

Meso-level evaluation of Deadly Innovation

Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport

31 January 2023



Nous Group acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging, who maintain their culture, country and spiritual connection to the land, sea and community.

This artwork was developed by Marcus Lee Design to reflect Nous Group's Reconciliation Action Plan and our aspirations for respectful and productive engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

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1 Acknowledgement

Nous Group acknowledges the work, input and contributions that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, businesses and communities across Queensland have made through Deadly Innovation towards supporting this evaluation. The evaluation was strengthened by the experiences and expertise of stakeholders from across the Indigenous business and innovation community, and Nous Group is grateful for the willingness and collaborative spirit in which they were shared with us.

Nous Group also acknowledges the significant contribution made by members of the evaluation's Co-design Group towards designing the evaluation and shaping its findings to ensure it delivers maximum value to both Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities, and government.

2 Key terms used in this report

Indigenous

This report uses the terminology Indigenous to refer broadly to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples – the First Australians. This terminology has been adopted due to its use in the Deadly Innovation Strategy document when describing Indigenous businesses, innovators and communities.

Stakeholders involved in the delivery of the Deadly Innovation portfolio

A diverse range of stakeholders have contributed to the delivery of the Deadly Innovation portfolio. For the purposes of this evaluation, they have been categorised into four groups:

1. Innovation Senior Executives
2. Deadly Innovation program staff
 - Director, Regional Engagement
 - Deadly Innovation Program Manager
 - Deadly Innovation Policy Advisor
3. Innovation division staff supporting Deadly Innovation
 - Contract and Investment Management
 - Finance
 - Regional Innovation
 - Program Design and Insights
4. Deadly Innovation delivery partners
 - Staff from other government agencies (e.g. the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries [DAF], TAFE Queensland)
 - Subcontracted individuals
 - Businesses (e.g. Iscariot Media)

Departmental names

Since inception in 2017, Deadly Innovation has been designed and delivered by the Innovation division, which has been in a number of different agencies, due to Machinery of Government changes:

- Department of Innovation, Tourism Industry Development and the Commonwealth Games (DITID)
- Department of State Development, Tourism and Innovation (DSDTI)
- Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport (DTIS)

For ease of reference, this report generally uses “the department” or “departmental” rather than the individual names of departments, unless it is in reference to a specific document e.g. the DITID Indigenous Participation Plan, or clarity is needed as to which department the Innovation division was located within at the time.

Acronym	Definition
ADF	Australian Defence Force
AES	Australian Evaluation Society
AI	artificial intelligence
AQ	Advance Queensland
BIRG	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Business and Innovation Reference Group
ASC	Aboriginal Shire Council
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DAF	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
DAIDF	Defence and Aerospace Industry Development Fund
DSDSATSIP	Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships
DES	Department of Environment and Sciences
DESBT	Department of Employment, Small Business and Training
DITID	Department of Innovation, Tourism Industry Development and the Commonwealth Games
DSDILGP	Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning
DTIS	Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport
IIEP	One Business Indigenous Innovation and Entrepreneur Pathways
ILSC	Indigenous Land and Sea Council
INFP	Indigenous Native Food Program
IPP	Indigenous Participation Plan
KLE	Key Lines of Enquiry
MEGT	Melbourne Eastern Group Training
QIC	Queensland Investment Corporation
QIPP	Queensland Indigenous Procurement Policy

Acronym	Definition
QRON	Queensland Register of Nominees
RAP	Reconciliation Action Plan
SEQICC	South East Queensland Indigenous Chambers of Commerce

3 Report on a page

The report on a page was developed in collaboration with the Co-design Group to communicate the key findings of the report in a way that is accessible to the Indigenous community. The Co-design Group identified that the primary audience for the report on a page were Indigenous community leaders and prospective participants in Deadly Innovation programs and initiatives. The Co-design Group distilled the key findings of the report relevant to this audience, with consideration as to how the report on a page might also be used to showcase Deadly Innovation to a broader audience including government and the business community.

Deadly Innovation Evaluation

BACKGROUND

From July to December 2022, Nous Group conducted an evaluation of Deadly Innovation to understand its success and effectiveness and to inform the way the Queensland Government supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. This document shares the evaluation's key findings.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Nous Group acknowledges the work, input and contributions that Indigenous people, businesses and communities across Queensland have made through Deadly Innovation towards supporting this evaluation.

DEADLY INNOVATION IS A RANGE OF INVESTMENTS, ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES INCLUDING:

BACKING CHANGE AGENTS

to deliver projects that create wealth and self-determination in community.

BUILDING CAPABILITY

through supporting access to training and learning pathways, including scholarships, training programs and mentoring that lead to real jobs.

INFLUENCING OTHERS

to create shared success across government, industry, investors and Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities by shaping policies and practices and building collaboration.

CO-DESIGNED WITH INDIGENOUS INNOVATORS AND BUSINESS LEADERS

The Deadly Innovation Strategy was co-designed with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Business and Innovation Reference Group (BIRG) alongside other key stakeholders.

The Deadly Innovation Strategy outlines a culturally responsive approach to engaging with, supporting, and partnering with Indigenous communities, businesses and innovators to create jobs and generate wealth. The Strategy identified three critical actions for DTIS:

SHARE
opportunities and supports with Indigenous businesses and their communities

HEAR
from Indigenous voices through authentic engagement

ACTIVATE
communities and businesses through change agents and empowering self-determination

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE DELIVERY

RELATIONSHIPS AND TRUST WERE KEYS TO SUCCESS

The below four key elements were critical to achieving the strong relationships between government and Indigenous communities, businesses and innovators:

MOVING AT THE SPEED OF TRUST

Investing time in building personal and genuine cultural relationships at both the individual and community level.

BUILDING MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Shared high expectations between government and participants to make and fulfil commitments.

ACTIVATING CHANGE AGENTS

Recognising and empowering change agents and champions within communities to build coalitions of the willing and drive shared success.

MEETING PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE AT

Supporting innovators, businesses and communities on the ground with the support that they wanted.

*"We are looking to the future - it feels like there are people around us supporting us, that believe in us and are supporting us in our journey."
- Program participant from Deadly Innovation*

*"I never would have dreamed that I could become a successful business owner, let alone to be competitive in a med tech space that is not commonly occupied by Indigenous people, particularly Indigenous women."
- Deadly Deals recipient*

*The sense of cultural safety flowed from the pride of staff in the work they do, their ability to be able to talk in both yarning and educating terms, and through open and honest conversations."
- Deadly Innovation grant recipient*

COMMUNITY-FIRST APPROACH

Support went directly to Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities to create jobs, generate wealth and grow confidence and skills to engage in innovation.

\$1m

Funding for Indigenous business, innovators and communities to grow their businesses

100+

Businesses and innovators supported and trained in core business and innovation skills

50+

Jobs created and supported with more forecast to come

51

Scholarships supported Indigenous students to study at TAFE

CASE STUDY: ACTIVATING AUSTRALIA'S FIRST COMMUNITY-OWNED SERVICE CENTRE

Deadly Innovation helped establish Australia's first community-owned and operated not-for-profit Service Centre in Cherbourg. The Service Centre supports Fujitsu and other large clients as a full-service contact centre providing phone and IT support to customers.

The Service Centre has created more than 10 jobs in Cherbourg, with more on the way following strong interest from industry and government.

Through training for its staff, the Service Centre provides career pathways in technology and digital skills related roles.

*"The service centre has shown to me that I can do something that I never had the self-belief or confidence to do. I never thought I could be a part of this digital job and it has meant so much to me."
- Service centre employee*



4 Executive Summary

This report presents findings and lessons learned for the Queensland Government from the meso-level evaluation of Deadly Innovation, a component of the Advance Queensland initiative that seeks to deliver jobs and economic wealth for Indigenous peoples.

This evaluation was commissioned by the Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport (DTIS) and conducted by Nous Group (Nous) from July to December 2022 with the objective of generating insights to inform decisions to better target future investment and enhance the delivery of targeted and mainstream programs to ensure an inclusive approach to innovation driven economic growth.

4.1 Deadly Innovation

In 2017, the Queensland Government committed to create more pathways for Indigenous people through participation in the innovation economy.

To deliver on this commitment, the (then) Department of Innovation, Tourism Industry Development and the Commonwealth Games (DITID), the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Business and Innovation Reference Group (BIRG) and key stakeholders co-designed the [Deadly Innovation Strategy](#)¹ (the Strategy).

The Strategy sits under the broader [Advance Queensland](#)² (AQ) initiative, and aligns with the three themes outlined in the [Queensland Reconciliation Action Plan 2018-21](#)³ (RAP) – Relationships, Respect and Opportunity.

The three core aims of the Strategy – Hear, Share and Activate – are both the stated objectives of the Strategy, and a guide for government for placing Indigenous innovators, businesses and their communities at the centre to support them to “walk their own pathway to success”⁴.

Figure 1 | Deadly Innovation Strategy aims aligned to Queensland RAP 2018-21

RELATIONSHIPS	AIM 1	RESPECT	AIM 2	OPPORTUNITIES	AIM 3
	Government will hear, by identifying and supporting a pathway for Indigenous businesses and innovators to achieve success.		Government will share, by broadening access to existing opportunities.		Government will activate, by securing funding and backing feasible deals.

To deliver on the government commitment and subsequent aims of the Strategy, a core team was established within the Innovation division of the department, and a budget of \$2.5 million was allocated from the overarching AQ budget (the Deadly Innovation Fund), subsequently increased to \$2.75 million in 2020.

Additional AQ funding of approximately \$1.85 million was also committed to programs and activities that contribute to the aims of the Deadly Innovation Strategy, and a range “extension activities” were also undertaken in partnership with other Government agencies.

For the purposes of this evaluation, “Deadly Innovation” is considered to be the following portfolio of three categories of activities. Figure 2 outlines the individual elements that constitute the respective categories.

¹ [Advance Queensland Deadly Innovation Strategy, 2019](#)

² [Advance Queensland](#)

³ [Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan, 2018 - 2021](#)

⁴ [Advance Queensland Deadly Innovation Strategy, 2019](#) (page 8)

Figure 2 | Three categories of activities collectively make up the Deadly Innovation portfolio



4.2 Purpose of this evaluation

This meso-level evaluation was commissioned to understand the effectiveness of Deadly Innovation, and to generate insights to improve the future design and performance of programs to ensure an inclusive approach to innovation and economic growth. It aimed to understand how effectively the Deadly Innovation approach, including the modalities of investments, activities and initiatives responded to the needs and strengths of Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities.

Importantly, the evaluation approach has been informed by a co-design process to ensure it is culturally safe, appropriate and meaningful, and adhered to cultural safety principles and Indigenous data sovereignty principles.

This meso-level evaluation specifically focuses on:

- **Process:** examining the core characteristics of the Deadly Innovation approach, and the extent to which the design, implementation and delivery of Deadly Innovation has been successful.
- **Effectiveness:** examining the extent to which the Deadly Innovation portfolio of investments, activities and initiatives achieve its intended outcomes and contribute to Advance Queensland more broadly, as well as how effectively the Deadly Innovation approach responded to the needs of Indigenous innovators and communities to achieve outcomes for key stakeholders, including government and Indigenous innovators.
- **Lessons learned:** examining what lessons can be drawn from the design, implementation and delivery of Deadly Innovation, and how they could be applied or replicated to inform future design and performance of programs to create an inclusive approach to innovation and economic growth.

The evaluation was designed with an appreciative enquiry approach designed to assist the department to amplify the strengths of Deadly Innovation. With this frame, the evaluation sought to better understand what has made Deadly Innovation successful through the process evaluation, to capture this success through the effectiveness evaluation, and draw lessons learned from this success to inform future programming and policy. To achieve this, Nous engaged closely with Deadly Innovation program staff and departmental staff through the Co-design under an appreciative enquiry approach.

Five key lines of enquiry (KLEs) were developed to guide analysis across the three focusses of this evaluation (see Figure 3).

Figure 3 | Key lines of enquiry (KLEs)

PROCESS		EFFECTIVENESS		LESSONS LEARNED
KLE 1	KLE 2	KLE 3	KLE 4	KLE 5
To what extent has the design, implementation and delivery of Deadly Innovation been successful, and why?	What are the core characteristics of the Deadly Innovation approach?	To what extent did the Deadly Innovation portfolio of investments, activities and initiatives achieve its intended outcomes (Hear, Share, Activate) and contribute to Advance Queensland more broadly?	How effectively did the Deadly Innovation approach respond to the needs of Indigenous innovators and communities to achieve outcomes for key stakeholders, including government and Indigenous innovators?	What lessons learned from the design, implementation and delivery of Deadly Innovation can be applied or replicated to inform future design and performance of programs to create an inclusive approach to innovation and economic growth?

This report presents findings based on qualitative and quantitative analysis of available data and outputs from stakeholder consultations.

The findings and opportunities in this report aim to inform future Queensland Government decision-making and priorities. They have been tested and refined with input from the Deadly Innovation evaluation Co-design Group which comprises members central to the development and delivery of Deadly Innovation, external stakeholders, and members of the evaluation project team.

4.3 Key findings

This section provides key findings relating to the process and effectiveness evaluations (KLEs 1–4). Detailed findings can be found in Section 6 of the report.

Key findings: Deadly Innovation has successfully delivered a broad range of programs, initiatives and investments

- The decision to commence with the development of a transformative strategy with high-level actions rather than a “typical program” gave the department the flexibility to respond to the needs of Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities.
- Quantifying the success of the delivery of Deadly Innovation and monitoring and reporting on its progress as a portfolio is difficult due to the flexible and organic approach to delivery laid out in the Strategy and limited reporting processes.
- Participation from Indigenous businesses and communities in Deadly Innovation activities has generally been strong, with participation rates meeting expectations of Deadly Innovation program staff and delivery partners.
- A core element of the Deadly Innovation approach was supporting Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities to apply for funding.

Interviews with all staff involved in the design and delivery of Deadly Innovation and external stakeholders reflected a high level of confidence that Deadly Innovation has been successfully delivered according to the intent of the Strategy. This finding was supported by a qualitative review of approval documentation for AQ funded activities, which provide alignment with relevant aspects of the Strategy. Limited design documentation of the Deadly Innovation extension activities (e.g. DITID Indigenous Participation Plan) was provided to the evaluation, but through interviews with Deadly Innovation program staff, these extension activities are considered aligned to the Strategy aim of “Share”.

The flexible and high-level design of the Strategy creates challenges in terms of reporting on progress and quantifying the success of the delivery. However key outputs that were reported through program documentation include:

- Providing direct funding of \$1 million across 16 Indigenous businesses, innovators and communities to support the growth of their businesses.
- Leveraging co-funding of \$1.2 million from a range of sources across government and industry to support Deadly Innovation activities.
- Influencing government policy and processes across at least 4 Queensland Government departments.
- Registering 200 Indigenous businesses for the One Business program.
- Supporting 51 Indigenous students with scholarships to study STEAM courses at TAFE.
- Providing in-depth support to 129 Indigenous businesses through COVID-19.
- Providing mentoring and training to over 100 Indigenous individuals and businesses in core business and innovation skills.

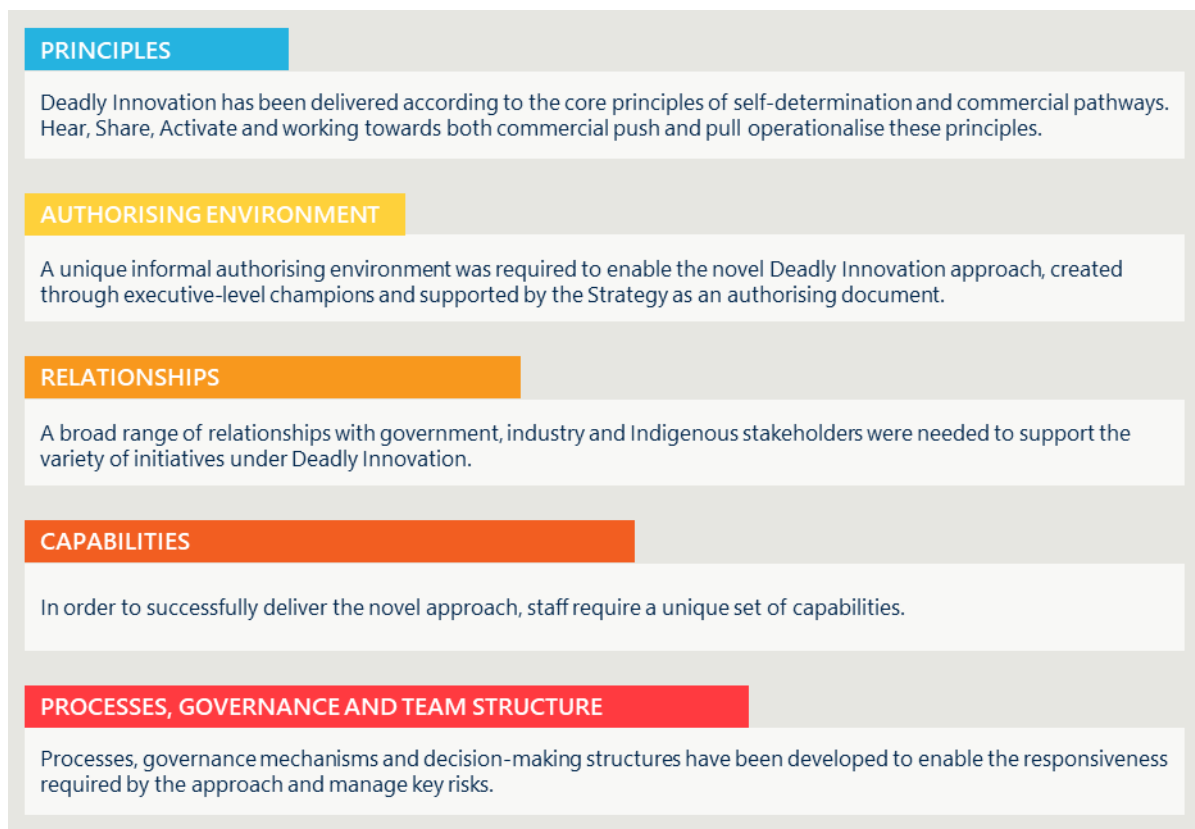
One of the most significant intangible outputs of the Deadly Innovation portfolio is its successful leveraging of in-kind support from organisations, businesses and other government departments in terms of volunteer work, staff time, equipment and facilities provided at low or no cost. While it is not possible to quantify the value of this in-kind support, it is important for the evaluation to recognise it as a core output contributing to successful delivery. However, the potential reliance of the Deadly Innovation portfolio on in-kind support is a risk to its sustainability.

