

Editorial Volume 1

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Abstract: This inaugural issue of the *International Journal of Indigenous Business* marks the establishment of a dedicated, Indigenous-led space for advancing scholarship, practice, and critical dialogue in Indigenous business. IJIB is an open-access, peer-reviewed journal with an international focus, committed to centring Indigenous voices, knowledges, and priorities across all areas of the Indigenous business discipline. The journal adopts a strengths-based approach that recognises Indigenous businesses and organisations as sites of leadership, innovation, and intellectual authority. It responds directly to the long-standing absence and marginalisation of Indigenous voices in academic literature on Indigenous business, where research has too often been conducted about Indigenous peoples rather than for, with and by them. IJIB prioritises Indigenous-led research and requires Indigenous authorship as a foundational principle of publication. This first issue brings together contributions from Indigenous scholars, practitioners, and business leaders from across the globe, reflecting the breadth and diversity of Indigenous business contexts, practices, and futures. Collectively, the articles demonstrate that Indigenous business is not a niche field but a vital and generative domain of knowledge that informs how organisations are led, economies are shaped, and futures are defined on Indigenous terms.

Keywords: Indigenous Business Knowledges

Introduction

The launch of the *International Journal of Indigenous Business* marks an important moment for Indigenous scholarship, practice, and leadership in business. This journal has been established not simply to add to an existing body of literature, but to shift how business is understood, researched, taught, and practised when Indigenous peoples define the terms.

Indigenous peoples have always engaged in sophisticated economic systems grounded in place, kinship, law, culture, and responsibility. Yet within mainstream business scholarship, Indigenous enterprise has too often been positioned as marginal, emergent, or in need of explanation through non-Indigenous frameworks. This journal begins from a different starting point. It recognises Indigenous business as intellectually generative, theoretically rich, and already offering viable models for economic life in a time of global uncertainty.

The contributions in this inaugural issue demonstrate the breadth and depth of Indigenous business scholarship across education, policy, enterprise, procurement, governance, and leadership. Together, they show that Indigenous business cannot be reduced to questions of participation or performance alone. Instead, business emerges as a site where purpose, place, community, and sovereignty intersect, shaping how success is defined and pursued.

Several papers in this issue engage directly with institutions that shape contemporary business practice, including universities, public sector systems, and corporate procurement regimes. These contributions do not seek inclusion on existing terms. They interrogate purpose, expose structural limitations, and articulate alternative logics grounded in Indigenous standpoints, priorities, and lived experience. In doing so, they challenge the assumption that mainstream business frameworks are neutral or universal, and instead reveal them as culturally and historically situated.

Other contributions centre Indigenous enterprise success as something defined by Indigenous peoples themselves. Drawing on diverse Indigenous voices, this issue foregrounds enterprise as collective, place-based, and future-

oriented. Success is not framed solely through profit or growth, but through community wellbeing, cultural continuity, environmental responsibility, and intergenerational impact. These papers make clear that Indigenous enterprises are not deviations from “real” business. They are expressions of long-standing economic traditions that continue to adapt, innovate, and lead.

The inclusion of the opening address delivered at the launch of this journal is intentional. It situates the International Journal of Indigenous Business within lived leadership and community responsibility, rather than abstract debate. The reflections shared in the opening address speak to the daily realities faced by Indigenous business leaders as they navigate cultural obligations within contemporary economic systems. These realities are not peripheral to business scholarship; they are central to understanding how business is practised in Indigenous contexts.

As Managing Editors, we are clear about the stance of this journal. The International Journal of Indigenous Business is Indigenous-led and Indigenous-centred. It values Indigenous methodologies, ethics, and ways of knowing as foundational, not supplementary. It does not support extractive research practices, deficit narratives, or work that treats Indigenous peoples as objects of study rather than knowledge holders and leaders. We welcome rigorous scholarship that is accountable to communities, grounded in context, and committed to contributing beyond the page.

Supported by the Indigenous Business Hub at The University of Queensland Business School, the journal has a global remit. Indigenous business scholarship transcends institutional, disciplinary, and geographic boundaries, existing wherever Indigenous peoples determine their futures on their own terms.

This first edition sets the direction for what follows. It signals a journal that platforms Indigenous business as a field of knowledge, practice, and leadership. We invite scholars, practitioners, policymakers, and community leaders to engage with this work, to challenge it, to build on it, and to contribute to a growing body of scholarship that reflects the diversity, strength, and vision of Indigenous business globally.

