

Palawa Business Hub

SEDI Peer Learning & Support Community Report



Purpose & Overview of the Learning Community

The Palawa Business Hub (PBH) received funding under the Social Enterprise Development Initiative (SEDI) to deliver a First Nations-led Peer Learning & Support Community in Lutruwita/ Tasmania.

The purpose of this learning community was to:

- Strengthen relationships between Aboriginal businesses, community, government, and the private sector
- Build capability and confidence among Aboriginal social enterprises
- Support sustainable economic participation with self-determination principals
- Create culturally safe, peer-led spaces for knowledge-sharing, collaboration, and shared learning

This initiative centred lived experience and cultural practice, ensuring that all activities were responsive to the needs of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community and led by Aboriginal voices.

The learning community engaged:

Aboriginal businesses

Tasmanian Aboriginal community members (Palawa)

Members of the Tasmanian Parliament

State government representatives

Private sector stakeholders

Total participation across activities:

Approximately 70 attendees at the Parliament House event

14 participants at the Black Coffee gathering

Industry representation included:

Catering and hospitality

Creative industries (photography, videography, artists)

Cultural enterprises and cultural advisory services

Consultancy and professional services

Community engagement practitioners

Legal services and advisory

Trade waste management

Social enterprise and community services

Program Delivery & Activities

1. Truth Telling – From a Palawa Perspective

Gathering at Parliament House, Nipaluna/Hobart

This event created a platform for Aboriginal businesses and community members to engage directly with decision-makers through a luncheon, which hosted a panel conversation.

Key topics from the panel discussion included procurement barriers and opportunities, strengthening Aboriginal participation in business, policy and systems reform, self-determination and Treaty, cultural protocols in partnerships, the difference between consultation and self-determination, and embedding UNDRIP principles.

2. Black Coffee Gathering

Lazy Brunch Café – Nipaluna/ Hobart

An informal yarning session focused on strengthening relationships to enable a sustainable Aboriginal business sector and healthy community into the future. Aboriginal people don't often get the chance to catch up and check in with one another, this Black Coffee allowed people to connect, which enabled a variety of conversations, including supporting one another after the breakfast.

Key themes, insights & challenges:

Self-determination in economic development
Importance of Aboriginal-led spaces
Need for systemic reform
Recognition of Aboriginal enterprises as leaders
Procurement barriers
Lack of culturally appropriate legal frameworks
Limited access to practical tools and policy templates
System-level inequities

Key Learnings from Aboriginal Businesses

Participants consistently identified the need for practical, culturally appropriate business tools and governance frameworks, including core policy templates such as privacy, artificial intelligence, code of conduct, and psychosocial hazards and risks, alongside accessible legal agreements including contractor/subcontractor, intellectual property, non-disclosure, supply of goods, consultancy, and partnership agreements.

These resources—including tender terms and conditions templates are critical to protecting Aboriginal intellectual and cultural property, enabling fair and equitable contracting, strengthening confidence in engaging with government and corporate partners, and supporting long-term business sustainability and capacity building.

Continue to host Aboriginal events in at Parliament House, to enable the opportunity to educate politicians and learn from them.

Many Aboriginal people who are starting or already running businesses are guided by a social enterprise model, with community benefit at the centre of their work.

And the desire for a Treaty.

Participant reflections & feedback

"Having a space to speak directly with decision-makers was incredibly valuable."

"Connecting with other Aboriginal businesses builds confidence."

"Peer learning helps us navigate challenges together."

"Visibility amongst Government and industries"

Ripple effects & emerging outcomes

- Increased visibility of Aboriginal businesses.
- New collaborations and partnerships across industries.
- Recognition of Aboriginal business and community efforts.
- MP acknowledgement of Treaty in Parliament after our event.

- An Aboriginal photographer was also supported to expand into videography by capturing footage of the event.
- A new Aboriginal start-up was given her first opportunity through the Hub to photograph the Gathering at Parliament House.
- This was the first time in Tasmanian Parliament history that an external catering business was engaged to provide catering for an event.
- Politicians taking photographs with Aboriginal businesses and sharing on their social media pages to showcase the positive work of the Hub and most importantly Aboriginal businesses and Palawa.

The Palawa Business Hub SEDI Peer Learning & Support Community demonstrated the significant value of Aboriginal-led spaces in strengthening relationships, sharing knowledge, and advancing self-determined economic development.

Through meaningful engagement between Aboriginal businesses, community members, government, and industry, the initiative created lasting connections, amplified Aboriginal voices, and fostered opportunities for collaboration, visibility, and growth.

The learnings and outcomes from this program highlight the importance of continued investment in culturally safe, peer-led initiatives that empower Palawa people, support sustainable Aboriginal enterprise, and contribute to a stronger, more equitable future for Lutruwita/ Tasmania.



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Truth Telling – From a Palawa Perspective Gathering at Parliament House, Nipaluna/Hobart
Photos courtesy of from Jess Mansell Photography