Key findings: Deadly Innovation has developed a novel approach to supporting Indigenous innovation guided by deeply held core principles

- The Deadly Innovation approach evolved to enable agile and organic delivery, keeping Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities at the centre.
- Deadly Innovation has been delivered according to the core principles of self-determination and commercial pathways.
- A unique informal authorising environment was required to enable the novel approach, created through executive-level champions and supported by the co-designed Strategy as an authorising document.
- A broad range of relationships with government, industry and Indigenous stakeholders were needed to support the variety of initiatives under Deadly Innovation.
- A unique set of capabilities is required for staff to successfully deliver the novel approach.

Through engagement with Deadly Innovation staff and departmental leadership, the evaluation has identified key elements of the novel Deadly Innovation approach to supporting Indigenous innovation. The Deadly Innovation approach was not designed and structured according to these key elements, rather, these elements have evolved in response to challenges, risks and opportunities throughout delivery.

Figure 4 | Key elements of the Deadly Innovation approach



The evaluation highlighted several key characteristics of Deadly Innovation, driven by this novel approach to supporting Indigenous innovation:

Strengths-based approach

Both the Strategy and the implementation approach for Deadly Innovation were led by a deliberate focus on the strengths of the Indigenous community. Staff involved in the design and delivery of Deadly Innovation articulated the importance of recognising and amplifying these strengths, rather than adopting a deficit approach that primarily seeks to remediate marginalisation. “We’re in the hope space” was quoted several times by Deadly Innovation program staff throughout evaluation interviews, capturing this sentiment.

Shared understanding of self-determination and commercial pathways

Interviews with staff involved in the design and delivery of Deadly Innovation highlighted their shared understanding and the influence of core principles of Deadly Innovation Strategy: self-determination and commercial pathways. Collectively, these mutually reinforcing principles guided operations and decision-making throughout the design and delivery of Deadly Innovation.

Deadly Innovation positions government as a facilitator and enabler, supporting Indigenous businesses and innovators to be the voice of, and agents for change; emphasising self-determination as the driver for achieving this change sustainably. The evaluation found strong qualitative evidence that Deadly Innovation has strengthened the ability and confidence of Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities to engage in innovation.

The commercial intent of Deadly Innovation, and the emphasis placed on the commercial viability of participants’ products and services, further strengthened and supported self-determination. This dual focus on both supporting a business and ensuring there is a market for the business is conceptualised throughout this evaluation report as working towards both commercial push and pull. This recognises that for a business to be successful, there must be both a seller with the capability and capacity to sell a quality product, and a buyer that is committed to purchasing it. The evaluation found that Deadly Innovation program staff share a deep understanding of this concept, and have successfully found and connected buyers with sellers.

Innovation in the Indigenous context

Deadly Innovation built on Advance Queensland’s focus on innovation as a driver of economic growth and job creation,⁵ adopting a broad interpretation that recognised both the traditional strengths of Indigenous communities in innovating, solving challenges and adapting,⁶ and the different starting points and needs of many Indigenous businesses, innovators and communities compared to non-Indigenous peers and cohorts.

Strong relationships and connections between government, Indigenous businesses and communities and industry

A broad range of relationships with government, industry and Indigenous stakeholders were needed to support the variety of initiatives under Deadly Innovation. These relationships, which the evaluation has found to have had a significant and positive impact across the breadth of the Deadly Innovation portfolio, included:

- Positioning and leveraging the BIRG as both the conduit and the intersection between the Indigenous business community and the Queensland Government.
- Trusted relationships with decision makers and key influencers within communities and industry, which were essential to mobilising support.

⁵ [Building our Innovation Economy: Advance Queensland Strategy, 2019](#)

⁶ See Executive Summary of [Advance Queensland Deadly Innovation Strategy, 2019](#)

- Strong connections to Indigenous business networks and meetups across the state, which directly resulted in increased applications and participant engagement.
- Connecting non-Indigenous Deadly Innovation service providers with Indigenous organisations to build cultural competence and provide cultural advice and leadership.
- A broad network of specialists across government and the private sector, which enabled tailored support for the wide variety of business types and sectors that are involved in Deadly Innovation.

KLE 3: To what extent did the Deadly Innovation portfolio of investments, activities and initiatives achieve its intended outcomes (Hear, Share, Activate)? (Effectiveness)

3



Hear: Deadly Innovation has successfully built trust and relationships with Indigenous peoples and communities

Key findings

- Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities place a high level of value and trust in their relationship with Deadly Innovation program staff.
- Deadly Innovation program staff have achieved this through moving at the speed of trust, building mutual accountability, delivering on commitments and meeting people where they are at.
- Change agents and champions identified by or drawn to Deadly Innovation have been instrumental in successfully delivering investments, activities and initiatives.
- Deadly Innovation has engaged successfully with Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities to build skills, knowledge and experience to engage in innovation.
- Deadly Innovation has built understanding of what it takes to build skills to engage in innovation in the Indigenous context.
- A quantitative understanding of participant engagement with learning will assist Deadly Innovation to strengthen and better target skill building initiatives and programs

Successful engagement and positive relationships

Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities that were interviewed as part of the evaluation spoke positively of their relationship with Deadly Innovation program staff and delivery partners, placing a high level of value and trust in this relationship. Several elements of Deadly Innovation program staff's ways of working were highlighted as critical to achieving this:

Moving at the speed of trust by investing time in building a personal and genuine relationship at the individual level and at the community level, for example through rounds of consultations in Cherbourg before launching the Cherbourg Service Centre.

Building mutual accountability and delivering on commitments were emphasised by Deadly Innovation program staff and Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities as crucial to overcoming the perception of governments over promising and under delivering for the Indigenous community in Australia.

Meeting people where they were at both figuratively in terms of building successful relationships with a wide variety of stakeholders across sectors and with a range of business maturities, and literally in terms of

committing to spending time on the ground in community. This is in line with the intent of the Deadly Innovation Strategy of supporting Indigenous people to walk their own pathway of success.

Identifying and empowering change agents and champions from across industry and government identified by or drawn to Deadly Innovation have been instrumental in successfully delivering investments, activities and initiatives. Beyond the commercial viability and self-determination of individual innovators and businesses, the emphasis on the empowerment of Indigenous change agents is also reflected through secondary impacts, such as Deadly Innovation grant recipients valuing and committing to building Indigenous employment and strengthening Indigenous representation within supply chains. Similarly, Deadly Innovation has successfully identified and built relationships with champions within government to drive the transformative agenda of the Deadly Innovation Strategy within their respective agencies and portfolios.

Strengthened understanding of innovation engagement in the Indigenous context

Deadly Innovation has built understanding of what it takes to build skills to engage in innovation in the Indigenous context. Staff involved in delivering training, mentoring and support initiatives identified a range of key learnings that iteratively strengthened delivery and participant engagement as activities progressed. These include:

- Delivering training over a longer period of time enables greater flexibility for Indigenous innovators and small business owners and has the potential to be more effective than intensive, multi-day workshops.
- Flexible training offerings that provide opportunities for Indigenous innovators and small business owners to engage in topics best aligned to their context and training needs.
- Induction events for participants in regional and remote communities combining community engagement, networking and introductory program content can build momentum, connection and trust in community.
- Culturally tailored training materials, including mob-friendly language and visuals, delivered by experienced trainers appropriately attends to the learning and cultural needs of participants.
- Ensuring necessary equipment such as laptops and headsets are ready to begin immediately, and training timelines and milestones align to give a clear sense of completion and success can support early and sustained confidence for training participants.

Better monitoring and reporting will strengthen understanding of what it takes to successfully build capability in innovation and core business skills in this context

A stronger understanding of participant engagement with learning will assist to strengthen and better target skill building initiatives and programs in the Deadly Innovation portfolio. The evaluation surfaced significant challenges across the portfolio in quantitatively understanding participant engagement with training, mentoring and support activities. To address this the department could:

- 1) Establish consistent definitions or metrics related to “training, mentoring and support” to allow engagement activities to be effectively measured at the portfolio level to report on successful delivery.
- 2) Ensure that participant engagement with all activities is tracked via an email address, phone number or other unique identifier to enable better tracking of individuals’ journeys and engagement patterns, allowing Deadly Innovation program staff to supplement qualitative assessments of what works with data-driven insights.

This would strengthen understanding and subsequent program design, as well as enable the department to more effectively articulate successes and impact. However, it is widely acknowledged that capturing the impact of capability building is challenging, regardless of the context.



Share: Deadly Innovation has created increased access to innovation opportunities for Indigenous businesses, individuals and communities

Key findings

- Deadly Innovation has contributed to a strong increase in Indigenous participation in Queensland government Innovation programs.
- Deadly Innovation has successfully developed connections and partnerships between Indigenous innovators, businesses and community, and government and industry.
- The Indigenous Native Food Program (INFP) has contributed to growing momentum and connection across government in the native food space.
- Deadly Innovation training, mentoring and support initiatives take a highly individualised approach to supporting innovators and businesses, ensuring they receive the support they need and want.

Increased Indigenous participation in Advance Queensland programs

Since the introduction of Deadly Innovation in 2019 to Q1 2022, the proportion of DTIS Advance Queensland recipients who have been identified as Indigenous⁷ has increased from 0.6 per cent to 5.16 per cent (from 7 to 98 recipients) and whole-of-initiative Advance Queensland Indigenous recipients has increased from 0.4 per cent to 3.8 per cent (from 15 to 284 participants). In Q1 2022, Deadly Innovation recipients accounted for 69 out of 284 Advance Queensland recipients who have been identified as Indigenous – which accounts for 24 per cent of the total figure.

Notwithstanding potential limitations of data (see footnote 7), the reported proportions of Indigenous AQ recipients is approaching (whole-of-AQ) or exceeding (DTIS AQ initiatives) the proportion of Indigenous Queenslanders in the Queensland population of 4.5 per cent.⁸ It also exceeds the estimated proportion of Queensland businesses that are Indigenous owned of 1.5 per cent.⁹

Development of connections and partnerships

Deadly Innovation made individual connections between Indigenous innovators and businesses and prospective buyers and supporters in industry and government that have assisted Indigenous businesses to grow. Many Indigenous innovators and businesses interviewed through the evaluation identified specific connections facilitated by Deadly Innovation and its program staff that were critical to the growth of their businesses. These connections were made directly between individuals, generally with warm referrals from Deadly Innovation program staff.

Additionally, Deadly Innovation has supported Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities to access networking and promotional opportunities. This has included facilitating, coordinating or brokering networking and business events to create opportunities for businesses to promote themselves with potential buyers.

LOGiT RAP Project

Deadly Innovation program staff successfully assisted the establishment of formal partnerships between government, industry, Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities. The LOGiT RAP Project is an

⁷ Note: it is not mandatory for Advance Queensland implementing agencies to report on or capture the Indigeneity of participants.

⁸ ABS, 2021

⁹ ABS, 2021. Note: Estimate only calculated using the Census count of Indigenous owner-managers living in Queensland. Supply Nation used a similar method in their "[Driving Growth in Indigenous Business](#)" report.

example of Deadly Innovation-brokered partnerships between Indigenous businesses, government agencies and industry to deliver success outcomes. The project saw four parties enter a Collaborative Development Agreement to co-design, develop, test and refine an online tool for organisations to capture and report against their respective Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) commitments. The tool has since been commercialised for organisations across Australia using a subscription model.

Indigenous Native Food Program

The Indigenous Native Food Program (INFP) has contributed to growing momentum and connection across government in the native food space. The program, which aims to develop a pathway to engage Indigenous innovators to develop and commercialise products with native foods, has given INFP staff a platform to grow networks across industry and the range of Queensland Government agencies relevant to supporting Indigenous native food businesses. Interviews with departmental staff also highlighted INFP as a crucial opportunity for Queensland Indigenous businesses in the lead up to the 2032 Olympics and Paralympics. Refer to Section 6.2.2 for a case study of the INFP.



Activate: Deadly Innovation has activated the right funding mechanisms and enablers to create self-determination

Key findings

- Deadly Innovation has directly created and/or supported at least 50 jobs, as well as a flow on effect on jobs and wealth generation through commitment to Indigenous employment and supply chains.
- Deadly Innovation has successfully leveraged funding from across local, state and federal government sources to support initiatives.
- The community governance wealth sharing model is important for generating support for, and sustainability in, community businesses.
- Access to funding leveraged by Deadly Innovation has helped Indigenous innovators and businesses develop sustainable businesses and grow revenue.
- Deadly Innovation has strengthened the self-determination of Deadly Innovation program participants, Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities.

Supporting and creating jobs with a flow on effect

In addition to the at least 50 jobs directly created and/or supported across the portfolio, nearly all change agents supported with funding through Deadly Innovation have demonstrated a strong commitment to growing Indigenous employment and supply chains within their businesses. While unquantifiable within the scope of the evaluation, there are clear indications that Deadly Innovation funding is having a flow on effect on job creation and wealth generation in the Indigenous business sector.

Leveraging funding through a reduced perception of risk

Deadly Innovation has leveraged approximately \$1.2 million in funding from a range of local, state and federal government agencies to support Deadly Innovation initiatives. Deadly Innovation program staff and industry stakeholders highlighted the value of Deadly Innovation co-funding initiatives in that it reduced the perception of risk involved in the investment from other government and industry stakeholders.

The Cherbourg Service Centre as a proof of concept for community-owned businesses

A detailed case study of the Cherbourg Service Centre is included later in Figure 18 and highlights the success of the Deadly Innovation-led initiative. The Cherbourg Service Centre is a community-owned, full-service contact centre business that began as a collaboration between Deadly Innovation, Fujitsu, Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council with the support of TAFE Queensland. It has created jobs for 10 members of the Cherbourg community and signed service contracts to the value of circa \$4 million with several large corporations and government departments, with current customers expressing strong satisfaction with the quality of services. Deadly Innovation program staff and industry stakeholders highlighted it as proof of concept for the development of community-owned businesses.

The community wealth sharing governance model (i.e. the opportunity for the community to control and distribute the wealth generated through a community-owned business) was an enabler of community support for the Cherbourg Service Centre. The model was developed as a series of legal and governance templates to assist communities to navigate the complexities of establishing a community owned business. While the model is yet to be fully implemented, its value was highlighted by community stakeholders, Deadly Innovation program staff and delivery partners.

Developing sustainable businesses and strengthening self-determination

There is strong qualitative and quantitative evidence that Deadly Innovation funding assisted recipients to grow revenue and develop sustainable businesses. In addition, participants, funding recipients and communities from a range of Deadly Innovation investments highlighted the confidence, legitimacy and pride that receiving funding and other support through Deadly Innovation has helped grow, and that support has strengthened their ability to engage in innovation.

KLE 4: How effectively did the Deadly Innovation approach respond to the needs of Indigenous innovators and communities to achieve outcomes for key stakeholders, including government and Indigenous innovators? (Effectiveness)

4

Key findings: Deadly Innovation successfully responded to the needs of Indigenous innovators and communities to achieve outcomes

- The novel Deadly Innovation approach has empowered Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities to initiate, continue and lead innovation activity.
- Deadly Innovation staff and the DITID Indigenous Participation Plan have had a positive impact on government practices and processes as it begins to work towards Treaty.
- Deadly Innovation has an opportunity to build on its momentum to strengthen its position as an Indigenous innovation network builder.
- Success at the community level has created interest from other Indigenous communities in what innovation could look like in their own community.

Indigenous Participation Plan

Deadly Innovation program staff played a key role in the development of the DITID Indigenous Participation Plan (IPP). The IPP established a “common vision, agreed benchmarks, and reporting framework” across the Department to “ensure Advance Queensland and all of DITID is taking active steps to integrating Indigenous businesses into the activities”.¹⁰

¹⁰ [DITID Indigenous Participation Plan, 2018 - 2021](#)

Since its development, the IPP has supported the department to rethink its approach to increase their Indigenous procurement spend. In the financial year following the introduction of the IPP (2019-20), the department's proportion of total addressable spend awarded to Indigenous businesses was 7.7 per cent – an increase of 6.2 per cent on the previous financial year. Similarly, the IPP led to growth in a number of Indigenous businesses responding to an opportunity to quote (17.4 per cent) and the success rate of Indigenous businesses tendering for contracts (10.9 per cent) that year.¹¹

Deadly Innovation has also collaborated with other government agencies to build on the internal success of the IPP. For example, an informal, mutually beneficial partnership with the Indigenous Partnerships Manager of QIC has focused on and led to the strengthening of QIC's Indigenous procurement processes and commitments. QIC's Indigenous procurement grew from \$100,000 to \$600,000 in two years (FY 20 to 22), driven heavily by the partnership and the support from Deadly Innovation. QIC also highlighted the internal cultural shift associated with the increased spend on Indigenous businesses.