The contributions that follow give form to this commitment. Together, they demonstrate the breadth of Indigenous business scholarship, spanning enterprise, education, policy, governance, and leadership, while remaining grounded in Indigenous priorities, contexts, and lived experience. The first edition covers a range of topics roughly grouped in themes; opening address, historical accounts of Indigenous business, Indigenous enterprise, wicked problems within Indigenous business, employment and business education.

Opening Address: Launch of the international Journal of Indigenous Business

This article is such an important contribution to the journal, it was written by Baringa Barambah and delivered at the launch of the IJIB in 2025. In this opening address, Barambah reflects on the lived realities of First Nations business leadership, drawing on her experiences as a Turrbal woman balancing cultural responsibility within contemporary organisational and commercial settings. She explores how Indigenous leaders centre culture, community, and Country in decision-making while engaging with systems that privilege speed and narrow definitions of success. Through three interrelated challenges, Baringa shows how Indigenous leaders lead with cultural protocols, assert the value of Indigenous knowledges, and embrace collective responsibility as strength. The address positions First Nations organisations not as exceptions to mainstream business, but as offering grounded, transferable approaches to leadership and sustainability.

The Past to the Future: The National Indigenous Business & Economic Conferences (NIBEC) Footprint

The National Indigenous Business & Economic Conferences (NIBEC) of 1993 and 1995 were landmark Indigenous-led interventions that shaped Australia’s Indigenous business and economic development agenda in the wake of the Mabo decision. This article traces NIBEC’s influence from 1993 to 2025, assessing its relevance against contemporary equity, diversity and inclusion agendas, Indigenous procurement policy, and the expanding Indigenous Estate. Using a qualitative historical review structured around the NIBEC facilitators’ triad of political, support, and financial structures, the paper shows how early calls for a national business voice, supplier registers, procurement levers, and Indigenous-led finance anticipated later developments such as Supply Nation, Indigenous chambers alliances, and the Indigenous Procurement Policy. Despite these gains, persistent gaps remain, including the absence of a nationally mandated peak body, uneven capability across jurisdictions, limited access to finance, and unresolved issues around business definition and asset protection. The article argues that NIBEC’s original work program remains a valid diagnostic and proposes a renewed national forum to advance First Nations-led economic self-determination and sovereignty.

Moments in Time: A systematic review of Indigenous business research 1999-2019

This article presents a systematic review of Indigenous business research published between 1999 and 2019, critically examining how the field has developed and how effectively it supports Indigenous business practice and education. Analysing 127 empirical studies, the authors identify strong growth in research output, particularly in the past decade, but note persistent structural limitations. Indigenous business research is heavily concentrated in high-income countries, remote contexts, and sectors such as tourism and agriculture, with urban, regional, and developing-country contexts underrepresented. The review highlights inconsistent definitions of Indigenous business, limited application and reporting of Indigenous methodologies, and a dominance of western theoretical frameworks within business schools. While some progress has been made toward hybrid and Indigenous-informed theory, Indigenous voices remain marginalised in what is considered “quality” business research. The authors propose a conceptual framework and clear recommendations to advance Indigenous-led, methodologically rigorous, and practically relevant research that better supports Indigenous economic self-determination.

Indigenous Enterprise Success: In Our Peoples’ Voices

This article reconceptualises Indigenous enterprise success by centring the lived experiences and worldviews of First Peoples in Australia, Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand, and Indigenous Ugandans. Drawing on three Indigenous-led qualitative studies, the authors challenge profit-centric, western definitions of success and instead foreground relational, cultural, spiritual, and intergenerational dimensions. Indigenous methodologies—including yarning, kaupapa Māori, and Ubuntu philosophy—are employed to elevate Indigenous epistemologies and disrupt deficit-based and extractive research traditions. The paper introduces a Triadic Relational Model that frames enterprise success as a dynamic interplay between people, place, and purpose, grounded in collective wellbeing, stewardship of land, and self-determination. Across all contexts, success is understood as sustaining culture, strengthening community, and enabling future generations, rather than maximising short-term financial returns. The authors argue that Indigenous entrepreneurship represents a form of resurgence and offers a decolonised alternative to dominant economic narratives, particularly in times of global economic instability.

Beyond Compliance: Black Cladding, Indigenous Procurement, and the Realising of Economic Sovereignty

This article examines *Black cladding*—the superficial or fraudulent representation of Indigenous ownership in business—as a structural failure of Indigenous procurement policy rather than a series of isolated misconducts. Using a Relational Indigenist Framework that integrates Indigenist Critical Policy Analysis with Aboriginal Terms of Reference, the paper critiques Australia’s Indigenous Procurement Policy (IPP) for privileging bureaucratic compliance, efficiency, and market logics over Indigenous governance, cultural legitimacy, and self-determination. It argues that Black cladding emerges where Indigeneity is reduced to an administrative category, enabling non-Indigenous actors to access benefits intended for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses while displacing legitimate enterprises. The analysis demonstrates that these practices cause material, cultural, and systemic harm, including the erosion of relational Indigenous business models grounded in reciprocity, custodianship, and community accountability. Drawing on international comparisons and UNDRIP principles, the paper concludes that procurement reform must embed Indigenous-led authority, verification, and governance to reposition procurement as a mechanism of economic sovereignty and structural justice.

