

Impact North

First Nations Women
in Social Enterprise Forum -
Nhulunbuy & Yirrkala

9-11th October, 2023

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Project Background

Purpose

ELP believes that entrepreneurship is the most powerful tool for remote entrepreneurs to effect change. Entrepreneurs grow businesses that create local employment, economic opportunity and financial independence. Through business, entrepreneurs also share culture, expand their leadership skills, self-determine their futures and inspire their community.

Together with women Yolngu leaders, ELP designed and delivered a First Nations Women in Business Forum in Nhulunbuy and Yirrkala, East Arnhem Land. The Forum was delivered over three days, incorporating a series of intimate events, workshops and networking opportunities along with a final public forum that supported First Nations women from the region to build stronger networks, form new connections, upskill in business concepts and be inspired by other First Nations women in business from East Arnhem and the broader Northern Australian region. The Forum was co-designed with female Yolngu business leaders and we engaged First Nations women and their businesses, both from East Arnhem and beyond, to participate as speakers, facilitators and trainers. The Forum elevated the voices, experiences and achievements of First Nations women in business, whilst also providing valuable skills workshops and supportive networking opportunities.



Activities

A three-day series of moments to connect, ideate and learn from each other.

MONDAY

Dinner + Welcome event

A late afternoon/early evening event to welcome those who have travelled into town, and provide an opportunity for everyone to meet each other and meet key members of the community. The goal of this event was to support the out-of-town speakers to get to know the local context and meet with local people so that they understand more about the community, and for the local representatives to have one-on-one time with the people coming in that can help spark new ideas and build relationships that may extend beyond the forum. This event included an exclusive screening of *Märrma Wänga*, a documentary showcasing Australian Photographer Simon Upton on his journey into the remote Indigenous community of Milingimbi in East Arnhem Land. The documentary featured our Executive Director Liandra Gaykamangu and her niece Tarlisa Gaykamangu's rise in the modelling industry walking in a Bottega Veneta runway show in Milan, Italy. The welcome dinner and documentary set the scene for the forum, sharing the message that a dream, coupled with a supportive ecosystem to nurture talent, is key to turning aspirations into reality.



TUESDAY

Social Enterprise and Indigenous Women Entrepreneur panel

This saw a diverse group of Indigenous business leaders come together commencing with a panel discussion. MC Lateesha Jeffrey, from Wave of Change Consultancy, was joined by panelists Liandra Gaykamangu, Michelle On, Sarah Hyland, Kylie Lee-Bradford. The conversation focused on their individual journeys and offered insights into growing successful businesses whilst juggling family life and cultural responsibilities. Following the panel discussion we moved into smaller groups that saw our Indigenous business leaders hold workshops on a range of topics that included: Finance, Business 101, Marketing and Branding and an insightful Bush Foods Workshop.

WEDNESDAY

Q&A with Sylvia Nulpindtj & Miyalk (Yolngu Women) in Business Networking Event

Sylvia is a Yolngu women from Milingimbi, East Arnhem Land. She is a business owner, cultural facilitator, radio presenter and producer. Sylvia was interviewed by Lateesha Jeffrey and spoke to attendees about themes specific to our audience including: being an Indigenous woman in business, being and having role models, accessing support from the right organisations, and the role of family in business.

This final event also provided an opportunity for local businesses to sell their products, (including Yirralka Miyalk Bush Products and Yolngu Culture and Arts) and for Yolngu women to network with the speakers, presenters from the Forum and further discuss their business ideas, way of getting started and the support available to them.



Facilitators, speakers & subcontractors

Impact North engaged a wide range of Indigenous organisations and First Nations women to support the Forum through paid employment opportunities. We contracted the following:

- Our highly skilled & successful workshop facilitators and panel speakers:
 - Liandra Gaymkamangu, ELP & Liandra Swim
 - Sarah Hyland, Founder, Together Business Australia
 - Selena Stewart, CBB, Relationship Manager NT
 - Sylvia Nulpinditj, Cultural Facilitator, Radio Announcer and Producer
 - Alinta McGuire, Westpac
 - Michelle On, Founder, Kiril Park Wild Harvest
 - Kylie-Lee Bradford, Founder, Kakadu Tiny Tots
- Our MC for the three day Forum, Lateesha Jeffrey, Yolngu woman and founder of Wave of Change Consultancy.
- Jacinta Donald, a young & talented photographer & videographer from Elcho Island, Galiwinku.
- The Welcome to Country was delivered by Rirratjingu Aboriginal Corporation.
- Catering by the Miyalk at the Yirrkala Cafe. The Yirrkala Cafe is a community project and business created under the CDP Program to deliver local employment opportunities and skill development.