Supporting Indigenous engagement in broader government programs and processes

Deadly Innovation has had an active and influential role in shaping Queensland Government programs and processes aimed at increasing Indigenous participation. These include:

- **Yhurri Gurri Framework:** a landmark framework detailing DSDILGP's commitments to working with Indigenous peoples as the Queensland Government walks the Path to Treaty. Department staff supported the development of this framework, which was significantly influenced by the DITID IPP and Deadly Innovation program staff.
- **Defence and Aerospace Industry Development Fund (DAIDF)** (a DSDILGP initiative) guidelines and processes: Deadly Innovation program staff provided support and guidance aimed at ensuring the Fund participants included Indigenous representation. Staff administering the DAIDF qualitatively observed an increase in Indigenous participation. Though Indigeneity was not captured in Round 1, 21 per cent of Round 2 funding was directed to Indigenous businesses.
- **Indigenous Fishing Licenses policy and application process (DAF):** Deadly Innovation program staff supported DAF to refine the policy which aims to provide a short-term, cost-effective way for Indigenous businesses to trial commercial fishing. This support also included working with DAF in developing a more accessible permit application process.
- **Queensland Register of Nominees to Government bodies (QRON):** A coordinated communications and outreach campaign led by Deadly Innovation program staff and the BIRG saw a 33.65 per cent increase in Indigenous people registering for consideration on QRON in 2019.¹²

Building and supporting the network of Queensland Indigenous businesses

Deadly Innovation program staff's support of and presence in key networks has increased the visibility of the portfolio and helped Deadly Innovation recipients connect with Indigenous innovators. Deadly Innovation program staff and several Deadly Innovation grant recipients highlighted Black Coffee¹³ as an important mechanism for making connections and more broadly as an important part of a network of Indigenous innovators and businesses. Through connections made at Black Coffee, several grant recipients were made aware of Deadly Innovation funding opportunities, resulting in applications and proposals to receive funding. Deadly Innovation has provided ad hoc financial and in-kind support to Black Coffee over several years, assisting in maintaining and growing the network's presence.

¹¹ DITID Procurement Report, Q4 2019-2020.

¹² QRON Case Study provided by DTIS

¹³ [Black Coffee](#) is an Indigenous business networking event held in regions around Australia.

Additionally, Deadly Innovation funding has supported the South East Queensland Indigenous Chambers of Commerce (SEQICC) to lease a space in The Precinct (an innovation space run through the Advance Queensland initiative), giving SEQICC a strong presence in one of the state's foremost innovation sites.

Generating interest from other Indigenous communities

Success at the community level has created interest from other Indigenous communities in what innovation could look like in their own community. Stakeholders from Cherbourg and the Yarrabah Business Accelerator indicated that leaders from other Indigenous communities including Aboriginal Shire Councils had expressed interest in Deadly Innovation initiatives, including conducting visits.

KLE 5: Lessons learned for the Queensland Government

5

Key lessons: The success of Deadly Innovation has important learnings for government as an approach for investment in Indigenous innovation

- Build trust between community, government and business. The Deadly Innovation focus on "moving at the speed of trust" provides a strong example of how this can be operationalised.
- Allow design and delivery to be led by Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities, including through co-design, building in significant community engagement, and maximising the delivery of initiatives by Indigenous staff and partners.
- Identify and leverage change agents and champions across community, government and business to build coalitions of the willing, allowing government to access and bring together the diversity of supports needed to grow Indigenous innovation.
- Build on communities' strengths and leverage existing momentum and in-community resources to design initiatives improves success, as demonstrated in Cherbourg.
- Create strategic alignment between partners and a shared appreciation of success between community, government and business to ensure that partnerships are sustainable. Supporting Indigenous innovation requires government to create the space to develop this shared understanding.
- Strengthen training and mentoring activities through flexible and culturally appropriate delivery.

Refer to Section 7.1.2 for detailed findings.

This section provides key findings from the fifth key line of enquiry, relating to lessons learned. The evaluation has highlighted some lessons that may be applied and replicated when designing, delivering and enhancing approaches to investment in Indigenous innovation.

Key lessons: Several of the success factors for the implementation of the Deadly Innovation portfolio can be applied to government programs for other cohorts that may face barriers or discrimination

- Focus on building trust as first step through a gradual, iterative delivery of activities to identify what works and strengthen relationships by delivering what was promised.
- Co-design programs with senior members of the community from within target cohorts to identify what is important to them and build programming around their definition of success.
- Empower staff who deeply understand the context to work differently, deliver programs in a culturally responsive way, and work within or refine government processes to support this.
- Take a strengths-based approach led by the target cohort rather than focusing on a deficit model.
- Adopt a flexible and localised approach to delivery that recognises it is their pathway and lets people stay local to maintain connection to community and support networks.
- Maximise delivery of programs by people from the target cohort to ensure that target cohorts can “see themselves” and increase community connection.

Refer to Section 7.1.3 for detailed findings.

The evaluation has highlighted some success factors that may be applied and replicated in other contexts such as other government programs and investments, and other target cohorts that may face participation barriers and discrimination.

However, it is important to note that the cultural context in which Deadly Innovation was implemented and a focus on relationships may not resonate as strongly in other contexts due to the unique role that community and relationships play in Indigenous culture.

Key lessons: The evaluation offers insights into enabling inclusivity in innovation policy and programming more broadly

- Build coalitions of the willing from government and industry to bring together the diversity of expertise and resources to drive success.
- Work on commercial “push and pull” (focusing on supporting the seller and creating enabling conditions within the market for buyers) to increase the probability of successful investments.
- Focus application processes on the viability of the service or product and support first-time applicants through the process through use of Expression of Interest (EOI) and building the understanding of assessors.
- Give programs the time and space to be considered, planned and piloted to allow for solid foundations to be built.

Refer to Section 7.1.4 for detailed findings.

The evaluation has highlighted some lessons that may be applied when designing, improving and implementing Queensland Government innovation policies and programs to ensure an inclusive approach across all program offerings.

Key risks identified through the evaluation should be considered in shaping future Indigenous innovation program design, delivery and policy

For the purposes of this evaluation, a risk has been defined as a potential future event that would have a negative consequence. These risks fall into five broad categories, detailed in Figure 5.

Figure 5 | Risks identified through the evaluation



Refer to Section 7.1.5 for detailed findings.

Challenges identified throughout the delivery of the Deadly Innovation portfolio should shape refinements to the portfolio

The evaluation identified challenges that occurred at four levels: community, government, business and cross-cutting. These are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1 | Challenges identified through the evaluation

Community-level challenges

- Auspicing organisations in community may lack capability and capacity to administer grants, and this is a key consideration for partner selection during program design.
- The complexity of community governance may be a barrier to setting up community-owned businesses, highlighting the need to build strong relationships with community and co-create what success looks like.
- Capital may be inaccessible in rural and remote communities due to collective land ownership or lack of significant assets, creating a barrier for some Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities to participate in the innovation economy.
- Deadly Innovation program staff have been challenged by a lack of trust in government within parts of the Indigenous community.
- The current method of supporting Indigenous businesses to complete applications may represent a hidden cost to the department.
- Remote and regional communities can have poor access to digital infrastructure and lower digital capability, creating barriers to participating in digital innovation and increasing program costs.
- Wealth generation can have unintended consequences in community, highlighting the need to listen deeply to Indigenous communities and work slowly.
- Innovation often relies on unpaid work which is an additional barrier for some Indigenous Australians to participating in the innovation economy.

Government-level challenges

- Understanding of the progress of projects outside of formal milestones is held outside of systems, heightening key person risks and challenging reporting to senior executives.
- The qualitative nature of the success of Deadly Innovation and lack of quantitative measures of success makes impact difficult to communicate to government and community.
- The absence of a peak or industry body for Indigenous small business and innovation reduces the ability of the Deadly Innovation program staff to remain connected to regional and remote communities.
- Building trust requires program staff to undertake negotiations with communities, challenging internal approval processes to maintain flexibility and empower staff while maintaining appropriate oversight.
- Going outside typical public service protocols and speaking directly to those in positions of power and influence to progress activities creates tension within government.
- The lower-than-expected uptake of the Deadly Digits software is an example of the challenges for government investment in innovation when consumers do not take up products from businesses that have received government funding.
- Government and other funding sources may lack a framework to assess grant applications from Indigenous businesses.
- Tailoring training, mentoring and support activities to local contexts is resource-intensive.

- Elements within government may have a lower understanding and confidence in the capability and capacity of Indigenous business.
- Government approaches to contracting with small businesses and government partners may not be appropriate to the innovation or Indigenous business context.
- Other government agencies may not be empowered to complete work needed to support innovation in community.
- Ensuring staff can be on the ground in regional and remote communities is cost intensive.

Business-level challenges

- Some non-Indigenous businesses may have a lower understanding and confidence in the capability and capacity of Indigenous business.
- Some elements within industry may have a lack of understanding of the commercial value of supporting Indigenous innovation beyond corporate social responsibility.

Cross-cutting challenges

- New ways of working may be resisted due to a lack of consistent understanding of why a different approach is needed.
- Funding available may be insufficient to support the variety and scope of investments needed

Refer to Section 7.1.6 for detailed findings.

4.4 Conclusion

Deadly Innovation has been delivered in line with the Deadly Innovation Strategy, and has delivered a broad range of programs, initiatives and activities supporting economic wealth and job creation for Indigenous communities across Queensland. A summary of the key findings from this meso-level evaluation are outlined in Figure 6 below.

The approach to the design and delivery of the Deadly Innovation Strategy and associated programs and activities was both unique and core to its success. This novel, culturally responsive approach placed a strong and deliberate emphasis on being present within Indigenous communities and business networks to gain trust and an authentic understanding of how the department can best support self-determination and facilitate commercial success.

The evaluation found that the trust that Indigenous communities and business owners placed in Deadly Innovation was likely the combination of multiple deliberate and culturally responsive approaches to the Strategy's design and implementation. However, the evaluation also surfaced a number of risks and challenges associated with the Deadly Innovation approach that must be managed.

Figure 6 | Summary of key findings and lessons learned

PROCESS	KLE 1	Deadly Innovation has successfully delivered a broad range of programs, initiatives and investments
	KLE 2	Deadly Innovation has developed a novel approach to supporting Indigenous innovation guided by deeply-held core principles
EFFECTIVENESS	KLE 3	Deadly Innovation has achieved many of its intended outcomes under Hear, Share, Activate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HEAR: Deadly Innovation has successfully built trust and relationships with Indigenous peoples and communities • SHARE: Deadly Innovation has created increased access to innovation opportunities for Indigenous businesses, individuals and communities • ACTIVATE: Deadly Innovation has activated the right funding mechanisms and enablers to create self determination
	KLE 4	Deadly Innovation successfully responded to the needs of Indigenous innovators and communities to achieve outcomes
LESSONS LEARNED	KLE 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships have been key to connecting spheres of influence across the Indigenous innovation ecosystem • The success of Deadly Innovation has important learnings for government as an approach for investment in Indigenous innovation • Success factors of Deadly Innovation can be applied to programming for other cohorts that may face barriers or discrimination • Deadly Innovation offers insights into enabling inclusivity in innovation policy and program design and delivery more broadly • Key risks identified through the evaluation should be considered in shaping future Indigenous innovation program design, delivery and policy • Challenges identified throughout Deadly Innovation’s delivery should shape refinements to the portfolio

Core elements for amplification and replication

Four core elements were highlighted as critical to success and enabled the unique Deadly Innovation approach:

1. **“Moving at the speed of trust”** by investing time in building a personal and genuine relationship at the individual level and also at the community level, for example through rounds of consultations in Cherbourg before the community launched the Cherbourg Service Centre.
2. **Building mutual accountability and delivering on commitments** were emphasised by Deadly Innovation staff and Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities as crucial to overcoming the perception of governments over promising and under delivering for the Indigenous community in Australia.
3. **Meeting people where they were at** both figuratively in terms of supporting their pathway and building successful relationships with a wide variety of stakeholders across sectors and with a range of business maturities, and literally in terms of committing to spending time on the ground in community.
4. Being **anchored by change agents’ and champions’** ability to connect across ecosystems from the local level to the system level. Change agents and champions drive a mutually reinforcing cycle of trust, relationships and outcomes.

The department, and other government departments should consider opportunities to amplify these elements when working with Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities and for other cohorts who may face participation barriers and discrimination.

5 Introduction

5.1 Overview of Deadly Innovation

The Deadly Innovation Strategy was co-designed to deliver on a Queensland Government commitment to grow Indigenous participation in the innovation economy

In 2017, the Queensland Government committed to create more pathways for Indigenous people through participation in the innovation economy:

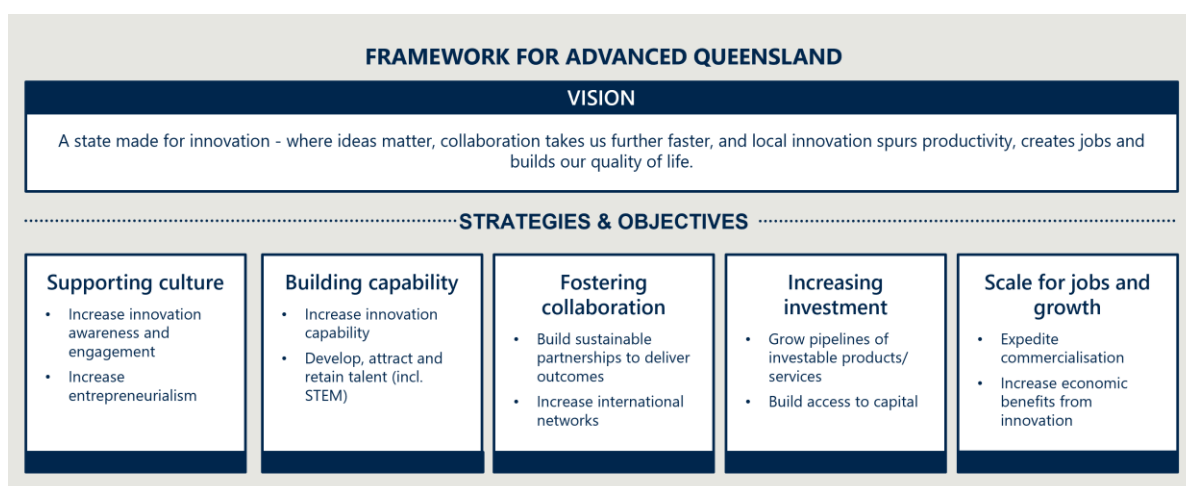
Advance Queensland: Foundations for the Future:

Partner with universities, TAFE, the education system and business to deliver Deadly Innovations, a program designed to create more pathways for young Indigenous innovators to turn their ideas into reality.

To deliver on this commitment, the (then) Department of Innovation, Tourism Industry Development and the Commonwealth Games (DITID), the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Business and Innovation Reference Group (BIRG) and key stakeholders co-designed the [Deadly Innovation Strategy](#)¹⁴ (the Strategy).

The Strategy sits under the broader [Advance Queensland](#)¹⁵ (AQ) initiative which was launched in 2015 and aims to create a more diversified Queensland economy, strengthen regional growth and create jobs.

Figure 7 | Advance Queensland framework



The Strategy places Indigenous businesses, innovators and their communities at the centre of programs, investments and activities. It defines government’s role as being “to identify Indigenous businesses and innovators and support them to become agents for change, on the premise that their ideas, with government support, will create new jobs.”¹⁶

To achieve this, the Strategy commits to three actions, “Hear, Share, Activate,” to “...harness relationships, strengthen respect, and activate opportunities for Indigenous businesses and innovators.”

These aims also align with the three themes outlined in the [Queensland Reconciliation Action Plan 2018-21](#)¹⁷ (RAP): harnessing Relationships, strengthen Respect, and creating Opportunities.

¹⁴ [Advance Queensland Deadly Innovation Strategy, 2019](#)

¹⁵ [Advance Queensland](#)

¹⁶ [Advance Queensland](#)

¹⁷ [Queensland Reconciliation Action Plan, 2018 - 2021](#)

Figure 8 details how this is translated into the Strategy's Action and Implementation Plan, aligned under the RAP themes.

Figure 8 | Deadly Innovation Strategy Action and Implementation Plan¹⁸

RELATIONSHIPS	AIM 1	RESPECT	AIM 2	OPPORTUNITY	AIM 3
<p>Government will hear, by identifying and supporting a pathway for Indigenous businesses and innovators to achieve success.</p> <p>Harness relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities to identify opportunities, risks and needs for innovation and business growth.</p> <p>ACTIONS: HEAR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders for advice. • Analysis of the current program offerings. • Promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business and innovation. • Establish pathways for Indigenous businesses and innovators for success. • Create Digital Futures for Indigenous people and communities. 		<p>Government will share, by broadening access to existing opportunities.</p> <p>Strengthen respect to improve Indigenous participation in existing and emerging opportunities offered by government, Queensland industries and by emerging business networks.</p> <p>ACTIONS: SHARE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support platforms for Indigenous businesses and innovators to connect to jobs and opportunities. • Enhance the likelihood of Indigenous businesses and innovators to succeed in applying to existing government programs. • Enliven networks to maximise opportunities. 		<p>Government will activate, by securing funding and backing feasible deals.</p> <p>Create new innovative businesses led or managed by Indigenous businesses and innovators embracing technology and innovative practices where feasible.</p> <p>ACTIONS: ACTIVATE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve economic independence in the sectors of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture/aquaculture • Energy, renewables and telecommunications • Construction • Defence or manufacturing • Government services • Arts and culture. 	
GOVERNMENT ACTION:					
<p>Government will support the change agents by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • respecting their culture and their traditions • supporting them and their community, to activate the business and innovation mindset • building expertise through education, business acumen, digital know-how, and mentoring • promoting their success • identifying and empowering Indigenous voices. 		<p>Government will walk beside the change agents along their pathway by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supporting structures that strengthen their cultural voice in business • linking the innovation and business ecosystems • increasing participation in government business as usual • facilitating access to the expertise of many people to develop emergent opportunities. 		<p>Government will champion opportunities for change agents by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working together to identify and access buyers, assets, capital, industry and expertise to secure the deals that lead to economic wealth and prosperity. 	

