



**Facility Management
Association of Australia**

**Indigenous Engagement
Strategy**

2018–2020

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Facility Management Association (FMA) proudly acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples and Traditional Owners of the land and water on which we rely.

We acknowledge and respect that Aboriginal communities are steeped in traditions and customs built on an incredibly disciplined social and cultural order. This social and cultural order has sustained up to 50,000 years of existence.

We acknowledge the ongoing leadership role of the Aboriginal community. As First Peoples, they are best placed to determine a culturally appropriate path for support within their communities.

THE TIME FOR CHANGE IS NOW

We are pleased to present you with our Indigenous Engagement Strategy for 2018–2020. This strategy was born of our desire to help address the systemic disadvantage experienced by our nation’s First Peoples – specifically, the issue of unemployment within Indigenous communities.

The strategy comes at a time when the inequality between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians continues to grow, despite decades of generally well-intentioned policies. The current unemployment rate for Indigenous Australians is approximately four times the rate for non-Indigenous Australians.

We believe that the FM industry, with its varied skill levels and touch points across the Australian population, is uniquely placed to help bridge this employment gap. The FMA will lead the initiative by raising our members’ awareness of Indigenous disadvantage and encouraging them to take practical steps to help alleviate it – namely, by employing Indigenous people and engaging Indigenous-owned businesses.

By working together, we can provide Indigenous people with meaningful and robust employment opportunities across this broadly skilled industry. Greater employment will, in turn, lead to sustainable economic and cultural benefits to Australia’s Indigenous community.

While the FMA fully endorses and understands the importance of Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs), we have chosen to devote our current energy to the Indigenous Engagement Strategy. As a membership organisation, we believe our power to effect change is better exerted through a national strategy that influences our members Australia-wide, rather than a RAP, which is limited to our National Office. Nevertheless, we plan to develop a RAP when resources permit.

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to this strategy, including the Indigenous Australians and community groups who provided an invaluable insight into their people’s unique culture and needs. Their voices provided the cornerstone to this strategy, and we recognise that their continued collaboration is essential for the strategy to be successfully implemented.

We hope you will join us in seizing this opportunity to address Indigenous unemployment. By opening up new career paths to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, you will help to make the FM industry an agent for change.

We look forward to working with you on this exciting initiative.

Nicholas Burt
Chief Executive Officer

Kristiana Greenwood
Chairman

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The FMA recognises the social and economic disadvantage experienced by Indigenous Australians and is committed to overcoming the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians. Our vision is to make a contribution to tackling the national issue of high unemployment within Indigenous communities.

Developing this Indigenous Engagement Strategy is an important first step in demonstrating our commitment to that vision.

This Indigenous Engagement Strategy attempts to provide further encouragement and opportunities to Indigenous businesses and, by doing so, help to address some of the ongoing challenges faced by Indigenous Australians. It will do this by improving the awareness of FMA members of Indigenous disadvantage and encouraging them to take practical steps to help alleviate it through employment of Indigenous people and engagement of Indigenous-owned businesses.

The FM industry is in a unique position to positively contribute to this vision, as it has touch points with a majority of the population on a daily basis, whether at home, in the office, during recreational activities such as sporting activities, daily shopping activities, or transportation. The various skill levels of the FM industry, along with the various touch points available to it, give the industry an opportunity to achieve robust and sustainable outcomes.

The FMA will contribute to these positive outcomes by:

- Being advocates
- Educating, training and mentoring
- Modelling Indigenous inclusion in our Association
- Communicating progress
- Celebrating success
- Working together.

Progress against this strategy will be overseen by the Diversity Portfolio Group, which reports to the FMA's CEO. The Diversity Portfolio Group will also be responsible for reporting progress against targets to the Board.

It is expected that this strategy will take 24 months to embed across the organisation. In 12 months, the Diversity Portfolio Group will review progress against the targets and consider the next steps.

OUR VISION

The FMA recognises the social and economic disadvantage experienced by Indigenous Australians and is committed to overcoming the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians. We will contribute to tackling the national issue of high unemployment within Indigenous communities.