Content highlights

Our incredible facilitators led powerful workshops and participants were strongly engaged in these workshops. Workshop topics and discussions covered some of the following:

- Branding & marketing
- Ideation and talking about business
- E-commerce
- Wholesale product creation
- Transferable skills
- Social capital
- Goal setting, remote work
- Money management and tools
- Tax + GST
- Career paths in harvesting
- IP – protecting traditional knowledge
- Connecting Health and Wellness



Participant feedback

92%

of participants agreed they learnt more about business and social enterprise.

58%

of participants said they had grown in confidence to take the next steps in business, and

33%

said they might have grown in confidence.

92%

of participants rated the speakers and workshop facilitators as excellent.

50%

of participants said they developed new skills.

92%

of participants said they would recommend this forum to friends and family.

“Amazing. Worthwhile attending”

“I enjoyed the Forum, a lot of new things to learn about empowerment”

“Sadly came for day only. Talking business means more days.”



Speaker & Workshop Facilitator feedback

Over the course of the Forum our speakers and facilitators engaged deeply with our participants, building up an understanding of their current situation, capacity for business, appetite for starting a business, family and access to resources and supports. Our contracted First Nations Businesswomen were able to provide practical, culturally contextual, and relevant information for our attendees.

Post-event feedback with speaker & facilitators confirmed the overwhelming success of the event.

Each of the speakers surveyed agreed:

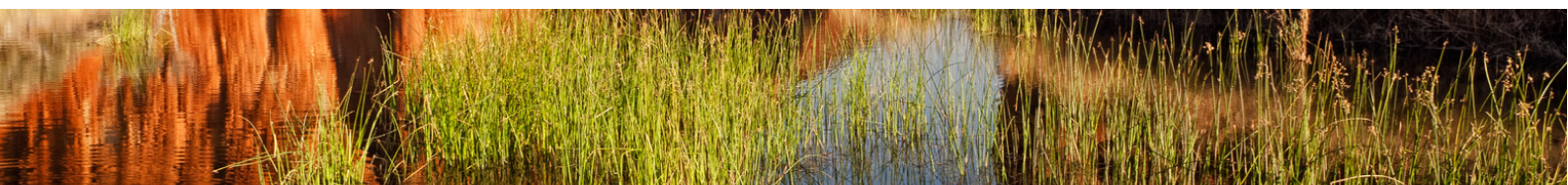
- This forum provided an opportunity for them to connect and share their unique business experience with First Nations Women.
- There was opportunity and they provided participants the support to take the next steps in business.
- They expanded their professional network.

“..it gave me opportunity to share and engage with other successful business women and with yolŋu women as well. It was very important they shared collective knowledge, informations and skills by trying to make us understand which was a bit of overwhelming but it was good to see yolŋu participants and myself involved in the workshop.”

“The remote space is a space that I’ve deliberately not stepped into because I know it comes with a certain level of responsibility. So being invited was a big deal and its always been something I’ve had in the back of my mind - the Forum was insightful as to what financial programs might be suitable in a remote setting”

“Participants expressed their need for more of these opportunities / events and engagements and don’t want to be forgotten about.”

ELP assesses the performance of speakers and facilitators as incredibly high. Speakers and facilitators were knowledgeable and experts in their field. They were flexible and tailored their workshops to the needs of their groups and provided comprehensive and practical support, in a culturally informed way, through a female First Nations lens.







“I say that most Australians.. in general think.. of someone like myself not achieving in the mainstream. And, no matter what comments, remarks about me, I’m not them. I’m me, and I’m not there for them. I’m just here to inspire my mob, especially mothers, grandmothers, who are my age group, and maybe young women not just in my community, but in other communities across the board.”

– Sylvia Nulpinditj



“Go to networking events where there is women that inspire you. Sometimes it is daunting, but when you talk with another entrepreneur they will empower you. Find them, and grab them and keep them in your circle.”

– Kylie-Lee Bradford



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