¹⁸ [Advance Queensland Deadly Innovation Strategy, 2019](#)

A portfolio of Deadly Innovation programs, investments and activities delivers on the intent of the Strategy

To deliver on the government commitment and subsequent aims of the Strategy, a core team was established within the Innovation division of the department to design and lead the implementation of the Strategy.

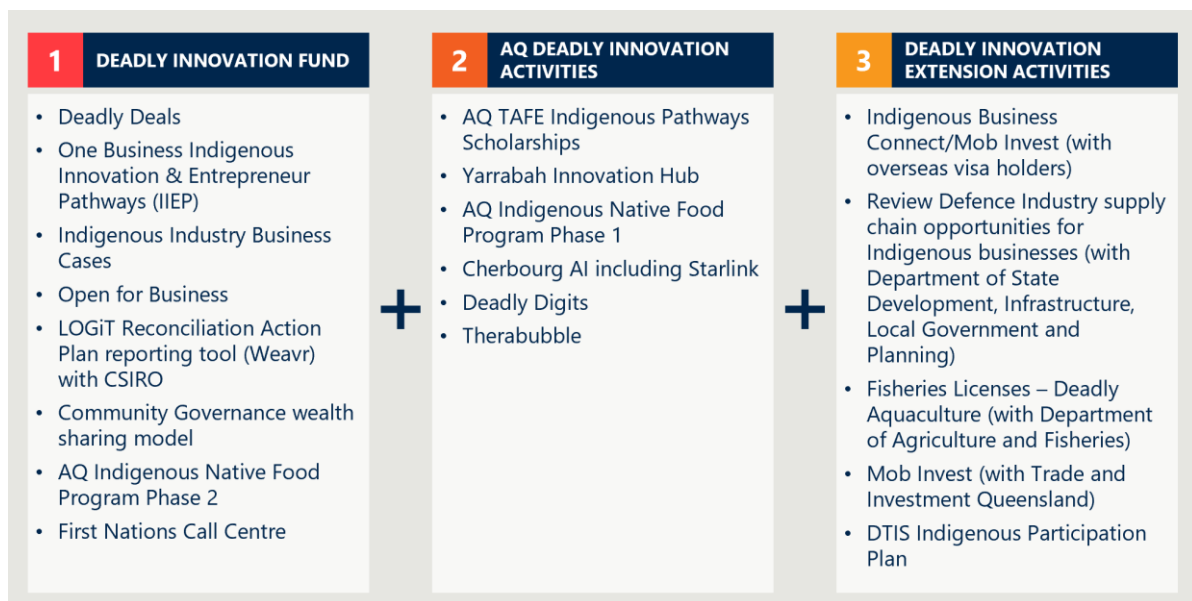
A budget of \$2.5 million was allocated from the overarching AQ budget (the Deadly Innovation Fund), subsequently increased to \$2.75 million in 2020. Additional AQ funding of \$1.84 million was committed to programs and activities that contribute to the aims of the Deadly Innovation Strategy. All AQ funded activities have been aligned against Deadly Innovation Strategy aims and AQ Strategies (see Appendix 3, Table 9).

These AQ funded activities were supplemented by a range of “extension activities” undertaken by Deadly Innovation program staff, in collaboration with a range of other government agencies.

This broad portfolio of Deadly Innovation investments and supporting activities include grants and scholarships, partnerships with communities and industry, and innovative government procurement.

While there are many ways of categorising or labelling what is and is not considered to be “Deadly Innovation activities”, for the purposes of this evaluation, “Deadly Innovation” is considered to be the following portfolio of programs, investments and activities (see Figure 9 and further detail in Appendix 4).

Figure 9 | Three categories of activities collectively make up the Deadly Innovation portfolio



Approach to design and delivery

The Strategy defined government support for Indigenous people to walk their own pathway of success and builds on the metaphor of the Gidyea tree which places the person and community at the centre (see Figure 10).

The Strategy defines government’s role as being “to identify Indigenous businesses and innovators and support them to become agents for change, on the premise that their ideas, with government support, will create new jobs.”¹⁹

¹⁹ [Advance Queensland Deadly Innovation Strategy, 2019](#)

This approach respects the need for self-determination to achieve sustainable change, and reflects that it is the individual – through their business or innovation – that will drive the transformation and mobilise the community to participate in emergent business opportunities.

In developing the Strategy, Deadly Innovation program staff undertook detailed mapping of existing programs to support Indigenous businesses and innovators. The Strategy addressed the identified gaps by seeking to:

- Increase interactive support for Indigenous businesses and innovators to develop and refine their ideas, apply sound business models, improve digital literacy and access, and consider more innovative agricultural technology.
- Increase support to applicants and suppliers by modifying government programs to increase access and opportunities, mentoring applicants and potential suppliers.
- Create opportunities for commercial success and future jobs through promotion of opportunities, improved trading mechanisms and networks, and ensuring efforts lead to jobs.
- Improve understanding of the sector, including its scope, strengths and advantages, personal communication, reporting and insights.

The Strategy also states that “programs will be flexible in design to allow for pivoting towards new opportunities when they arise”.

The Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport (the department) provides coordination, delivery, monitoring and support for Deadly Innovation, including oversight of the Deadly Innovation evaluation.

Figure 10 | The Deadly Innovation approach to delivery as shown in the Strategy²⁰



²⁰ [Advance Queensland Deadly Innovation Strategy, 2019](#)

5.2 Purpose of this Evaluation

This meso-level evaluation was conducted by Nous Group (Nous) from July to December 2022. The evaluation's objective was to understand the success and effectiveness of Deadly Innovation, and generate insights aimed at improving the future design and performance of programs to ensure an inclusive approach to innovation and economic growth.

These insights will inform decisions to better target future investment in both mainstream initiatives as well as initiatives to support Indigenous peoples and communities. It was also intended that the evaluation findings would offer an evidence base applicable to the broader Queensland Government and support considerations around the modalities, relationships and capabilities required to effectively support target cohorts that may face participation barriers and discrimination.

The scope for this meso-level evaluation includes consideration of the collective portfolio of Deadly Innovation activities outlined in Figure 9 above, rather than assessments of individual programs, grants or initiatives. It focussed on the overall process and effectiveness of Deadly Innovation, highlighting selected activities to assist in the illustration of key findings.

5.3 Evaluation process

The evaluation's appreciative enquiry approach was designed to assist the department to amplify the strengths of Deadly Innovation

The Queensland Government has committed to continuing to fund Deadly Innovation, reflecting the high level of confidence from the department that Deadly Innovation is important to the innovation economy and jobs creation. The evaluation was designed with this frame in mind, to better understand what has made Deadly Innovation successful through the process evaluation, to capture this success through the effectiveness evaluation, and draw lessons learned from this success to inform future programming and policy. To achieve this, Nous engaged closely with Deadly Innovation program staff and departmental staff through the Co-design under an appreciative enquiry approach.

The evaluation was limited by its focus on voices that have been part of Deadly Innovation

The evaluation engaged extensively with stakeholders that have played key roles in the delivery of Deadly Innovation, participated or engaged with Deadly Innovation initiatives, or been directly influenced by Deadly Innovation program staff. The evaluation's scope did not include engagement with the wider Indigenous and Queensland business and innovation community or government more broadly. The evaluation scope also did not include engagement with Indigenous businesses and innovators that were not successful in applying for, or becoming part of, Deadly Innovation initiatives.

Evaluation findings have been tested through triangulation across multiple data sources and review through co-design, however the evaluation's scope creates an inherent limitation due to a success-biased sample. While this represents a limitation, it also aligns with the Deadly Innovation approach by identifying and amplifying the strengths and successes of activities built around listening to community and supporting change agents.

Cultural safety and relevance for Indigenous stakeholders was embedded in the evaluation approach

The evaluation was designed to ensure both rigour and the cultural safety of Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities. The Nous team conducting the evaluation was Indigenous-led and informed at key moments by a Co-design Group including key Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders internal and external to Deadly Innovation. The Co-design Group shaped the evaluation process detailed in Figure 11. All evaluation activities were underpinned by principles of culturally safe evaluations.²¹

²¹ Australian Evaluation Society, 2021, [First Nations Cultural Safety Framework](#).

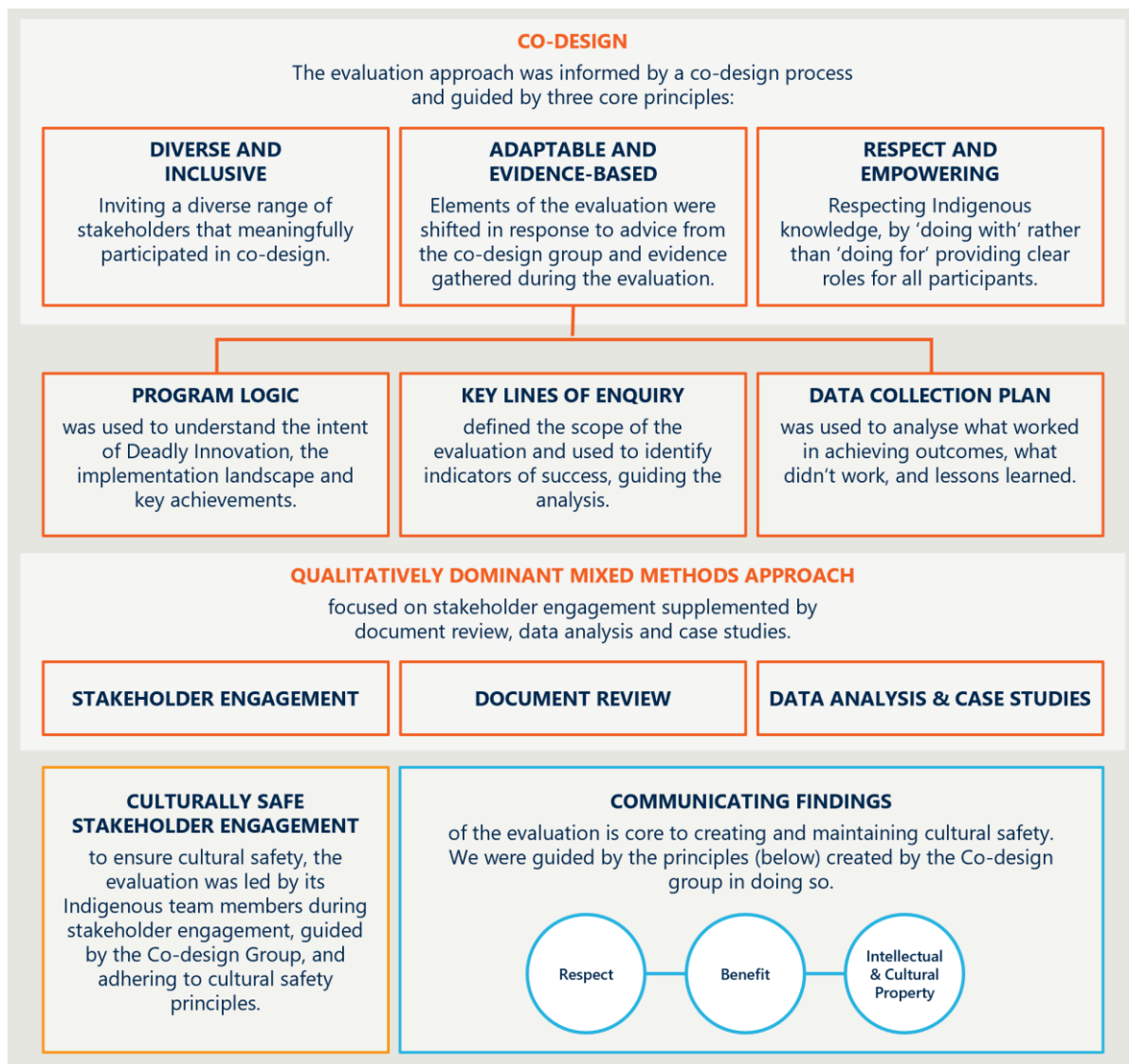
Maintaining cultural safety for Indigenous stakeholders interviewed through the evaluation was a priority. To engage in a culturally safe way, the evaluation was led by its Indigenous team members during stakeholder engagement including an Indigenous external evaluation partner and community engagement specialist. The evaluation was also guided by the Co-design Group, and adhered to cultural safety principles set out below:

- Approaching engagement as genuine knowledge sharing, rather than a consultation, to respect expertise and truth.
- Allowing time to develop relationships and trust before seeking knowledge.
- Respecting cultural values, protocols and knowledges.
- Valuing and planning for flexibility to hear perspectives expressed in different ways.
- Honouring commitments made to stakeholders, particularly with regards to sharing findings.
- Valuing the diversity of Indigenous cultures by avoiding the assumption that what was true somewhere is true everywhere.

Additionally, the evaluation was guided by the *Maiam nayri Wingara Indigenous Data Sovereignty Principles*.²² Appendix 1.1 contains more detail on how the evaluation maintained cultural safety and relevance for Indigenous stakeholders.

²² [Maiam nayri Wingara Indigenous Data Sovereignty Principles, 2018](#)

Figure 11 | High-level evaluation process



Co-design with Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders close to Deadly Innovation shaped the evaluation methodology, findings and lessons learned

The Co-design Group provided significant input into the evaluation and was used as a touchpoint throughout the evaluation. The Co-design membership included:

- Leesa Watego (former BIRG member, Managing Director, Iscariot Media)
- Kalair McArthur (Director, Rural and Remote Development)
- Duncan Kerlake (Program Manager, Deadly Innovation, DTIS)
- Jennifer Black (former Director, Indigenous Tourism, DTIS)
- Nicole Blackett (Director, Innovation Program Design and Insights, DTIS)
- Jacqueline Steel (Director, Regional Engagement, Innovation Engagement and Delivery, DTIS)
- Rodney Williams (Principal and Project Director, Nous Group)
- Lateesha Jeffrey (External evaluation partner, Director and Consultant, Wave of Change Consultancy).

Four co-design workshops shaped the evaluation:

- 1) Established principles to guide the evaluation and informed key elements of the evaluation approach, including key lines of enquiry, indicators, data sources and communication of findings.
- 2) Tested high-level findings, ensure that findings are communicated in a way that can be understood and benefit Indigenous innovators, businesses and community and government, and develop lessons learned.
- 3) Provided feedback on the draft report.
- 4) Shaped the Executive Summary and report on a page.

The evaluation used a Program Logic to understand Deadly Innovation and Key Lines of Enquiry to guide analysis

The Program Logic links the portfolio of AQ-funded investments, and other activities and initiatives that contribute to the aims and objectives of the Deadly Innovation Strategy which details the intended outcomes of the delivery of the Deadly Innovation portfolio. It steps through the inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes of the portfolio, describing the expected links that underpin these links between each step. The full Program Logic is included in Appendix A.1.3.

This evaluation uses three types of evaluation, drawing on the AQ Evaluation Framework²³:

- 1) A process evaluation to assess whether Deadly Innovation has been designed and delivered as intended.
- 2) An effectiveness evaluation to assess the extent to which Deadly Innovation has achieved its short and medium-term goals.
- 3) A lessons learned evaluation to generate insights to improve the future design and performance of programs.

Five Key Lines of Enquiry (KLEs) were developed to guide analysis across the three types of evaluation.

Figure 12 | Key lines of enquiry (KLEs)

PROCESS		EFFECTIVENESS		LESSONS LEARNED
KLE 1	KLE 2	KLE 3	KLE 4	KLE 5
To what extent has the design, implementation and delivery of Deadly Innovation been successful, and why?	What are the core characteristics of Deadly Innovation's approach?	To what extent did the Deadly Innovation portfolio of investments, activities and initiatives achieve its intended outcomes (Hear, Share, Activate) and contribute to Advance Queensland more broadly?	How effectively did Deadly Innovation's approach respond to the needs of Indigenous innovators and communities to achieve outcomes for key stakeholders, including government and Indigenous innovators?	What lessons learned from the design, implementation and delivery of Deadly Innovation can be applied or replicated to inform future design and performance of programs to create an inclusive approach to innovation and economic growth?

The evaluation was driven by the voices of Indigenous businesses, innovators and communities through a qualitatively dominant mixed methods approach.