As the peak national industry body for facilities management, representing and supporting professionals and organisations responsible for the operational management of Australia's built environments, the FMA aims to become a leading voice for greater engagement and inclusion of the Indigenous community, particularly within the FM industry. By working with Indigenous organisations and not-for-profit organisations, and with support from the Indigenous engagement activities of governments and corporations, we will help close the disadvantage gap and change the stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Developing this Indigenous Engagement Strategy is an important first step in demonstrating our commitment to this vision.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

This strategy was developed by a working group set up specifically for this task. It comprised grassroots members of the FMA from multiple industry-leading organisations from across the country. Some of these companies have Reconciliation Action Plans (RAP), providing first-hand RAP experience. The working group also contained an Indigenous Australian to provide insight into Indigenous culture and community needs.

Various Indigenous community groups have provided comment to include in this strategy.

The working group was set up to develop the strategy, and has now handed responsibility to the FMA Diversity Portfolio Group. This group will be responsible for implementing, monitoring and embedding the strategy into FMA culture, and setting future targets.

The FMA would like to formally acknowledge and thank everyone who generously volunteered their time and knowledge in the development of this strategy.

THE SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES OF IMPACT OPEN TO THE FM INDUSTRY

The FMA believes it is important that we celebrate and build on the success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, while recognising that many challenges and disparities remain.

This Indigenous Engagement Strategy attempts to do both: to provide further encouragement and opportunities to Indigenous businesses and, by doing so, to help address some of the ongoing challenges faced by Indigenous Australians. It will do this by improving awareness among FMA members of Indigenous disadvantage, and encouraging them to take practical steps to help alleviate it through employment of Indigenous people and engagement of Indigenous-owned businesses.

The FM industry is in a unique position, as it has touch points with a majority of the population on a daily basis, whether at home, in the office, during recreational activities such as sporting activities, daily shopping activities, or transportation.

The various skill levels of the FM industry, along with the various touch points available to it, give the industry an opportunity to champion an Indigenous Engagement Strategy with robust and sustainable outcomes.

Many skill levels

A wide range of skills are required within the FM industry, varying from specialised services (electricians, plumbers, senior management, engineers etc), to entry-level skill sets (helpdesk coordinators, cleaners, handymen etc). The industry is in a unique position to cater for a wide variety of personnel within its ranks, providing a unique opportunity to leverage engagement within communities at all levels, and supporting specific client and community needs.

Leveraging from the work done in various Indigenous schooling programs, there is opportunity to provide meaningful and sustainable employment opportunities across this broadly skilled industry. The FM industry's active participation in this Indigenous Engagement Strategy will provide flow-on effects from a cultural perspective. This will ensure a sustainable strategy that can be engaged well into the future, providing economic and cultural benefits to Indigenous people and greater communities.

Indigenous businesses are well represented in the sector

The number of Indigenous companies within the FM industry is increasing with various service offerings. This is not surprising considering the broad range of skills required to cater for the industry, the low barriers of entry for personnel to service various facets of the industry, and the opportunities to bolt on additional services through existing business relationships.

There is an opportunity for the FM industry to learn from the Indigenous businesses that are providing value back to Indigenous communities through employment opportunities across various skill sets.

FM companies promoting Indigenous businesses

Promoting Indigenous businesses that are highly responsive, ethical and genuine will be the backbone in raising knowledge, awareness and motivation within the FM industry.

What works

The Clontarf Foundation exists to improve the education, discipline, life skills, self-esteem and employment prospects of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men. By doing so, it equips them to participate meaningfully in society. Since 2000, the Foundation has grown to cater for over 5,600 boys in 96 schools across Australia. By encouraging involvement in their sport and education programs, the foundation secures participation within the school system to get students job-ready and develop self-esteem and confidence.

<http://www.clontarf.org.au/>

WHAT THE FMA WILL DO

WE WILL RAISE AWARENESS

What works

The ABC has started to showcase to Australia, and the world, the talent of Indigenous Australians in a non-tokenistic way – providing an outlet for these talents in ways that were previously not accessible. Two well-known examples are the sketch program Black Comedy, which is breaking down barriers between white and black comedy, and Cleverman, which is loosely based on Dreamtime stories and has also been shown in the USA. This type of change instils a wave of new Indigenous actors, writers and directors into the media, and brings Indigenous stories and comedy to the world.