Between Culture and Context: What Shapes Māori Perspectives on Capitalism and Government Regulation?

This article presents the outcomes of a multidisciplinary research initiative conducted collaboratively between leading academic institutions in Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia. The investigation addresses a critical issue within the social sciences, centring on Indigenous perspectives—particularly those of Māori communities—in the context of capitalism and government regulation. Employing innovative and inclusive methodologies, the study foregrounds Indigenous voices and knowledge systems, ensuring that cultural context and lived experience are integral to both the research process and its interpretation. By prioritising cross-cultural understanding, the research offers fresh insights and highlights the necessity of culturally responsive approaches in social inquiry. The findings underscore the value of sustained academic collaboration and ongoing dialogue between institutions, while also emphasising the importance of empowering Indigenous communities in shaping research agendas. This work serves as a valuable resource for scholars and practitioners seeking to engage thoughtfully with the broader societal implications of Indigenous perspectives on economic and regulatory frameworks.

Indigenous Women's Inclusion in the Workplace: Setting the Blak Agenda

This article examines Indigenous women's workplace experiences through an Indigenous standpoint grounded in Indigenous Feminist Theory, Intersectionality, and Critical Race Theory. It argues that employment inequity is not accidental but a structural outcome of ongoing colonisation, embedded racism, sexism, and white institutional power. Centring Blak women's voices, the research uses yarning and storytelling as sovereign Indigenous knowledge practices to expose how systemic racism, cultural load, shadeism, and gendered expectations shape labour market participation, wellbeing, and career progression. Drawing on extensive empirical research and national data, the paper demonstrates how colonial workplace structures produce a "white ceiling" that marginalises Indigenous women while demanding constant cultural labour and cross-cultural code-switching. Rather than positioning Indigenous women through deficit narratives, the study foregrounds resistance, leadership, resilience, and agency. It calls for decolonised, culturally safe workplaces that recognise Indigenous governance, remunerate cultural labour, and move beyond tokenistic inclusion. The paper ultimately frames workplace transformation as essential to Indigenous self-determination, sovereignty, and justice.

Identified Positions in Queensland: A Discussion on Purpose, Practice, and Possibilities

This discussion paper critically examines the purpose, practice, and possibilities of identified positions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Queensland. Drawing on Indigenous standpoint theory and early-stage qualitative PhD research, the paper interrogates how identified roles are legislatively enabled, organisationally interpreted, and culturally experienced. While identified positions are intended to address employment inequities and recognise Indigenous cultural knowledge under section 25 of the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (Qld), the paper argues that the absence of a clear legal definition has resulted in inconsistent application, confusion, and, at times, tokenism. Using personal reflection, literature analysis, and emerging insights from research topic yarning sessions, the author highlights tensions between equity-driven intentions and compliance-based practices, including the risk of unrecognised cultural load. The paper contributes to Indigenous employment scholarship by centring Indigenous voices and calls for clearer purpose, Indigenous-led co-design, and stronger organisational accountability to ensure identified positions foster genuine inclusion and structural change rather than symbolic representation.

Stepping into Standpoints: Indigenous Standpoints Guiding Decolonial Reflexivity in Business Education

This article argues that Indigenous Standpoint Theory (IST) is essential for guiding decolonial reflexivity and meaningful transformation in business education. Responding to the persistence of colonial and Eurocentric knowledge systems within business schools, the authors call on non-Indigenous academics to engage Indigenous standpoints not as supplementary content, but as epistemic foundations that challenge dominant paradigms. Drawing on Indigenous scholarship, lived experience, and pedagogical practice, the paper demonstrates how Indigenous standpoints—expressed through story, art, data, and relational practice—disrupt extractive, capitalist logics embedded in curricula, pedagogy, and institutional culture. Using the Indigenisation spectrum and the concept of parallax, the authors show how reflexive engagement with multiple standpoints can expose power, privilege, and epistemic exclusion. The paper positions IST as both theory and praxis, demanding relational accountability, ethical allyship, and structural change. Ultimately, it contends that centring Indigenous knowledge is a necessary condition for an ethical, inclusive, and decolonised future for business education.

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