²³ [Advance Queensland Evaluation Framework, July 2019](#)

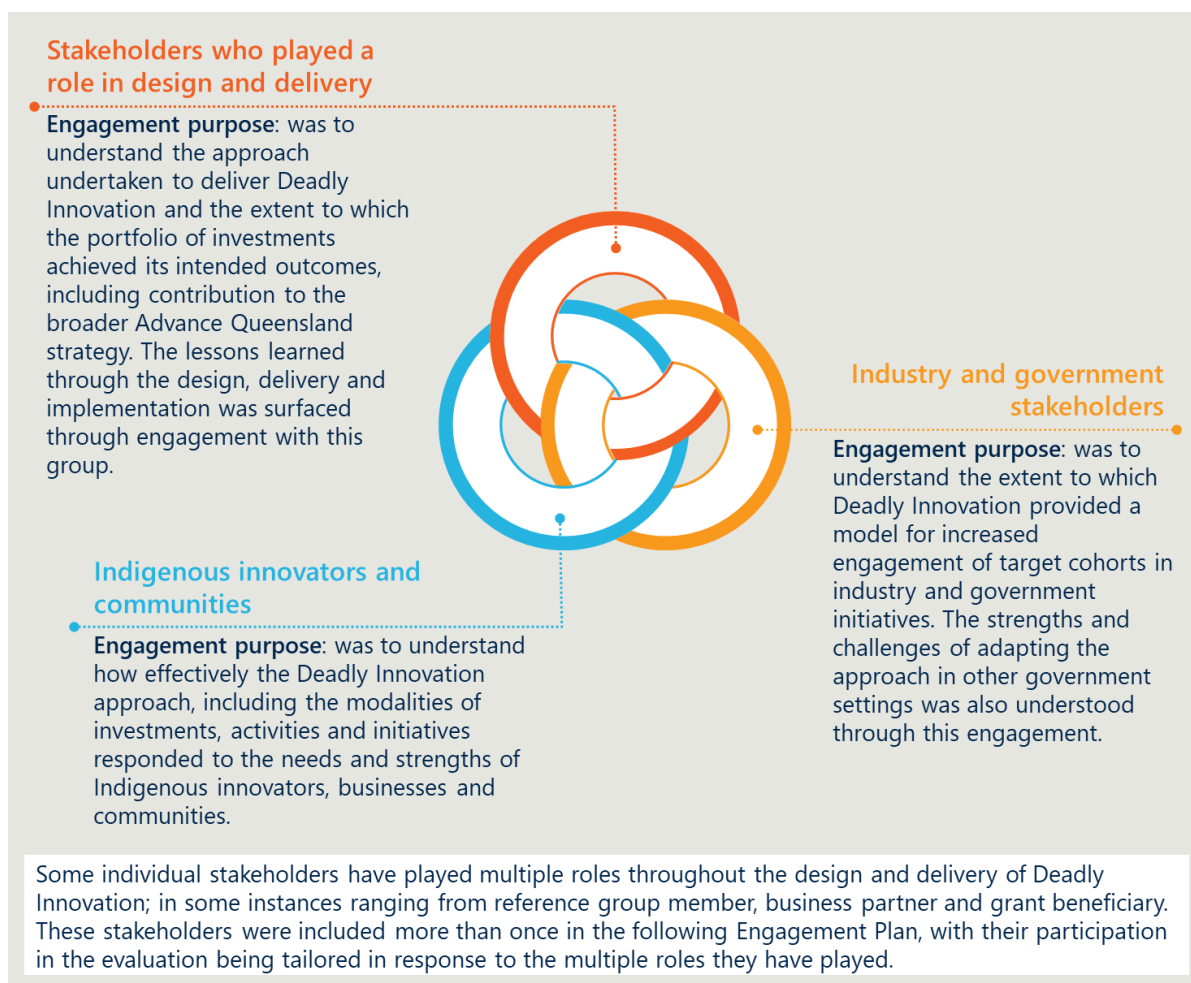
The evaluation took a robust mixed methods approach led by hypotheses formed through qualitative analysis. There were three key factors driving this deductive approach:

- 1) Being driven by the voice of Indigenous businesses, communities and innovators provided a culturally appropriate framework for capturing, analysing and understanding these voices as the primary measure of the effectiveness of Deadly Innovation.
- 2) Articulating lessons learned from the design, delivery and implementation of Deadly Innovation required extensive engagement with internal and external stakeholders to synthesise findings.
- 3) Understanding the availability, reliability and completeness of quantitative data determined which hypotheses can be tested through quantitative analysis.

Nous triangulated a range of data (see Section A.1.5) to test evaluation findings based on the key lines of enquiry. The integration and comparison of qualitative insights across multiple sources was supported where possible with quantitative data enabling a more balanced and accurate evaluation of the effectiveness of Deadly Innovation, however, the limitations of this approach are discussed above. Lessons learned were synthesised primarily from qualitative analysis throughout the evaluation and developed by the Co-design Group.

In line with the qualitatively dominant approach, interviews with a broad range of stakeholders from across Deadly Innovation were crucial to developing and testing findings. Figure 13 outlines three broad categories of stakeholders and how each informed the evaluation.

Figure 13 | Overview of stakeholders interviewed through the evaluation



6 Evaluation findings

6.1 Process evaluation

6.1.1 KLE 1: To what extent has the design, implementation and delivery of Deadly Innovation been successful, and why? (Process)

1

Key finding: Deadly Innovation has successfully delivered a broad range of programs, initiatives and investments

Figure 14 | Key outputs of Deadly Innovation²⁴

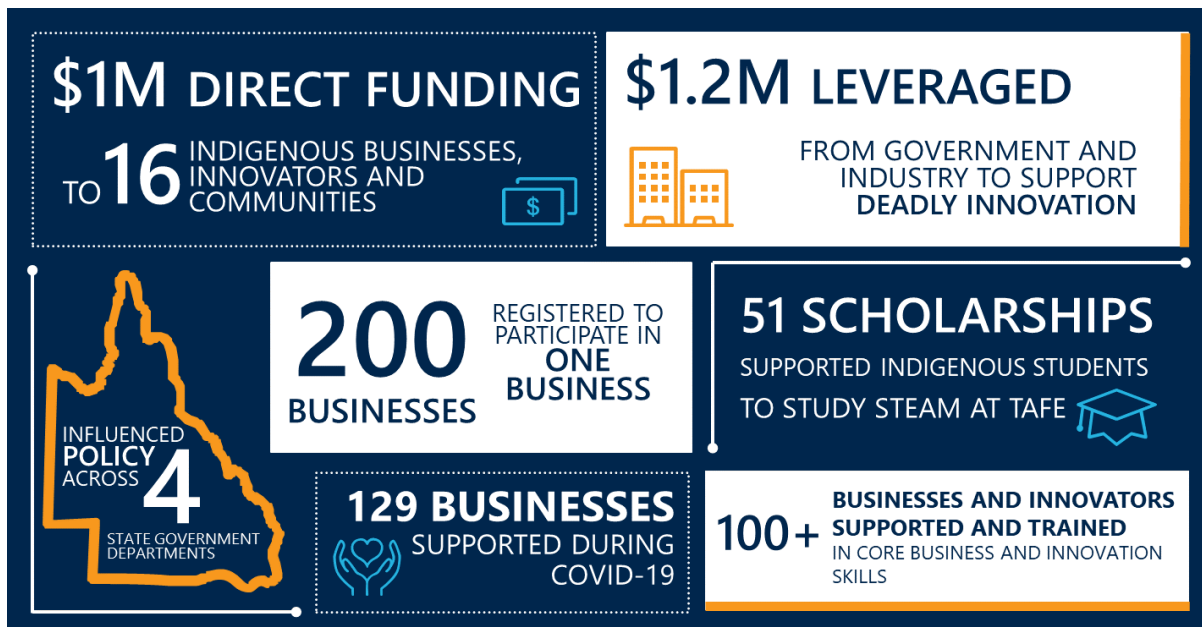


Figure 14 details a selection of key outputs of the Deadly Innovation portfolio to illustrate its success. Table 2 later contains more detailed information on participation rates in individual programs, investments and activities which were considered a core element of understanding the portfolio's success.

\$1.2 million funding leveraged from government and industry to support Deadly Innovation includes funding from Queensland Government departments and does not include co-contributions from Indigenous businesses. See Appendix A.1.6 for a more detailed explanation on how this has been calculated.

The evaluation understood the Deadly Innovation Strategy as the design document for the Deadly Innovation portfolio of investments, activities and initiatives as defined for the purposes of the evaluation in Figure 2 above. To conduct the process evaluation, the achievements and alignment of the Deadly Innovation portfolio have been considered against the aims, intent and actions expressed in the Strategy. The evaluation did not consider the alignment of the Deadly Innovation portfolio within the Advance

²⁴ Deadly Innovation program data provided by DTIS, data to 30 June 2022, supplemented by data gathered by Nous during this evaluation

Queensland Framework and the contribution of the Deadly Innovation portfolio towards achieving AQ objectives.

Deadly Innovation has been successfully delivered according to the intent of the Strategy

The Deadly Innovation Strategy articulates the intent of Deadly Innovation as being to “create more pathways for Indigenous people through participation in the innovation economy” through supporting businesses and innovators to “turn their ideas into reality, so they can build wealth and create jobs”.²⁵ Interviews with Deadly Innovation program staff, Innovation Senior Executive, Deadly Innovation delivery partners, Innovation division staff supporting Deadly Innovation, and external stakeholders reflected a high level of confidence that Deadly Innovation has been successfully delivered according to this intent, with findings in Section 0 speaking to the impact that has been created, including jobs created and supported.

All Deadly Innovation activities, initiatives and investments align with the documented intent and outcomes of the Deadly Innovation Strategy

A qualitative review of available documentation for activities, initiatives and investments, especially documents seeking approval from Directors General and the Advance Queensland Program Board supports that the Deadly Innovation activities outlined in Figure 2 (in Section 4.1 above) align with Hear, Share, Activate, and the actions outlined in Figure 8 (in Section 5.1 above). Approval documents generally articulate the relevant aspects of the Deadly Innovation Strategy that the individual investment targets.

Limited design documentation of the Deadly Innovation extension activities (e.g. DITID Indigenous Participation Plan) was provided to the evaluation, but through interviews with Deadly Innovation program staff, these extension activities are considered aligned to the Strategy aim of “Share”.

A mapping of the AQ-funded elements of Deadly Innovation against the aims of the Strategy (Hear, Share, Activate) and the AQ Strategy (Supporting culture, Building capability, Fostering collaboration, Increasing investment, Scaling for jobs and growth) is contained in Appendix 3, Table 9.

The design of the Deadly Innovation Strategy as a transformative strategy rather than a program has enabled an agile and organic approach to delivery that creates room for the variety of investments, activities and initiatives needed to grow Indigenous innovation

The strengths of the Strategy itself as a design document was highlighted by Deadly Innovation program staff as critical to the success in the delivery of the Deadly Innovation portfolio, and as such the following section shows elements of the design that contributed to this.

The flexibility of delivery enabled by the Strategy has successfully allowed Deadly Innovation to respond to the needs identified by Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities

A genuine commitment to self-determination as expressed in the Deadly Innovation Strategy required flexibility to be built into the delivery of Deadly Innovation. The combination of several elements creates a high level of flexibility in terms of the specific investments, initiatives and programs possible within Deadly Innovation. The Strategy outlines high-level actions in its Implementation section as shown in Figure 8. The Strategy also twice states that actions and programs are flexible to respond to new opportunities as they arise.

Deadly Innovation program staff agreed that this flexibility allowed them to establish the broad range of investments, initiatives and programs needed to support Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities, as well as creating a platform to drive reform across government. They also reflected that the Innovation division had not tried to work before in the culturally informed way as required by the approach laid out in the Deadly Innovation Strategy, hence the flexibility created the opportunity to pilot a range of initiatives on a small scale to test what would be most effective.

²⁵ [Advance Queensland Deadly Innovation Strategy, 2019](#)

Careful alignment with existing government initiatives and mapping of existing opportunities for Indigenous innovators strengthened the design of the Strategy

The Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2018-21²⁶ provided some of the underpinning language and structure for the Deadly Innovation Strategy, creating a strong link between Deadly Innovation and whole of government priorities. Deadly Innovation program staff suggested that seeing the three actions of the RAP of Relationships, Respect and Opportunities reflected in the Deadly Innovation Strategy increased familiarity and understanding of Deadly Innovation for government stakeholders, though the evaluation could not verify this suggestion.

The mapping of existing government and philanthropic programs supporting Indigenous innovators and business conducted by Deadly Innovation program staff focused the intent of the Deadly Innovation Strategy and informed its approach of supporting change agents. The mapping found that there was a gap in programming specifically to support Indigenous innovators, and that few programs were designed to develop trust and relationships either through personal or community contact. It also highlighted the need to support Indigenous innovators applying for programs, which became a key part of Deadly Innovation.²⁷

The Deadly Innovation Strategy capitalised on existing momentum within government with the below strategies, policies and documents supporting the intent of the Deadly Innovation Strategy:

- whole-of-government Moving Ahead Strategy 2016–2022²⁸
- Queensland Indigenous Procurement Policy (QIPP)²⁹
- Queensland Government Building and Construction Training Policy³⁰

Though they are not mentioned in the Deadly Innovation Strategy document, two other important documents and agreements were also contemporaneous with the development of the Deadly Innovation Strategy: the Statement of Commitment to reframe the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the Queensland Government³¹ and the signing of the Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap³² by the Council of Australian Governments and the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations.

Quantifying the success of the Deadly Innovation delivery and monitoring and reporting on progress is difficult due to the design of the Strategy and limited reporting processes

The design of the Deadly Innovation Strategy as a transformative agenda and high-level action plan necessarily does not include measures of success or timelines against which progress can be measured

While there are strong qualitative indicators that allow the success of the delivery of Deadly Innovation as a portfolio to be understood and articulated, it is challenging to make a quantitative assessment. As stated above, the design of the Strategy as a high-level action plan was needed to give Deadly Innovation program staff the flexibility to support change agents and trial new projects. However, the absence of timelines, measures of success or key metrics at the portfolio level in the Strategy or other Deadly Innovation internal documentation creates an over-reliance on qualitative measures of progress and success in this evaluation.

An example of the challenge to the evaluation that the lack of measures of success or metrics poses is seeking to understand the success of the various training and mentoring activities within the portfolio. The

²⁶ [Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan, 2018 - 2021](#)

²⁷ Deadly Innovation internal document – “Research and Mapping of existing programs,” 2018

²⁸ [Moving Ahead – A strategic approach to increasing the participation of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland's economy, 2016-2022](#)

²⁹ [The Queensland Indigenous \(Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander\) Procurement Policy](#)

³⁰ [Queensland Government Building and Construction Training Policy](#)

³¹ [Statement of Commitment to reframe the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the Queensland Government](#)

³² [Closing the Gap Partnership Agreement, 2019 - 2029](#)

Strategy lists “building expertise through education, business acumen, digital know-how and mentoring” as a government action, but does not define a metric to measure this by. As such, relevant activities within the Deadly Innovation portfolio have defined and reported outputs related to training and mentoring in different ways that cannot be aggregated into a portfolio-wide output. For example, the Yarrabah Business Accelerator “engaged with 37 individuals to provide accelerator activities”³³, Open for Business “supported” 129 businesses “through detailed discussions and referrals”³⁴, and 39 individuals attended Deadly Digits webinars³⁵. Compounding this definitional challenge is the lack of quantitative data on participants’ journeys through training and mentoring activities as discussed in Section 6.2.1.

Portfolio-level planning and reporting systems focus on contract and financial management, with limited formal reporting on the portfolio’s progress beyond AQ reporting requirements

Neither the Strategy nor internal program documentation establish a framework for regular reporting on the progress of the portfolio as a whole or its individual investments beyond AQ’s quarterly program reporting requirements.³⁶ Deadly Innovation program staff expressed frustration that these reporting requirements did not capture the qualitative impact of Deadly Innovation, particularly when related to jobs supported. Deadly Innovation staff highlighted for example, that the relatively small number of jobs created in Cherbourg has a much higher impact for the job holders and the community more broadly, and that this impact could only be understood by qualitative means. Various reports were produced for the BIRG alongside a summary of key programs and initiatives (all in 2020) to articulate the qualitative impact of the Deadly Innovation portfolio, however no further reports were received by the evaluation.

Innovation division staff developed systems to manage financial commitments that allow for a point-in-time understanding of pipeline, committed and expended funding (please see Section 6.1.2). This is supported by clear documentation of contracts, variations and milestone reporting for individual investments and activities.

Proposal and contract documents accurately document the intended delivery of investments, however extension activities have little documentation or reporting

There is clear documentation of contracts and variations for all initiatives and activities that required investment by the department that articulate milestones, planned activities and expected outcomes for those initiatives and activities. However, there is little project documentation available for Deadly Innovation extension activities that did not require investment by the department. Assessment of their progress, outputs and effectiveness has only been possible through interviews undertaken as part of the evaluation. The Deadly Innovation extension activities (see Figure 2) do not contribute directly to any of the AQ quarterly reporting key measures therefore the work and influence of the Deadly Innovation program staff is not captured within Advance Queensland reporting.

Participation in individual investments, initiatives and activities has generally met expectations, despite COVID-19 and withdrawal of support from key stakeholders within community businesses

Participation from Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities in Deadly Innovation initiatives has been generally strong

Levels of participation in initiatives and investments funded through Deadly Innovation funding or other AQ funding that were designed to engage with Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities have generally met expectations of Deadly Innovation program staff and delivery partners. Table 2 outlines the available data on participation rates. Appendix 4 provides further details on the initiatives and investments.