WE WILL BE ADVOCATES

We will develop a section of the FMA website dedicated to providing further information on businesses that support Indigenous self-determination, with links to additional information regarding Indigenous issues.

WE WILL EDUCATE, TRAIN AND MENTOR

We will run cultural awareness training across all states as a professional development opportunity for FMA members, and award an FMA cadetship program to an Indigenous student annually.

WE WILL MODEL INDIGENOUS INCLUSION IN OUR ASSOCIATION

We will model inclusion by having Indigenous representation across roles within the FMA, including the Board, Branch Committees and Portfolio Groups; recognising FMA members who support Indigenous inclusion through the National Diversity Award; and ensuring Indigenous representation at Ideaction.

WE WILL UNDERTAKE RESEARCH AND COMMUNICATE PROGRESS

WE WILL COMMUNICATE PROGRESS

So we do not lose sight of our long-term objectives, progress against the targets identified in this strategy will be reported through the Annual Report and our various communication channels.

WE WILL CELEBRATE SUCCESS

We will recognise the proactivity of our members who are supporting Indigenous engagement and self-determination, by publishing updates and articles on their achievements through our communication channels.

WE WILL WORK TOGETHER

Indigenous inclusion cannot be achieved by the FMA alone. During the first years of the strategy, we will learn from, and apply the lessons of, other progressive industries. We will develop partnerships with Indigenous organisations, chambers of commerce and other like-minded organisations, so they can connect with us on our reconciliation journey. We will do this by communicating progress on the Indigenous Engagement Strategy to these groups.

What works

‘When I first started in the facilities management industry, it was an industry run by middle-aged ex-tradie men. I was afraid, worried, and nervous to tick any box to say I was Indigenous, or even dare mention that I was, due to the stigma associated with being Aboriginal. Moving past this, the industry has given me so much, and the people within it have been so generous with their time – giving it freely to show me the ropes, demonstrate how to make a career in FM, and mentor me. My goal is to find pathways for Indigenous youth into this industry, and to challenge the industry to bring Indigenous people into management positions such as FMs or BDs.’ – **Nathan Maher, Business Development Manager – Sodexo**

WHAT ARE INDUSTRY LEADERS DOING? – WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Indigenous inclusion cannot be achieved by the FMA alone. It is the responsibility of us all: individuals, communities, workplaces and businesses. Together, we must build a culture across the FM industry of trust, mutual respect, inclusion, consultation and sensitivity. Here are some examples of industry leaders who are rising to the challenge.

COMPANIES WHO ARE LEADING THE WAY

Evolve FM – a joint initiative of JLL and Pacific Services Group Holdings (PSGH) – is a facilities management company that aims to ‘maximise outcomes for Indigenous Australians’ by hiring and supporting Indigenous people and businesses.

‘I am delighted to witness the maturing nature of Indigenous business in the FM industry, with more expertise and experience adding value to all aspects of the FM profession. Recent undertakings by the Federal Government have helped establish companies such as Evolve FM in a great position to lead the Indigenous supply chain in FM.’

- **Chris Hunt, Managing Director, Corporate Solutions Australasia, JLL**

GJK Indigenous Solutions is an Aboriginal owned and operated company that provides commercial cleaning and associated services. The company aims to create opportunities for Aboriginal people through employment and career pathways.

‘Being passionate about creating parity in Indigenous employment and in the community delivers supplier diversity, including sourcing of products and services from the Indigenous community. Boosting Indigenous employment through career and training pathways is fundamental to that success.’

- **Steve Taylor, Executive Chairman, GJK Facility Services**

CBRE and A.G. Coombs Group have both developed Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs). A RAP provides a strategic framework through which organisations can take practical steps to support the national reconciliation movement.

‘At CBRE, we are extremely proud of our RAP, which was endorsed in 2017. The plan outlines our commitment to advancing reconciliation in the workplace by creating meaningful opportunities, and strengthening respect and understanding between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and other Australians. We’ve already established an Indigenous internship program in our in-house legal team, in partnership with Career Trackers, and we are looking at further opportunities in our broader business.’

