensland can be transformed through innovation, and it is important that all Queensland communities are participating in the new economy.

The Queensland Government can offer support and assistance in building the skills and knowledge of Indigenous business owners and operators. Growth in the number of strong and sustainable Indigenous businesses will provide opportunities for employment, income and wealth generation.

Therefore, we need to support the development and growth of businesses owned by Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people. This includes profiling our successful innovators, sharing success stories, growing capability and building collaborations and networks between communities.

Growing Indigenous businesses is a highly viable pathway to create opportunities, and research suggests the number of Indigenous owned and

operated businesses has increased over the last twenty years (Business Council of Australia, 2014; Hunter, 2014), and the number of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people self-employed almost tripled between 1991–2011 (Hunter, 2014).

The 'flow-on' employment and productivity benefits of increasing and growing Indigenous businesses are also significant. Evidence suggests Indigenous businesses are significantly more likely to employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff compared with non-Indigenous businesses. Therefore, if Indigenous owned small businesses could hire one more person or grow to be medium-sized businesses, it would result in multiple jobs created and increases in productivity.

Jobs in the future will increasingly depend on skills in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and developing these skills will enable young people to make a job, as well as get a job. By increasing STEM skills for Indigenous students, opportunities will be created for jobs and business creation in the future.

Advance Queensland is the Queensland Government's agenda for innovation-led economic growth. Advance Queensland programs are available to communities across the state and programs in innovation have been delivered with Indigenous participation. The uptake of programs will be targeted for increase to help encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander startups and entrepreneurs.

The Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy 2016–20 will create an environment for Queensland to be the place for small businesses to start, grow and employ. This includes initiatives that result in more Indigenous businesses established in regional Queensland, more businesses starting with a plan for success, stronger Indigenous businesses and more Indigenous businesses growing and employing.

## Actions

### **Assist Indigenous small businesses to develop and grow**, through:

- a suite of programs delivered under the Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy 2016–20 (*Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games*).
- the development of ‘Advancing Queensland’s Indigenous Businesses: A guide to creating an environment for Indigenous businesses to start, grow and employ, will link key Queensland Government policies and programs that impact on Indigenous small businesses (*Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games*).
- co-design the Enterprise Queensland Indigenous Program (EQulP) for the collective investment by the Queensland, Australian and Local Governments in building the capability and capacity of the Queensland Indigenous Business Sector (*Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships*).

9. **Build the capability and capacity of Indigenous businesses through mentoring** under the Mentoring for Growth Program (*Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games*).

10. **Harness the Advance Queensland initiative to develop stronger pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers** by supporting:

- Research fellowships of up to \$240,000 over three years
- PhD Scholarships of up to \$120,000 over three years
- collaboration with industry partners (*Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation*).

11. **Build STEM skills for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children** by increasing their participation in coding and robotics workshops (*Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation*).

12. **Convene a forum** bringing together Indigenous business leaders, chambers of commerce representatives, researchers and thought leaders to help design a new approach to encouraging greater Indigenous

entrepreneurship, business growth and innovation (*Departments of Science, Information Technology and Innovation; and Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games*).

### **Case study: Advance Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Fellowship**

The Advance Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Fellowship supports early-career Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers with funding of up to \$240,000, for a three year research project that contributes to Queensland’s knowledge-based economy.

The Fellowships support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers in completing original research that will have positive impacts on Queensland.

The program will:

- Support early-career Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers in gaining post-doctoral professional research experience.
- Support innovative, practical and applied research that address one of the Queensland Science and Research priorities
- Address the ‘brain drain’ by keeping research graduates in their chosen profession
- Fosters increased linkage and closer collaboration with industry organisations
- Deliver tangible social, economic, environmental and/or regional benefits for Queensland in the next five year.

Dr Cass Hunter from the CSIRO, and located within the Cairns Campus of James Cook University, is the 2016 recipient of the Advance Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Fellowship. Dr Hunter is undertaking a research project titled ‘Transforming hidden data: an integrative information system for Torres Strait’. The key outcomes from this research will be an improved capacity of Indigenous people and stakeholder partners to make more informed decisions about the environment given better understanding of accessible scientific information, strengthened knowledge sharing between Torres Strait communities and agencies, and building community confidence with keeping track of the information collected in the region and understand the supporting information for decision making.