³³ Yarrabah Business Accelerator Stage 1 Report

³⁴ Open for Business Final Report

³⁵ Deadly Digits Milestone 5 Report

³⁶ [Advance Queensland Performance Reports](#)

Table 2 | Available data on participation in Deadly Innovation initiatives

Initiative	Comments on participation
Deadly Deals	48 Eols and applications were received, and 8 businesses were successful. All available funding was allocated. ³⁷
Indigenous Native Food Program (INFP)	In Phase 1, over 25 enquiries were received from businesses and individuals interested in being part of the program, 12 of these entered the INFP Pathway and engaged consistently with INFP program staff within the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF). ³⁸
AQ Indigenous Pathways Scholarships	51 students have been supported with scholarships and strong interest in applications was reported by TAFE and Central Queensland University (CQU). ³⁹
Indigenous Industry Business Cases	Recipients of industry business case funding have remained engaged with Deadly Innovation program staff through delays due to COVID-19 and changing community stakeholder support. ⁴⁰
One Business	Over 200 businesses have registered for One Business. Good participation in regional events has been reported by One Business staff, and approximately 10 businesses have remained engaged in monthly webinars. ⁴¹
Open for Business	Open for Business contacted over 400 businesses and had detailed engagement with 129 businesses. ⁴²
Cherbourg initiatives	Community support and participation in the Service Centre and AI Project initiatives has remained strong, though some problems with trainee retention in the AI Project have been experienced. ⁴³
Yarrabah Business Accelerator	The Yarrabah Business Accelerator has engaged with approximately 40 individuals to develop their business ideas, and 50 students and young people through entrepreneur awareness sessions. ⁴⁴
Deadly Digits	Uptake of Deadly Digits licenses and webinars has been lower than anticipated due to a lack of targeted marketing connecting with community, concerns about Indigenous ownership of the platform, and a need for greater education about the use of accounting software. ⁴⁵
Indigenous Business Connect/Mob Invest	The initiative attracted two investors to one of the Indigenous Industry Business Cases, but the initiative did not continue. ⁴⁶

³⁷ Application and financial reporting data supplied by DTIS

³⁸ INFP Phase 1 Final Report

³⁹ CQU and TAFE Queensland Reporting. Figure includes the 51 students who are currently completing or have completed studies, and not those who have withdrawn from study following receipt of the scholarship.

⁴⁰ Interviews with Deadly Innovation program staff and delivery partners

⁴¹ One Business Milestone Reports

⁴² Open for Business Final Report

⁴³ Interviews with community stakeholders, Deadly Innovation program staff and delivery partners

⁴⁴ Yarrabah Business Accelerator Milestone Reporting

⁴⁵ Deadly Digits Milestone Reporting

⁴⁶ Interviews with Deadly Innovation program staff

Initiative	Comments on participation
LOGiT RAP Tool (weavr) and Community Governance Wealth Sharing Model	The Indigenous businesses that were contracted to deliver these investments collaborated successfully and remained engaged with Deadly Innovation program staff to deliver project outputs. ⁴⁷

The Deadly Innovation portfolio successfully rebuilt momentum through COVID-19-related delays and challenges

COVID-19 had a wide-reaching impact on the delivery of the Deadly Innovation portfolio, particularly given the community and face to face focus of many initiatives. Stakeholders identified the following key impacts:

- Communities and businesses were forced into a survival mentality due to lockdowns, reducing interest and ability to engage in innovation.
- Travel restrictions and the closing of Aboriginal communities hampered effective engagement with remote communities.
- Difficulty transitioning to virtual engagement due to lack of equipment and computer literacy, and 'Zoom fatigue' reduced the effectiveness of virtual training and engagement activities.

Despite these challenges, Deadly Innovation initiatives and activities continued to be successfully delivered through the COVID-19 pandemic and initiatives that experienced delays have resumed under contract variations with adjusted timeframes. The Deadly Innovation portfolio’s most successful response to the pandemic was the Open for Business initiative (see Figure 15).

⁴⁷ Interviews CSIRO and MEGT

Figure 15 | Case study of the successful response by the Deadly Innovation portfolio to COVID-19⁴⁸

SNAPSHOT CASE STUDY

FIRST OF ITS KIND STATE-WIDE SUPPORT AND REFERRAL HOTLINE FOR INDIGENOUS BUSINESSES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

OVERVIEW

The BIRG identified the need for tailored support to Indigenous businesses, and Deadly Innovation listened.


Due to the large-scale impacts of travel restrictions, lockdowns, and the sudden need for digital operations, Indigenous businesses and communities faced enormous barriers engaging in business activities and accessing support services. The BIRG identified the need for a culturally competent support service, and through an Indigenous business-only procurement process, Iscariot Media was awarded the contract to design and deliver an Indigenous business-to-business support and referral hotline.

The Open for Business program was designed for the needs of Indigenous businesses, generating trust and a sense of community.

The Open for Business program had three key components in its design:

1. A phone hotline staffed by Indigenous business agents, providing information and warm referrals for all calls.
2. A social media campaign that could build awareness of Open for Business services, promoted COVID-safe practices, as well as shared stories.
3. Town hall events held online to share stories about businesses impacted by COVID-19, promoting a sense of community with attendees.

"Once we introduced ourselves as a 100% Indigenous business, then they started to relax because they didn't have to translate what they had to discuss. They knew it would be understood." – Open for Business Operator



Open for Business clients shared their stories, providing close peer support and promoting resilience

KEY SUCCESS AREAS FROM THE PROGRAM

Despite COVID-19-related obstacles, the Open for Business program was highly successful in achieving its aims:

- 437 Queensland indigenous businesses contacted through hotline, calls and email
- 129 businesses supported through detailed discussions and warm referrals
- Over 34,000 impressions on social media within the first 3 months of operation
- 14 Indigenous business agents employed and trained to deliver support

Changing support from local community leadership within community businesses has set back delivery of several initiatives

Deadly Innovation program staff and delivery partners highlighted that establishing community-owned businesses in remote and rural areas requires the buy-in and support of local community leadership, particularly Aboriginal Shire Councils who may be the only organisation in the community that is able to auspice government or other grants.

Through interviews with delivery partners, community stakeholders and Deadly Innovation program staff, the evaluation has understood that the Indigenous Industry Business Case projects in Woorabinda and Wujal Wujal have been significantly delayed by the partial or complete withdrawal of change agents due to ill health or relocation due to work, or changes in the capacity of the local Aboriginal Shire Council to support the projects, though work is ongoing in both of these projects to address these challenges. See Section 6.2.3 for further detail on the progress of the Indigenous Industry Business Cases.

⁴⁸ Data drawn from Open for Business reporting and design documents provided by DTIS.

The Deadly Innovation support for Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities to apply for funding resulted in stronger application and proposal success rates

A core element of the Deadly Innovation approach was to provide support to Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities to prepare applications and proposals. Interviews with Deadly Innovation program staff indicated that this enabled a higher quality of application, thus strengthening the eventual contract terms and delivering better efficiency and effectiveness through the contract process. Feedback from recipients on the application process was generally highly positive and is discussed in Section 6.2.1.

Figure 16 | Eol and application success rates for Deadly Deals and Ignite Ideas

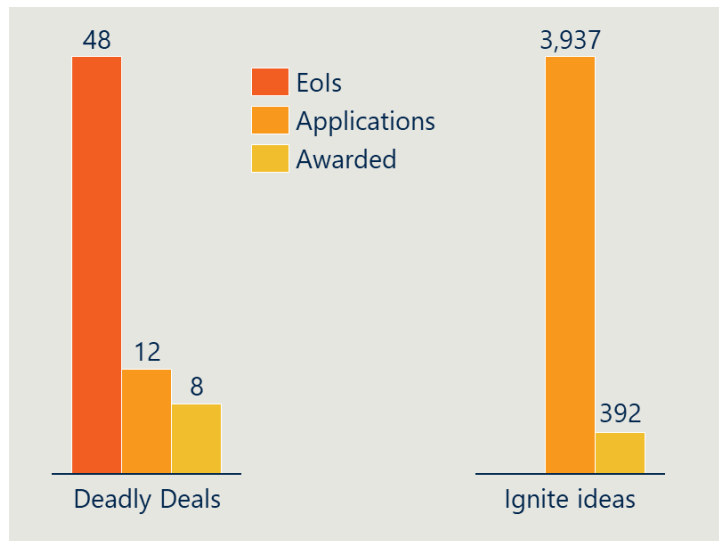


Figure 16 compares success rates for the Deadly Deals program and the INFP to AQ's Ignite Ideas fund applications. Deadly Deals and Ignite Ideas are the most similar AQ grants in terms of being an open application process. Deadly Innovation program staff indicated that the use of an Eol process in Deadly Deals allowed Deadly Innovation program staff and evaluators to identify and support applicants who were eligible and ready to undergo the full application process. Figure 16 indicates that this contributed to significantly lifting full application success rates compared to Ignite Ideas.

INFP staff worked closely with businesses to identify suitable candidates without formal applications. Twelve businesses were identified as being ready to enter the INFP pathway following preliminary engagement between DAF staff and over 25 businesses who enquired about the program. These 12 businesses entered the pathway and received support from DAF to develop their product, and six were chosen as priority projects.

The Deadly Innovation portfolio includes 12 grants to support Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities made using the department's specific purpose grant (see Section 6.1.2 for more detailed discussion of the specific purpose grant). This alternative funding mechanism had a nominal success rate of 100 per cent given that it was a closed negotiation process rather than an open application.

One of the most significant, intangible outputs of Deadly Innovation is its successful leveraging of in-kind support from organisations, businesses and other government departments

The high value of in-kind support provided to Deadly Innovation initiatives, activities and investment was articulated frequently by Deadly Innovation program staff, government and industry partners and Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities. While it was not possible for the evaluation to quantify the value of this in-kind support, it is important for the evaluation to recognise it as core output contributing to successful delivery. Deadly Innovation program staff indicated during interviews that they expend discretionary effort as required to support a range of stakeholders in a variety of ways to develop key relationships. Deadly Innovation program staff also indicated that they made themselves available outside of regular business hours to speak with Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities to meet their diverse and unique needs. Non-government Deadly Innovation delivery partners indicated that they have volunteered their time to supporting Deadly Innovation activities and investments, and businesses and government stakeholders including Fujitsu, TAFE Queensland and the Peregian Digital Hub have provided staff time, equipment and facilities in Cherbourg at reduced or no cost.

However, as discussed in more detail in Section 7.1.5, the partial reliance on in-kind support is a key risk to quantifying the resourcing and funding required to sustainably deliver the Deadly Innovation portfolio.

6.1.2 KLE 2: What are the core characteristics of the Deadly Innovation approach? (Process)

2

Key finding: Deadly Innovation has developed a novel approach to supporting Indigenous innovation guided by deeply held core principles

The Deadly Innovation approach evolved to enable agile and organic delivery

Through engagement with Deadly Innovation program staff and DTIS Innovation division Senior Executives, the evaluation has identified key elements of the novel Deadly Innovation approach to supporting Indigenous innovation. Deadly Innovation was not designed and structured according to these key elements, rather, these elements have evolved in response to challenges, risks and opportunities throughout delivery. Figure 17 outlines these elements, which are stepped out through the rest of Section 6.1.2 below.

Figure 17 | Key elements of the Deadly Innovation approach

PRINCIPLES

Deadly Innovation has been delivered according to the core principles of self-determination and commercial pathways. Self-determination commits Deadly Innovation to being led by change agents in Indigenous communities and businesses to take a strengths-based approach. Commercial pathways means focussing on the viability of a business and consistently asking “what’s next”. Hear, Share, Activate is a how-to guide to operationalising these principles, supported by working towards both commercial push and pull (i.e. ensuring both that the seller is set up for success and a buyer is ready and waiting.) A broad and culturally appropriate understanding of innovation in the Indigenous context underpinned all work.

AUTHORISING ENVIRONMENT

A unique informal authorising environment was required to enable the novel Deadly Innovation approach. Executive level champions were critical to mobilising departmental staff to work differently and drive practice and process change. The Strategy itself gave senior government stakeholders confidence that Deadly Innovation was aligned to government strategy and supported at the highest levels.

RELATIONSHIPS

A broad range of relationships with government, industry and Indigenous stakeholders was needed to support the variety of activities, investments and initiatives under Deadly Innovation. This included:

- Relationships with the BIRG as a key influencer in the authorising environment and providing access to truth (real-time intelligence related to business sentiment and conditions) in the Indigenous business community.
- Harnessing the cultural capital and leadership of key decision makers and influencers in community and industry.
- Building strong connections to Indigenous business networks and meetups such as Black Coffee.
- Connecting and supporting non-Indigenous Deadly Innovation delivery partners with Indigenous expertise.
- A network of specialists across government and industry to support the wide range of activities within the Deadly Innovation portfolio.

CAPABILITIES

In order to successfully deliver the novel approach, staff require a unique set of capabilities. This includes:

- The ability to build strong and trusted relationships with Indigenous businesses and communities, and knowing when to support and when to lead.
- Keen business acumen informed by deep understanding of community and a strong understanding of the innovation funding and support landscape.
- The ability to communicate strategically and persuasively with government and translate government processes flexibly to support new ways of working while ensuring compliance with corporate and other good governance requirements.
- A strong and trusting relationship between staff and leadership that empowers and supports staff to lead change and exercise cultural leadership.

PROCESSES, GOVERNANCE AND TEAM STRUCTURE

Processes, governance mechanisms and decision-making structures have been used and developed to enable the responsiveness required by the approach and manage key risks. These include:

- A one-off specific purpose grant that gave staff a legitimised, flexible and timely mechanism for funding projects.
- A specifically designed method of tracking the funding “pipeline” was developed in response to the need to make and keep appropriate commitments to community.
- A personal ethics framework was developed to increase confidence that potential conflicts of interest were being handled appropriately.
- Ensuring that Deadly Innovation program staff had no involvement in financial decision-making or approval processes increased transparency.
- Giving Deadly Innovation program staff a voice in Innovation division senior leadership improved information flows to improve decision making.

Deadly Innovation has been delivered according to the core principles of self-determination and commercial pathways

Deadly Innovation program staff and delivery partners have a shared understanding of self-determination and commercial pathways

Program staff and delivery partners articulated common themes that defined its design and delivery. These themes centred on core principles of self-determination and commercial pathways which, collectively, guided operations and decision-making throughout the Deadly Innovation portfolio.

Self-determination

Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination underpinned the approach to Deadly Innovation in three tangible ways. Firstly, program staff shared a commitment to ensuring that Indigenous voice was part of all work. Secondly, Deadly Innovation activities were deliberately positioned to recognise and leverage the strengths of Indigenous communities and businesses, rather than serve to remediate marginalisation. "We're in the hope space" was quoted several times by program staff, capturing this sentiment. Finally, program staff ensured that projects were Indigenous led, through operationalising the Deadly Innovation approach of supporting change agents in their communities.

Commercial pathways

The demonstrable commercial viability of an innovator's product or service was an essential factor for Deadly Innovation grant funding. For example, program staff pointed to a process of working with prospective Deadly Deals applicants to gauge the market and ascertain potential buyers.

Deadly Innovation program staff consistently ask "what's next" to focus attention on the commercial pathway, both internally as part of planning initiatives, and externally when working with Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities. There must always be clear next steps leading to wealth creation and/or job creation for an initiative to proceed.

The commercial focus of Deadly Innovation also included targeted support for Indigenous small businesses to better understand, navigate and position themselves within government opportunities – recognising the Queensland Government's strengthened commitment to procuring from Indigenous providers through the QIPP. Beyond government, the commercial focus and success of Deadly Innovation investments has been partially driven by the growing influence of corporations' Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs), which often include commitments to support Indigenous businesses.

As a further lever for driving commercial success, a broad range of internal and external stakeholders spoke to the importance of enhancing how Indigenous businesses are perceived by the market. These stakeholders pointed to an underlying lack of confidence among both industry and government agencies that Indigenous businesses are capable of doing the work that they are tendering for. While Deadly Innovation has gone some way to addressing this in the case of individual businesses or agencies, it has been raised as an ongoing challenge. (Refer to Section 7.1.6 for further discussion on challenges.)

Hear, Share, Activate and working towards commercial push and pull provides the framework for operationalising the core principles

Hear, Share, Activate were described as the 'how to' driving self-determination and commercial pathways

Deadly Innovation program staff articulated that 'Hear, Share, Activate' was mobilised as a process, guiding thinking on how best to support change agents:

- 'Hear' recognises that relationships and trust are the necessary foundations of any work with Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities, and that support may be needed for a business to move down the pathway towards commercialisation.

- 'Share' recognises that "coalitions of the willing" from networks across government and industry may be needed to create opportunities or commercial pathways for businesses, and that support might be needed for businesses to access these networks and pathways.
- 'Activate' finds the right source and model of funding to catalyse the business' growth.

Working towards both commercial push and pull increases the chance of success of investments

The Deadly Innovation portfolio's dual focus on both supporting a business and ensuring there is a market for the business can be thought of as working towards both commercial push and pull. This recognises that for a business to be successful, there must be both a seller with the capability and capacity to sell a quality product, and a buyer that is committed to purchasing it. Deadly Innovation program staff share an understanding of this concept and have successfully identified and connected buyers with sellers. The most powerful example of this approach is Deadly Innovation program staff's work finding a foundation customer for the Cherbourg Service Centre which was a necessary precursor to activating funding and support to develop the business.

The core principles are underpinned by a broad and culturally appropriate understanding of innovation in the Indigenous context

Defining *innovation* is a perennial challenge for state governments.⁴⁹ Deadly Innovation built on Advance Queensland's focus on innovation as a driver of economic growth and job creation,⁵⁰ adopting a broad interpretation that recognised both the traditional strengths of Indigenous communities in innovating, solving challenges and adapting,⁵¹ and the different starting points and needs of many Indigenous businesses, innovators and communities compared to non-Indigenous peers and cohorts.

Examples of the latter include:

- First Nations Call Centre: stakeholders acknowledged that setting up a call centre is not, in and of itself, innovative. However, the establishment of a call centre as a driver of community growth, jobs and wealth generation in a rural Indigenous setting, models the innovative methods valued by the Deadly Innovation approach.
- Yarrabah Business Accelerator: similarly, stakeholders commented that Yarrabah activities are driven by a broad and inclusive understanding of innovation, extending the reach of the support offered to individuals and small businesses in the community who want to start or grow a business, regardless of the sector or type of business.