- **Rob Di Pasquale, CBRE Senior Director & Head of Facilities Management**

‘Founded on a long-running Indigenous Participation Policy, A.G. Coombs implemented a RAP in 2016. Our vision is that through our actions, we will contribute to a reconciled, just and equitable Australia.’

- **Russell Telford, Managing Director, A.G. Coombs Group**

Anyway money

One example of the success of engaging Indigenous businesses is PSGH, a 100% Indigenous-owned construction and cleaning company. PSGH was engaged by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) through FMA member Cushman & Wakefield to provide cleaning services to the ATO offices in Queensland. PSGH employed 13 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians – over 25% of the workforce – including nine who were previously unemployed. This act saved the government money through a reduction in benefits and increased revenue through these newly employed people paying income tax, without a single cent of additional expenditure: it was money the government was going to spend anyway. This ‘anyway money’ – which provides real jobs for real clients – is an important key in addressing Indigenous disadvantage.



REMAINING ACCOUNTABLE

Progress against this strategy will be overseen by the Diversity Portfolio Group, which reports to the FMA's CEO. The Diversity Portfolio Group will also be responsible for reporting progress against targets to the Board.

It is expected that this strategy will take 24 months to embed across the organisation. In 12 months, the Diversity Portfolio Group will review progress against the targets and consider the next steps.

FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

- The FMA envisages that it will set targets and pledges for companies regarding engagement targets within the next 24 months.
- The FMA plans to develop and implement a RAP.
- The FMA will consider implementing a support group for Indigenous members.
- The FMA will consider coordinating regional visits and outreach programs – e.g. Spotless, JLL or Cushman & Wakefield to visit a remote community for a week, and hold a working bee involving the local FM business to up-skill participants and provide meaningful training.

THE STRATEGY

Our Goal	Our Actions	Our Focus	Our Target	Timeline
We will raise awareness	We will be advocates	Develop a section of the FMA website dedicated to providing further information on businesses that support Indigenous self-determination, and links to additional information regarding Indigenous issues, e.g. links to Supply Nation, Indigenous Business Association, Indigenous chambers of commerce.	Webpage developed.	December 2018
	We will educate	Offer cultural awareness training in all states as a professional development opportunity for FMA members.	Cultural awareness training offered in all states.	June 2019
		Award an FMA cadetship to an Indigenous student annually. This will support the success of Indigenous people and help to achieve greater Indigenous participation in the workplace. To ensure the greatest likelihood of success for the winner (by providing them with ongoing support), the award criteria will include the requirement that the nominating company provide the winner with a mentor for the duration of their cadetship. The winner will be announced each year at Ideaction (FMA's national conference).	Cadetship awarded at Ideaction 2019.	May 2019
	We will lead by example	Embed commitment to Indigenous people throughout the Association by having Indigenous representation across roles within the FMA, including the Board, Branch Committees and Portfolio Groups.	Indigenous representation across the FMA leadership structure, i.e. the Board, Branch Committees and Portfolio Groups.	December 2020
		Recognise FMA members who support Indigenous inclusion through the Diversity Award presented at the FM Awards for Excellence Gala Dinner each November. The current Diversity Award criteria will be reviewed to cover diversity in all its forms, not just gender.	Diversity Award criteria covers diversity in all its forms.	2018 Awards
		Ensure Indigenous representation at Ideaction by having speakers who identify as Indigenous Australians and including Indigenous businesses in the trade show.	Speakers – have at least one speaker who identifies as an Indigenous Australian. Business representation – an Indigenous-focused small business or charity partner should be given the opportunity to participate.	Ideaction 2018 Ideaction 2019