## Overcome barriers and realise opportunities to completion

*We need to overcome barriers that prohibit economic participation, and support individuals to ensure they gain the maximum benefit from available opportunities.*

Creating additional opportunities for individuals, families, businesses and communities will not, in itself, improve economic participation outcomes. Instead, available opportunities must be well targeted and individuals and businesses need to be supported to overcome relevant barriers that may otherwise prohibit them from fully participating in the economy. For example, removing barriers that impede access to housing, obtaining a driver license and accessing education and training resources, can assist individuals to gain meaningful employment and fully leverage current and future economic opportunities.

### Actions

1. **Increase the economic opportunities available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through the resolution of land administration matters and strengthened coordination of capital works projects** to increase local skill development, improve local economic opportunities and resolve land legacy issues (*Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships*).
2. **Support Indigenous communities to deliver learning to drive programs** through the ongoing delivery of the Indigenous Driver Licensing Program (*Department of Transport and Main Roads*).
3. **Support Queensland's public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centres** to implement initiatives to enhance the digital skills of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people to better connect to economic opportunities such as training, jobs and markets (*State Library of Queensland*).
4. **Continue to manage the Employment and Education Housing Program** to remove housing as a barrier to employment (*Department of Housing and Public Works*).

## Case study: Government Champions

The Queensland Government is committed to increasing their capability to deliver innovative, efficient, effective and integrated services for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people across Queensland, including those who live in remote and discrete Indigenous communities.

The Queensland Government Champion program enables Chief Executives of the Queensland Public Service to partner with individual discrete and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and use their influence across government to address barriers to social and economic participation and to increase the effectiveness and integration of service delivery. The Government Champions work together across government and in partnership with community leaders.

The Terms of Reference for the Government Champion program ensures that Government Champions work with their assigned communities to address barriers to effective service delivery and to strengthen the capability of the Queensland Government to deliver innovative, efficient, and integrated services by:

- collaborating with local leaders to effectively identify and efficiently implement solutions to critical issues
- establishing feedback loops between government and communities regarding the progress of initiatives
- creating opportunities for local leaders to advocate their community's needs among higher levels of government
- building cross-cultural awareness within government
- improving whole-of-government coordination and service delivery through information sharing.

Government Champions engage with all community stakeholders, not just elected leaders. It is essential that key stakeholders are identified – for example, Traditional Owners and local Elders, Prescribed Bodies Corporate, local service deliverers such as schools and kindergartens, hospitals and/or health centres, and men's and women's groups.





# Implementation

*The successful implementation of this strategy will rely on a genuine partnership approach between all departments, and a clear commitment to evaluation to ensure we understand overall progress achieved, and can target future areas for investment.*

Significantly, individual Queensland Government departments will retain responsibility for the implementation of their relevant actions. However, an evaluation framework, led by the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and in partnership with all Queensland Government agencies, is being developed, to identify the relevant deliverables and timeframes for each action, and support necessary accountability and transparency. It is expected that this evaluation framework will be finalised by October 2016.

Further, the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships will also coordinate and provide secretariat functions for an Implementation Reference Group, comprised of representatives from key government departments, and the community. The Implementation Reference Group will provide advice on the implementation of Moving Ahead, including identification of any relevant upcoming challenges and opportunities, and demonstrate a partnership approach with the community.

Given their role in overseeing the implementation of Moving Ahead, the Working Queensland Interdepartmental Committee (WQIDC) will receive advice regarding progress under the strategy. Reporting activities to the WQIDC will include a quarterly update, and an annual assessment of progress, and will be led by the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships.

DATSIP will also lead the development and implementation of a whole-of-government Indigenous Procurement Policy to significantly increase and grow Indigenous businesses in Queensland. The Indigenous Procurement Policy will set a Queensland Government target for procurement with Indigenous businesses by 2022. The target parameters will be developed and implemented following whole-of-Government advice and it is expected that this policy will be finalised by the end of 2016 and will outline how the target will be achieved.