A unique informal authorising environment was required to enable the novel Deadly Innovation approach, created through executive-level champions, and supported by the co-designed Strategy as an authorising document

Strong executive leadership was critical to mobilising departmental staff around the novel approach

The evaluation found that the Deadly Innovation portfolio and program staff had a significant and positive impact on driving increased cultural capability within the department. In the early phases of delivery, the executive leadership team at the time was central to adoption; establishing an authorising environment that championed novel and culturally nuanced approaches to supporting Indigenous businesses and communities. They were also credited with opening the doors required to enable cross-agency collaboration and buy-in. Subsequent executive leaders have continued this stewardship, acknowledging the necessity of the novel approach in meeting the needs of the target population.

⁴⁹ [Queensland State of Innovation 2021 Report](#)

⁵⁰ [Building our Innovation Economy: Advance Queensland Strategy, 2019](#)

⁵¹ See Executive Summary of [Advance Queensland Deadly Innovation Strategy, 2019](#)

The Strategy played a key role legitimising the approach in the eyes of senior government stakeholders

The authorising environment enabled through the Deadly Innovation Strategy was recognised as a significant contributor to the overall success of the Deadly Innovation portfolio. It gave senior decision-makers across government confidence in their decisions to support Deadly Innovation activities, knowing the initiatives and investments were aligned to a government strategy that had been signed off at ministerial level.

A broad range of relationships with government, industry and Indigenous stakeholders were needed to support the variety of activities, investments and initiatives within the Deadly Innovation portfolio

The BIRG was essential in creating the authorising environment and provided real-time intelligence and networks to access truth in the Indigenous business community

The evaluation identified the important role of the BIRG as both the conduit and the intersection between the Indigenous business community and the Queensland Government. From a governmental perspective, the BIRG was a strong legitimising force, enabling and influencing decision-making to support the novel Deadly Innovation approach as it encountered tension and resistance to new ways of working within government. This influence and impact were largely due to the seniority of executive leaders that the BIRG formally advised to, which included Ministers and Directors-General across several government portfolios.

As an advisory group made up of Indigenous business owners, the BIRG had strong connections and relationships with the wider Indigenous business community. This armed members with a deep working understanding of the challenges that Indigenous businesses face, as well as up-to-date intelligence into current and emerging issues. This access to truth was vital to identifying the need and mechanism to support the Indigenous business community through COVID-19 lockdowns in 2020. The Open for Business hotline was developed in response to this feedback, which engaged and supported over 400 business in 12 weeks, detailed above in Figure 15.

Relationships with decision makers and key influencers were essential to mobilising support

Deadly Innovation program staff and delivery partners highlighted the importance of strong, trusted relationships with influencers in communities and industry as a driver of the portfolio's success and expansion – harnessing the cultural and leadership capital of these identified agents of change.

Key examples include the Service Centre's success in Cherbourg, where relationships with Fujitsu, the Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council and other members of the Cherbourg community provided an opportunity to facilitate an introduction and broker an agreement for the Service Centre. Similarly, strong support from Yarrabah community leaders has been critical to the high levels of engagement from the community with the Yarrabah Business Accelerator.

Strong connections to Indigenous business networks and meetups across the state have directly resulted in applications being received

A frequent theme emerging from stakeholders was the connectedness of the Indigenous business community. The Deadly Innovation portfolio both leveraged and strengthened these connections. For example, Deadly Innovation program staff would attend Black Coffee⁵² meetup events to promote and share opportunities existing within the portfolio of activities and identify possible participants – thus broadening the reach of the portfolio. One of the Deadly Deals grant recipients spoke about their exposure to the Deadly Innovation program staff and the opportunities available to them through such an event. Similarly, Deadly Innovation program staff facilitated opportunities for other agencies (e.g. QIC) to attend these meetups, to share opportunities and further strengthen government-industry connections.

⁵² [Black Coffee](#) is an Indigenous business networking event held in regions around Australia.

Strong, pre-existing relationships between Deadly Innovation program staff and Indigenous business networks also provided the foundations and enabling conditions for new Deadly Innovation activities. For example, CSIRO (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation) and MEGT's (Melbourne Eastern Group Training) role as "Innovating Partners" was defined in the formal collaborative agreement between DTIS, CSIRO, MEGT and LOGiT in the development of the Weavr RAP tool. This formal collaboration was driven by Deadly Innovation program staff's network of relationships, bringing the group of four organisations together, recognising that the gap in the market that CSIRO had acknowledged wasn't unique to just CSIRO and could be addressed collaboratively.

As per the examples above, in many aspects, Deadly Innovation program staff functioned as a brokering service, connecting Indigenous communities with industry and government. Deadly Innovation program staff's presence and relationships within the Indigenous business community has positioned the Strategy and the Deadly Innovation approach as respected, connected and influential.

Ensuring strong connection to Indigenous business experts has been essential to informing non-Indigenous businesses providing services through the Deadly Innovation portfolio

In instances where Deadly Innovation activities were not being undertaken by an Indigenous business, expertise from an Indigenous third-party provided cultural advice and leadership. Examples of this include:

- The Dulin Duwa Centre for Indigenous Business Leadership and the University of Melbourne's Indigenous Business School provided support developing training and workshops to the Yarrabah Business Accelerator.
- Flashblak, an Indigenous communications specialist and small business owner, ensured marketing materials and the look and feel of the Deadly Digits product were culturally appropriate.

A broad network of specialists across government and the private sector is required to leverage the right support for the wide variety of business types and sectors that are involved in Deadly Innovation

While Deadly Innovation program staff displayed a broad skill set of capabilities to administer the portfolio of activities and investments (see below), the technical and commercial nature of some individual initiatives required specialist expertise. This need was particularly pronounced in the Indigenous Native Food Program (INFP) in which Deadly Innovation program staff collaborated with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) to leverage DAF's food technology expertise as well as agricultural industry supply chains and logistical expertise. Government stakeholders involved in INFP highlighted their reliance on the expertise provided by the Far North Queensland Food Incubator. This expertise included support for small-scale operations and start-ups, as well as community-based projects.

Deadly Innovation program staff require a unique set of capabilities to successfully deliver the novel approach

Deadly Innovation program staff and delivery partners identified the following capabilities necessary to work differently to support Indigenous innovation in a culturally responsive way within a government setting:

Connections with Indigenous communities and industry

Deadly Innovation program staff and delivery partners demonstrated the ability to build strong and trusted relationships with Indigenous innovators and businesses. This enabled a deep understanding of the challenges Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities face when engaging with government processes, and the support required to help them overcome this. Importantly, Deadly Innovation program staff were discerning with when to support and when to lead – balancing explicit direction with agency-building in pursuit of innovators' self-determination. This connectedness and understanding of Indigenous communities underpinned, and was further strengthened by a proactive approach of going out into communities to identify change agents and businesses suitable for support.

"Deadly Innovation goes out and finds businesses – rather than waiting for the world to come to you, you go out into the world, and you talk to people. The program itself is an activator, as people can see themselves in the program." – BIRG member

Business acumen informed by understanding of community

Deadly Innovation program staff's connectedness with community was complemented with a keen business acumen, including commercial and entrepreneurial intelligence. An understanding of the funding and support landscape, which included an awareness of targeted government support opportunities, enabled Deadly Innovation program staff to direct participants to the appropriate technical and business support for their specific needs, context and sector. It also sharpened program staff's understanding of where further funding and support can be leveraged, such as other government agencies (e.g. QIC) or corporations (e.g. Fujitsu), and how best to activate these opportunities.

A broad expertise in innovation and understanding of how to grow businesses was required to support the variety of business capabilities and sizes entering the pipeline of Deadly Innovation activities. This range included communities new to thinking about commercialising products (e.g. Wujal Wujal) through to supporting innovators with strong business backgrounds (e.g. some Deadly Deals recipients).

Understanding and flexible application of government processes and settings

Deadly Innovation program staff have demonstrated a strong capability to navigate and influence within public service settings. In the early phases, strategic leadership and a strong policy mindset was essential to translating gaps in government's current support and provision of services into something that government could understand, articulate publicly, and drive forward.

Similarly, Innovation division staff supporting Deadly Innovation have acted as a conduit between the external and internal requirements of the program, translating the novel approach and activities of program staff into project documentation appropriate for government audiences. These "translators" also need a working understanding of the principles underpinning the Deadly Innovation Strategy and the pace and nuance of working with Indigenous businesses and communities.

Deadly Innovation program staff demonstrated an eagerness and capability to work flexibly with other government agencies in novel and needs-driven ways. This collaboration included activities that may have been outside their recognised scope of work, but was purposeful in supporting Indigenous innovation within other departments' portfolios and activities, for example:

- collaborating with DAF to support innovation in fisheries through the Indigenous Fishing Permits
- liaising with QIC to identify and promote opportunities for investment in Indigenous innovators.

This flexibility also extended to ways of working within the Department. While Deadly Innovation program staff ensured complete compliance with critical government HR, risk and finance processes and policy, there was also a willingness to go outside typical public service protocols and speak directly to those in positions of power and influence in order to progress activities.

A strong and trusting relationship between staff and leadership that empowers and supports staff to lead change and exercise cultural leadership

Deadly Innovation program staff consistently cited the strong, trusting leadership that fostered the portfolio's success. Program staff characterised this leadership capability through three key themes: firstly, leaders within Deadly Innovation program staff and executive leaders within the department more broadly recognised and supported the innovative capabilities and entrepreneurialism within the team. Secondly, leaders saw the need to be led by Indigenous staff within the Department and understood the importance of leveraging this cultural capital. Lastly, and as a consequence of the two former themes, leaders empowered Indigenous Deadly Innovation program staff to exercise this cultural leadership – both internally and outwardly.

In turn, Innovation Senior Executives highlighted that this strong and trusting relationship needed to be created through program staff's ability to brief and inform leaders, and demonstrate a track record of delivery.

Collectively, this created the informal authorising conditions to design and deliver Deadly Innovation in a unique, culturally responsive way.

Processes, governance mechanisms and decision-making structures have been developed to enable the approach, often in response to challenges

The one-off specific purpose grant gave a legitimised, flexible and timely mechanism for funding projects

Internal stakeholders highlighted the utility of the Department's pre-existing one-off specific purpose grants as a mechanism for providing Deadly Innovation grants to recipients. Since the initial implementation of activities within the Deadly Innovation portfolio, the process for administering these grants has been systematically revised to strengthen probity and streamline processes. Reported advantages of one-off specific purpose grants included:

- Grants can be issued flexibly in response to emerging opportunities and priorities – reflecting principles of innovation.
- Relatively streamlined approval process and timelines: Deputy Director-General approval enabled by departmental delegations.
- Grant briefing process allowed for the clear and deliberate exclusion of Deadly Innovation program staff who were working alongside applicants from decision making, reducing concerns around perceived conflicts of interest.
- Approved grants are legally committed through standardised short- and long-form grant agreements, which can be tailored for individual programs.
- The pre-existence of this grant type as a legitimate funding mechanism provided a foundational precedent for use in Deadly Innovation investments.
- While minimal reporting requirements attached to the grant were attractive to recipients, this needed to be balanced with the embedded formal reporting processes and the identified need to strengthen reporting processes across the portfolio (see Section 6.1.1).

A specifically designed method of tracking the funding "pipeline" was developed in response to the need to make and keep appropriate commitments to community

Given the complexity and variability of funding sources for each Deadly Innovation activity – across the three categories of activities that collectively make up the portfolio (see Figure 2), as well as the funding leveraged from other agencies and parties – monitoring financial commitments emerged as a challenge for Deadly Innovation program staff. This was further complicated by the need to maintain trust with community and honour commitments, while operating in a government context in which 'committed' funds relate only to instances where a contract has been executed. There was a growing need to also capture pipeline commitments – anticipated funding commitments made with communities and businesses for whom applications and proposals are still in progress, or yet to begin.

To overcome this characteristic of the Deadly Innovation fund, a monitoring spreadsheet was developed that effectively tracked the availability of funding across actual and pipeline commitments. This served as a strengthened governance process in response to the novel Deadly Innovation approach of walking alongside and supporting prospective grant applicants, providing clearer oversight of which funds were expended, contractually committed, pipeline commitments, or uncommitted.

A personal ethics framework was developed to increase confidence that potential conflicts of interest were being handled appropriately

Perceptions of conflicts of interest emerged as a significant risk to the Deadly Innovation novel, culturally responsive approach. Deadly Innovation program staff described the primary driver of this risk was that

government institutions are yet to fully reconcile the need to employ and empower Indigenous employees as a way of driving community engagement, with the strong relationships that are essential in the small Indigenous innovation and business sector and the risks of potential conflicts of interest that this creates.

To overcome this, Deadly Innovation Indigenous program staff worked with departmental Ethics and Integrity team to develop a personal ethics framework to alleviate potential concerns of government and Indigenous community stakeholders. However, it is important to note that this solution was devised at significant time cost to the Deadly Innovation Indigenous program staff and may be in addition to their obligations under the Public Sector Code of Conduct.

Ensuring that Deadly Innovation program staff were not involved in financial decision-making or approval processes increased transparency

As per Innovation division policy, Deadly Innovation program staff who were working with and supporting prospective grant applicants were excluded from the formal grant approval process, including briefing and decision-making.

However, it is important to note that, while removed from approval processes, as the day-to-day face of Deadly Innovation, program staff played a key role in submitting opportunities for consideration and approval.

Consolidating Deadly Innovation staff under a single Director improved information flows to inform decision making and create efficiencies

An internal evolution within the Department's governance model has been to move the Deadly Innovation portfolio, including the Program Manager and Policy Advisor under the line management of the Director of Regional Engagement. This was, in part, driven by a growing breadth of activities and concern among Innovation Senior Executives that in-principle commitments were being made to businesses and communities that would be reputationally difficult to not approve at an executive level when the information was presented. Deadly Innovation program staff highlighted that this move has strengthened their voice to leadership, and Innovation Senior Executives agreed that the change in line management is working to reduce this concern but that there are opportunities to further strengthen these processes.

Figure 18 | The Cherbourg Service Centre demonstrates elements of the Deadly Innovation approach in action

CASE STUDY

CHERBOURG SERVICE CENTRE

OVERVIEW

In 2022 the First Nations Cherbourg Service Centre was established, commencing a three-year pilot. The Service Centre is a community-controlled not-for-profit business that supports Fujitsu and other large clients as a full-service contact centre providing phone and IT support to customers.

A core element of the Service Centre model is the work readiness training provided through TAFE Queensland to employees before they start, building core skills and setting up staff to succeed. For many of the staff, it is their first job, or the first time that they have used digital skills. The Service Centre is located on TAFE Queensland's Nurunderi campus.

The Service Centre has generated significant economic and employment opportunities for the Cherbourg community, providing career pathways in technology and digital skills related roles. The Service Centre has since hired more than 10 employees and has generated significant interest from large corporations and government departments.



SUCCESS

Key aspects of the Deadly Innovation approach were mobilised, catalysing the successful establishment of the Cherbourg Service Centre and creating 10+ jobs in community, with more on the way. The Service Centre's success has seen growing interest from industry and government in becoming customers in Cherbourg and establishing similar models elsewhere.



THE PRINCIPLES BROUGHT THE COMMUNITY, GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY TOGETHER

Deadly Innovation program staff listened deeply to the community and spent significant time developing trust on the ground in community, including with the Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council. Through this process, employment models were adapted to ensure a greater number of more flexible jobs could be offered to meet community needs, and identified a change agent in the local community to manage the Service Centre. Deadly Innovation program staff ensured that a foundational customer (Fujitsu) and relevant partners had been found and committed to the project before beginning consultations with community to ensure that the project was commercially viable.

THE AUTHORISING ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTED THE INITIATIVE THROUGH LONG DELAYS FINDING A FOUNDATION CUSTOMER

DTIS leadership backed the project from the start, and approved significant investment of Deadly Innovation program staff time and effort into its development.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHANGE AGENTS AND CHAMPIONS HAVE BEEN CRITICAL TO MOMENTUM, AND OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Close relationships with Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council, TAFE Queensland, and Fujitsu meant that Deadly Innovation program staff could holistically understand the needs of the community and effectively engage with agents for change in building and sustaining momentum for the project, despite technical and training challenges.

DEADLY INNOVATION STAFF'S CAPABILITIES WERE CRITICAL

Deadly Innovation program staff's capabilities were critical in providing *"the catalytic energy and connection to bring the ecosystem together in Cherbourg"* - Cherbourg Service Centre stakeholder.

THE ONE-OFF SPECIAL PURPOSE GRANT FUNDED INITIATIVES

Departmental processes enabled a one-off special purpose grant to fund access to high-speed internet needed to get the project off the ground.

6.2 Effectiveness evaluation

KLE 3: How effectively did the Deadly Innovation approach respond to the needs of Indigenous innovators and communities to achieve outcomes for key stakeholders, including government and indigenous innovators?

3

Key findings: Deadly Innovation has achieved many of its intended outcomes under Hear, Share, Activate



Deadly Innovation has successfully built trust and relationships with Indigenous peoples and communities



Deadly Innovation has created increased access to innovation opportunities for Indigenous businesses, individuals and communities



Deadly Innovation has activated the right funding mechanisms and enablers to create self determination



6.2.1 **HEAR:** Deadly Innovation has successfully built trust and relationships with Indigenous peoples and communities

Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities place a high level of value and trust in their relationship with Deadly Innovation program staff and delivery partners

All external stakeholders interviewed spoke highly positively of their relationship with Deadly Innovation program staff, and partners involved in delivering Deadly Innovation programs. Stakeholders consistently highlighted Deadly Innovation program staff and delivery partners' ability to build relationships, and their willingness to go above and beyond in supporting them.