THE STRATEGY

Our Goal	Our Actions	Our Focus	Our Target	Timeline
We will undertake research	We will undertake research	Carry out a survey within our Branch Committees and Portfolio Groups to understand the proportion of people within the groups who identify as Indigenous Australians. This will allow the FMA to assess whether a quota for Indigenous representation is required.	Survey within Branch Committees and Portfolio Groups carried out.	December 2018
		Gain a better understanding of the number of people who identify as Indigenous Australians within our membership through questions in the Industry Census. Example questions – do you identify as an Indigenous person? How does your company’s procurement processes support Indigenous companies? At what levels in the organisation are Indigenous people employed?	Questions added to the Industry Census to identify the proportion of members who identify as Indigenous Australians.	2019 Census
We will communicate progress	We will report	Report progress against the Indigenous Engagement Strategy targets in the Annual Report.	Summary of progress against the Indigenous Engagement Strategy targets included in the Annual Report.	Annual Report 2018
		Report on the Indigenous community’s levels of engagement in the FM industry, by publishing the results of the Indigenous-focused Industry Census questions.	Results and commentary published in the Census report and other relevant communication channels.	December 2019
		Develop partnerships with Indigenous organisations, chambers of commerce and other like-minded organisations, to connect on our reconciliation journey, by communicating progress on the Indigenous Engagement Strategy to these groups.	Update Indigenous organisations, chambers of commerce and other like-minded organisations on the progress of the Indigenous Engagement Strategy through FMA’s communication channels, including FMA Snippets and email mail-outs.	2018 onwards
	We will celebrate success	Recognise the proactivity of FMA members who are leading the change, by publishing updates and articles on their progress through our communication channels.	Updates on FMA members’ support of the Indigenous community and self-determination published in <i>Facility Perspectives</i> , FMA Snippets and on LinkedIn.	2018 onwards

REPORTING

Our Target	Timeline	Measure	Evidence	Responsible Person	Status 100% achieved
Webpage developed	December 2018	Evidence of webpage in place and being updated	Reported in quarterly Board marketing report, including number of updates and webpage statistics	Communications & Marketing Lead for reporting; Diversity Committee and National Office for web updates	
Cultural awareness training offered in all states	June 2019	Training program developed and in place	Course developed and attendance reported to Board as part of the professional development quarterly report	Membership Support Manager	
Cadetship awarded at Ideaction 2019	May 2019	Cadetship in place with support from industry; relevant assessment process for applications developed	Promotion of the opportunity to apply for the cadetship	CEO and Communications & Marketing Lead, with support from the Diversity Portfolio Group to develop assessment criteria	
Indigenous representation across the FMA leadership structure, i.e. the Board, Branch Committees and Portfolio Groups	December 2020	Understanding of Indigenous inclusion in broader committee structure	Data reported to the Board as part of the governance reporting on committees	CEO and Communications & Marketing Lead	
Diversity Award criteria covers diversity in all its forms	2018 Awards	Alteration to the award title and criteria	Inclusion of relevant information in collateral for the Awards Program	Events Project Manager	
Speakers – have at least one speaker who identifies as an Indigenous Australian	Ideaction 2018	Target Indigenous speaker for the conference	Inclusion of information in the conference program	CEO, Events Project Manager and Diversity Portfolio Group	

REPORTING

Our Target	Timeline	Measure	Evidence	Responsible Person	Status 100% achieved
Business representation – an Indigenous-focused small business or charity partner should be given the opportunity to participate	Ideaction 2019	Target Indigenous business to exhibit at the conference	Inclusion of information in the conference program	CEO, Events Project Manager and Diversity Portfolio Group	
Survey within Branch Committees and Portfolio Groups carried out	December 2018	Understanding of Indigenous inclusion in broader committee structure	Data reported to the Board as part of the governance reporting on committees	CEO and Communications & Marketing Lead	
Questions added to the Industry Census to identify the proportion of members who identify as Indigenous Australians	2019 Census	Inclusion of questions in Census	Data gathered on relevant Indigenous statistics	CEO and Communications & Marketing Lead	
Summary of progress against Indigenous Engagement Strategy targets included in Annual Report	Annual Report 2018	Inclusion of Indigenous statistics in Annual Report	Data gathered on relevant Indigenous statistics	CEO and Communications & Marketing Lead	
Results and commentary published in the Census report and other relevant communication channels	December 2019	Inclusion of Indigenous statistics in Census survey and information gathered highlighted in relevant communication channels	Census report inclusions and details in press release and presentations	CEO and Communications & Marketing Lead	

REPORTING

Our Target	Timeline	Measure	Evidence	Responsible Person	Status 100% achieved
Update Indigenous organisations, chambers of commerce and other like-minded organisations on progress on the Indigenous Engagement Strategy through FMA's communication channels, including FMA Snippets and email mail-outs	2018 onwards	Provide a regular update through access to information, such as FMA Snippets, e-news and <i>Facility Perspectives</i> by non-member identified stakeholders	Evidence of additional stakeholders included on relevant mailing lists	Administrative Assistant to upload relevant stakeholders who are provided by the Diversity Portfolio Group	
Updates on FMA members' support of the Indigenous community and self-determination published in <i>Facility Perspectives</i> , FMA Snippets and on LinkedIn	2018 onwards	Articles published	Include relevant references in the report of communication metrics presented to the Board quarterly	Communications & Marketing Lead for reporting, working with Diversity stakeholders to develop articles	

APPENDIX

Historical summary

The continent on which Captain Arthur Phillip of His Majesty's Royal Navy hoisted the Union Flag on Saturday January 26 1788 was a land that was known, mapped and owned, and which had been supporting the inhabitants for between 40,000 and 60,000 years or more. It is impossible to know exactly how many people lived here on that Saturday in January – estimates range from around 300,000 to well over 1 million – but a number of sources suggest that around 750,000 was likely.¹

Those 750,000 people lived as part of around 250 or more language groups (with perhaps 600 dialects)² – tribes or nations, which were in turn made up of clan-based semi-nomadic groups, consisting of up to several hundred people. Each of these groups knew their lands, rivers and sacred places, and had well-understood systems and protocols for accessing or traversing the lands of other groups.

Indigenous disadvantage

While many of the policies negatively affecting Indigenous people have disappeared, the attitudes that formed these policies are changing more slowly.

Two centuries of dispossession and cultural disruption and dislocation mean that even in the 21st century the lives of Australia's Indigenous people are very different to those enjoyed by non-Indigenous Australians. Australia's Indigenous people are worse off than its non-Indigenous people in a wide range of areas:

- In 2012–13, only 60% of Indigenous people aged 15–64 were in the labour force and the unemployment rate was 21%. The unemployment rate for Indigenous people was 4.2 times as high as the rate for non-Indigenous people (based on age-standardised rates).
- The homelessness rate for Indigenous people in 2011 was nearly 14 times the rate for non-Indigenous people.
- The age-standardised rate of hospitalisations for assault among Indigenous people was 14 times as high as for non-Indigenous people.
- On an average day in 2012–13, 44% of young people aged 10–17 under youth justice supervision were Indigenous. Indigenous young people aged 10–17 were 14 times as likely as non-Indigenous young people to be under supervision.
- In 2008–2012, the suicide rate for Indigenous Australians was almost twice the rate for non-Indigenous Australians (based on age-standardised rates). For 15–19 year-olds, the rate was 5 times as high as the non-Indigenous rate (34 versus 7 per 100,000 population).
- Indigenous adults were 3.3 times as likely to have diabetes as non-Indigenous adults.

¹ 750 000 seems to be a consensus figure. It comes from the website of the Australian Museum, "Introduction to Indigenous Australia" at <http://australianmuseum.net.au/indigenous-australia-introduction>. See also <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/68AE74ED632E17A6CA2573D200110075?opendocument> and <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/7d12b0f6763c78caca257061001cc588/8dc45512042c8c00ca2569de002139be!OpenDocument>

² Again, estimates vary. AIATSIS says "Over 250 Indigenous Australian language groups" were extant at colonisation (see <http://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/indigenous-australian-languages>) and the "Creative Spirits" website gives the figure of 250 language groups and 600 dialects (see <https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/language/#axzz4fKTdCVFs>, accessed 26 April 2017). The Australian Museum says "there were approximately 700 languages spoken" in 1788 (see <https://australianmuseum.net.au/indigenous-australia-introduction>).

- The proportion of Indigenous people with long-term kidney disease was 3.7 times as high as the proportion of non-Indigenous people.³
- In 2015, the overall incarceration rate for Indigenous people was nearly 16 times the rate for non-Indigenous people; for young offenders, it was 24 times the rate.

While the numbers are confronting, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have always added, and continue to add, great success to the Australia of which we are all proud. We can probably all remember the night Cathy Freeman won Gold in the 400m at the Sydney Olympics, or watching Mark Ella redefine the way attacking Rugby is played. But the Indigenous success that we celebrate is mainly confined to the sporting field. What we, as Australians, should be proud of is the impact Indigenous people have on our society every day, much of which goes unnoticed. David Unaipon (on our \$50 note) is often described as a modern-day Leonardo Da Vinci; he is credited as having some of the first ideas for mechanical helicopters. Neville Bonner was the first Indigenous man to be a Member of Parliament; he paved the way for Nova Peris and Damien Miller (the first Indigenous Head of a Diplomatic Mission). We could name many more. But these success stories are often blinded by negative headlines that distort our perception of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women.

This Indigenous Engagement Strategy attempts to provide further encouragement and opportunity to Indigenous businesses and, by doing so, to help address some of the ongoing challenges faced by Indigenous Australians. By improving awareness among FMA members of Indigenous disadvantage, and encouraging them to take practical steps to help alleviate it – through the employment of Indigenous people and engagement of Indigenous-owned businesses – this strategy will further develop the Indigenous middle class and provide opportunities for other Indigenous people to join it.

Role of economic engagement in helping to address the challenges faced by Australia's Indigenous people

Maximum participation in economic life is key to overcoming disadvantage. Capabilities are, to a large extent, something that is accumulated, it is intergenerational. To ensure that people have the capabilities to choose a life that they have a reason to value. This can be achieved by expanding the range of choices people have available to them. Currently there are very few real jobs and therefore a lack of economic and social development. Only engagement with the real economy can build incomes over time. There must be policy targeted at economic development, capability building and building the fabric of economic and social life. Our belief is that the direction is clear – we are now looking for support to carry it out. With economic development and participation comes empowerment. Until they earn their own income they will not be truly free.

(Noel Pearson – Extract of Lecture 2015)

Engagement of Indigenous-owned businesses

The Australian Government has recognised that one of the key elements of addressing Indigenous disadvantage, and economically empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, is through meaningful employment. In the Government's *Indigenous Procurement Policy 2015* (IPP), the Ministers for Finance and Indigenous Affairs note that:

- Indigenous businesses are key to creating jobs and employing more Indigenous Australians. Indigenous businesses are around 100 times more likely to employ an Indigenous person than other businesses.
- This policy is about creating opportunities for these Indigenous businesses to grow and employ more people. It is also about stimulating private investment in new Indigenous businesses.
- A strong Indigenous business sector will help drive financial independence, and create wealth and opportunities for Indigenous Australians. It will also provide the basis for Indigenous economic development in regional and remote Australia.⁴

³ All statistics from AIHW (2015), pp. 22–23 and pp. 80–81.

⁴ Australian Government, *Indigenous Procurement Policy 2015*, 1 July 2015, p.2. Available at <https://www.pmc.gov.au/indigenous-affairs/economic-development/indigenous-procurement-policy-ipp>

The IPP includes targets for government agencies to meet in engaging Indigenous-owned businesses, as well as other targets relating to Indigenous participation – either employment or engagement of Indigenous-owned businesses – for larger projects and contracts.

Complementing the IPP is the so-called ‘Indigenous Business Exemption’ to the Commonwealth Procurement Rules, which allows Commonwealth Procurement Officers to procure goods and services without going through a full open tender process.

The first two years of the IPP have seen strong growth in the Indigenous business sector, with concomitant growth in Indigenous employment and economic engagement.

But more is needed. The Commonwealth Government procures a relatively limited range of goods and services, and its presence in some areas – including those with higher concentrations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations, such as large cities – is relatively small.

The commitment of the Commonwealth Government is yet to be genuinely matched at other levels of government, and engagement with Indigenous businesses by the corporate sector is also less well-advanced.

The members of the FMA – as large procurers of goods and services, both on their own account and on behalf of clients – are well placed to build on the momentum of the Indigenous business sector, and help it take the next step, especially in areas where Commonwealth Government presence is relatively small.