"I felt very safe working with the grant application support staff, and the finance staff involved in the management of the grant. I was able to discuss openly any issues I was having with project management which may have affected the deadlines. At no point in time did I feel like I couldn't trust the people I was working with. The sense of cultural safety flowed from the pride of staff in the work they do, their ability to be able to talk in both yarning and educating terms, and through open and honest conversations." – Deadly Innovation grant recipient.

Relationships and trust were built by "moving at the speed of trust", building mutual accountability, delivering on commitments and meeting people where they are at

"Moving at the speed of trust" was used by several internal and external stakeholders to describe Deadly Innovation program staff and delivery partners' success in building relationships and trust with Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities. Deadly Innovation program staff and delivery partners were

described by external stakeholders as willing to invest time building a personal and genuine relationship. This was demonstrated by the careful process of building trust with the Cherbourg community prior to the launch of the Service Centre which involved several rounds of open consultation and opportunities for community members to ask questions and understand the project. Cherbourg Service Centre employees and Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council members felt heard through this process and saw Deadly Innovation program staff as partners.

Building mutual accountability and delivering on commitments were emphasised by Deadly Innovation program staff and Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities interviewed through the evaluation as crucial to building trust between government and Indigenous communities. These stakeholders highlighted Indigenous communities' perception of governments as over promising and under delivering on social impact for Indigenous communities in Australia, and that accountability and commitment were crucial to overcoming this perception. Deadly Innovation program staff highlighted that it was important to carefully commit only to what could feasibly be delivered, but also that it was critical that Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities delivered on their side of the commitment and staff were selective of who they worked with based on innovators, businesses and communities' willingness to do so. Several businesses interviewed through the evaluation valued the high expectations that Deadly Innovation program staff put on them, and staff's genuine honesty in engaging with them about accountability.

Meeting people where they were at carries a figurative and literal sense in terms of Deadly Innovation. Figuratively, Deadly Innovation program staff were able to build successful relationships with innovators, businesses and communities across a wide range of sectors and levels of complexity or maturity of their business. The individualised approach to training, mentoring and support through One Business, the INFP, Yarrabah Business Accelerator was highly valued by stakeholders and recipients from these programs. In a literal sense, Deadly Innovation program staff and delivery partners' willingness to be on the ground in community and connect with local leaders was highly valued, particularly by stakeholders interviewed in Cherbourg. Deadly Innovation program staff highlighted that meeting people where they are at is crucial to delivering on the Deadly Innovation Strategy's intent of supporting a change agent on *their* pathway to success.

Change agents and champions identified by or drawn to Deadly Innovation have been instrumental in successfully delivering investments, activities and initiatives

Cherbourg is a “perfect storm” of change agents and champions from across community, industry and government working together to drive change

The Deadly Innovation approach is built around supporting change agents to “walk their own pathway to success”. The evaluation has identified that it is not only these change agents that are critical to successful delivery, but also champions from across government and industry that form “coalitions of the willing” to deliver initiatives and projects. The success of the Deadly Innovation initiatives in Cherbourg is an example of where these elements have most successfully combined, leveraging positive and productive relationships to drive projects forward.

Change agents from the Cherbourg community were identified and trained to manage the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Project and Service Centre, as well as lead the business case for the Materials Recovery Facility. These change agents were applauded by other key stakeholders in Cherbourg and Deadly Innovation program staff for their commitment and energy in driving the projects forward. These change agents have been supported by champions in government, including staff and elected members of the Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council, Deadly Innovation program staff, TAFE and the Peregian Digital Hub, and from Fujitsu as the foundational customer. In turn, change agents from the Cherbourg community highlighted the high level of commitment of these champions in supporting and driving forward these projects.

Several of the Indigenous Industry Business Case projects are currently missing change agents and champions at key intersections of community, industry and government needed to replicate the success of Cherbourg

In both the Woorabinda wattle seed and Wujal Wujal vanilla bean projects, progress has been slowed by the partial or complete withdrawal of local change agents due to ill health or relocation due to work. Though initially supportive, for various reasons, the local Aboriginal Shire Councils were unable to continue to support the projects at the time this report was written. The combination of these factors has meant interest from commercial partners cannot be locked in to the projects, though industry continues to show interest in both projects.

A key indicator of the success of Deadly Innovation in identifying change agents in business is the strong commitment of business owners to Indigenous employment and supply chains

Ten innovators and businesses who have received grants or contracts through Deadly Innovation interviewed as part of the evaluation expressed a strong commitment to building their Indigenous staff numbers and increasing Indigenous business in their supply chain. One of these businesses had developed a strong framework and process for developing the business capability of their Indigenous subcontractors, and committed to a “multiplier” whereby each dollar of government procurement spend in their business would create four dollars spend in Indigenous businesses in their supply chain.

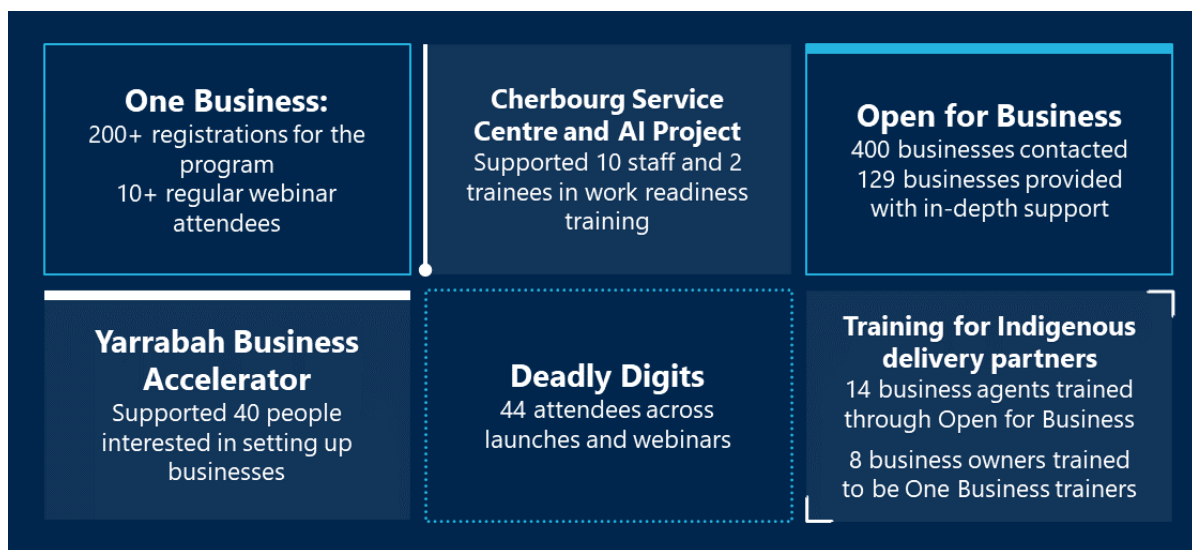
"It's a big focus for us to work with [the Indigenous] community where possible for ingredients, printing, point of sale, design and artists, raw materials suppliers on country... Anything we can do within the Indigenous business sector we try to." – INFP participant

Deadly Innovation has successfully identified and built relationships with champions within government to drive the transformative agenda of the Deadly Innovation Strategy

The outputs of the Deadly Innovation extension activities, through the DITID IPP and other projects, relied on key staff members within the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (DSDILGP), Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF), and Queensland Investment Corporation (QIC). The impact of these projects is discussed in Section 6.2.4, however Deadly Innovation program staff highlighted the critical role and drive that key staff across government had played in these projects, and the evaluation's interviews with the staff themselves demonstrated a high level of commitment to driving change across government.

Deadly Innovation has engaged successfully with Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities to build skills, knowledge and experience to engage in innovation

Figure 19 | Snapshot of Deadly Innovation training, mentoring and support activities



Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities that have participated in training, support and mentoring have built key skills to engage in innovation

Interviews with Deadly Innovation delivery partners running training, support and mentoring initiatives and program reporting indicated sound qualitative evidence that participants in training, support and mentoring programs built their skills to engage in innovation and strengthen their businesses. Table 3 below contains a series of short case studies where this was demonstrated.

Table 3 | Training, support and mentoring short case studies

Training, support and mentoring provided to Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities	
One Business workshops	Following a One Business Finance workshop in Townsville, almost all participants reviewed the pricing and costing of their products and services and worked through their numbers with the trainers and set new prices based on what they found through the review process.
	A One Business participant who has an MBA stated that the information being provided through One Business was far more practical and useful than anything he learned in that qualification.
	A regional distillery start-up accessed mentoring through One Business to improve the quality and performance of their website in advance of a significant media opportunity. The distillery's website remained functioning through the additional traffic generated by the media appearance, resulting in significant sales.
Open for Business information support	An Open for Business client was a sole trader who was impacted significantly by COVID-19, reducing half of his bookings within weeks of the pandemic. The client reached the hotline and was given support and information about various grant and projects, feeling strengthened to stay resilient. Three months later One Business was glad to be informed that since that time he had taken on additional training to upskill his digital skills and improve his business' website.
Yarrabah Business Accelerator	A Yarrabah man received significant support through the Yarrabah Business Accelerator to commercialise the on-country cultural experiences he had been providing to boys in the community. He was supported to organise an ABN, obtain the relevant insurances and develop an online presence. He is now in discussions with not-for-profit organisations and government who are interested in his business.

Embedding workforce and foundational skills training within the Cherbourg Service Centre and AI Project has assisted in retaining workers and trainees

Staff at the Service Centre and trainees at the AI Project complete three months of training through TAFE to develop their workforce and foundational skills based on a Certificate II-level course. For the Service Centre, this training is undertaken as a bootcamp before starting work, and for the AI Project, trainees complete work readiness training alongside training at the AI Hub.

There is a strong commitment to the ongoing development of staff at the Service Centre to take on work and learn in areas that they are interested in. One staff member is interested in developing their skills in IT to take on more challenging and complex work training and is being encouraged to train in that area and work with Australia Post, and another staff member is interested in becoming a supervisor and is both training and supporting the Service Centre Manager in that role. Service Centre management are working to capitalise on the breadth of avenues into more specialised skillsets for their staff available through the Service Centre.

Deadly Innovation successfully built skills and understanding of grant and funding application processes, and application processes assisted businesses to think strategically

Supporting Indigenous innovators and businesses through grant and funding application processes was highlighted by Deadly Innovation program staff as critical to building skills needed to engage in innovation. Deadly Innovation program staff suggested that a lack of trust in government, and a lower level of understanding of government processes and application processes more broadly combine within the ecosystem to create significant barriers to accessing funding.

To reduce these barriers and build capability in application processes, Deadly Innovation program staff supported Indigenous innovators through a variety of mechanisms:

- Encouraging Indigenous innovators interested in applying for Ignite Ideas to use the free My Innovation Advisor Service (funded through AQ for all applicants), then providing up to four hours of additional one-on-one support through this Service to Indigenous applicants with successful Eols (funded under Deadly Innovation).
- Deadly Innovation program staff providing direct application writing support to innovators and businesses applying for Deadly Innovation and other sources of funding.
- Multi-stage application processes with an Expression of Interest (EOI) as a first step to allow Deadly Innovation program staff to get in contact with innovators and businesses and support them before extensive time and resources had been committed to an application.
- Providing feedback on Eols and applications and inviting innovators and businesses to resubmit them.
- Invitation-only application processes, allowing much closer support for the application in a non-competitive environment.
- As modelled by INFP Phase 1, a pathway to entry into the program that did not involve formal applications, rather a gradual process of relationship building, support and information gathering that allowed DAF and Deadly Innovation program staff to identify businesses that were ready for commercialisation. In Phase 2, a formal application process for funding has been introduced.

Innovators and businesses who received the above supports were generally highly confident that they had built skills and understanding of grant writing processes.

"The support gives me confidence to look to grant funding, rather than losing faith in the system. Because of that there is a flow on effect from Deadly Innovation stuff. Now we're having those organisations that are seeing we are doing stuff. Hopefully this continues to grow." – Deadly Innovation grant recipient

"Deadly Innovation put us in touch with a professional for a few hours to provide feedback after the EOI process. It's important because as a small business, we don't have the funds to pay for external business planning. Having to complete the application we did actually make sure we were robust. We were able to access data on the market. We did a pitch, a proper strategy document, and we may not have put as much effort in if just for ourselves. So much more effort went into it because of the external set of stakeholders. It was a valuable process, regardless of the success of the application." – Deadly Innovation grant recipient

The support provided to one grant recipient was one of the major catalysts for their business's international expansion, internal growth and positive impact. The funding allowed the business to undertake detailed planning for expansion into the US market and built capability and confidence to begin exporting to the UK and other markets. The business has also been successful in applying for five further grants from various state and federal funding programs.

Despite the above support mechanisms, several applicants for funding through Deadly Innovation initiatives highlighted that the application process placed significant stress on their business due to the time that one or more staff in a micro or small business needed to commit to the process. Two businesses brought in significant paid and unpaid external support to complete application processes. However, applicants also highlighted the value that the rigour of the process provided in terms of developing their strategy, business planning and future thinking.

Deadly Innovation has built understanding of what it takes to build skills to engage in innovation in the Indigenous context

Delivery partners involved in running training, mentoring and support initiatives identified a range of key learnings that have strengthened delivery:

- Intensive multi-day face-to-face workshops can place too high a demand on innovators' and small business owners' time and are not flexible enough around family and other commitments. A

less intensive approach spread over a longer period of time has the potential to be more effective.

- A set program or curriculum of workshop topics may not cater to the diversity of capabilities present in a cohort of innovators and business. A more flexible approach where innovators and businesses can engage when they need to or are able to with workshop topics that are of most interest and use to them has the potential to increase engagement.
- Training and support for innovators and small businesses in regional and remote communities requires trust and understanding of what the program is trying to achieve to be built first before training and support can be undertaken. “Splash Day” events combining community engagement, networking and introductory program content can build momentum and connection in community.
- Training materials should be tailored to the cultural context and to varying levels of existing skills and understanding, including using mob-friendly language and visuals, and external trainers should have experience working with and speaking with Indigenous people.
- Building and sustaining momentum is important to maintaining the confidence of people undergoing training. Ensuring that necessary equipment is ready to begin immediately, and that training timelines and milestones align to give a clear sense of completion and success can assist with this.

A quantitative understanding of participant engagement with learning will assist Deadly Innovation to strengthen and better target skill building initiatives and programs

Deadly Innovation activities generally rely on qualitative assessments of participant engagement and progression through training for ongoing training, mentoring and support initiatives. Reporting and tracking occurs at the individual program or initiative level, with limited ability to compare progress between programs or initiatives.

Currently, it is difficult to quantitatively understand patterns in engagement such as the number of times an individual innovator or business engages with Deadly Innovation training, how long they remain engaged with training, the types of training or workshops they engage with, or flow-through from regional one-off workshops to regular training and support engagements. Better tracking of individuals’ journeys would allow Deadly Innovation program staff to supplement qualitative assessments of what works with data-driven insights.

Open for Business’ “Journey of Change” scale (shown in Table 4 below) offers a potentially useful model for understanding participants’ learning gain and confidence across their engagement with the program. The scale was developed during delivery of Open for Business and is a self-assessment of how the business was feeling in response to COVID-19. A similar style of self-assessment scale tailored to growing an innovative business could be leveraged across Deadly Innovation training, support and mentoring programs and initiatives to better understand participants’ journeys.

Table 4 | Open for Business’ Journey of Change scale⁵³

Stuck	Accepting	Trying	Learning	Self-reliance
Facing substantial difficulties or barriers to continuing in business	Starting to engage and believe that change is possible Thinking about other ideas for the business	Shift towards taking action Believing they can make change happen and trying to sort out barriers to continue in business	Has made some improvements (or pivots) in relation to the business Getting a sense of what works to move towards business goals	New ways of doing things start to feel natural

⁵³ Taken from Open for Business Final Report, 2020, Iscariot Media

Stuck	Accepting	Trying	Learning	Self-reliance
Doesn't have useful skills/resources to adapt to change and doesn't want to talk about it	Doesn't yet have the skills/resources to adapt but talking to someone about it	Identifying useful skills/resources that they have already and others they need to develop	Building skills and increasing confidence in the ability to make changes and achieve goals	Able to continue in business without further support
May be feeling fed up with how things are but not ready to engage with support or believe that change is possible	Ready to accept and becoming motivated	Taking the initiative to try out new ways of doing things	Mostly managing independently but still needs some support	The business is as independent as possible under the circumstances



6.2.2 **SHARE:** Deadly Innovation has created increased access to innovation opportunities for Indigenous businesses, individuals and communities

Deadly Innovation has contributed to a strong increase in Indigenous participation in Advance Queensland programs

Since the introduction of Deadly Innovation in 2019 to Q1 2022, the proportion of DTIS Advance Queensland recipients who have been identified as Indigenous has increased from 0.6 per cent to 5.16 per cent (from 7 to 98 recipients) and whole-of-initiative Advance Queensland Indigenous recipients has increased from 0.4 per cent to 3.8 per cent (from 15 to 284 participants)⁵⁴. In Q1 2022, Deadly Innovation recipients accounted for 69 out of 284 Advance Queensland recipients who have been identified as Indigenous – which accounts for 24 per cent of the total figure.⁵⁵ Figure 20 shows these trends over time.

It is important to note, however, that it is not mandatory for Advance Queensland implementing agencies to report on whether applicants or recipients identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, so it is likely that these figures are under reported, especially by external implementing agencies. While it is highly likely that the efforts through Deadly Innovation have increased the uptake and success of Indigenous applicants, the reported increases may be due in part to improved reporting practices.

Despite the limitations of data, it is clear that increased focus in this area has seen the reported proportions of Indigenous AQ recipients approaching, or in the case of the department – exceeding, their proportion of Indigenous Queenslanders in the Queensland population of 4.5 per cent.⁵⁶

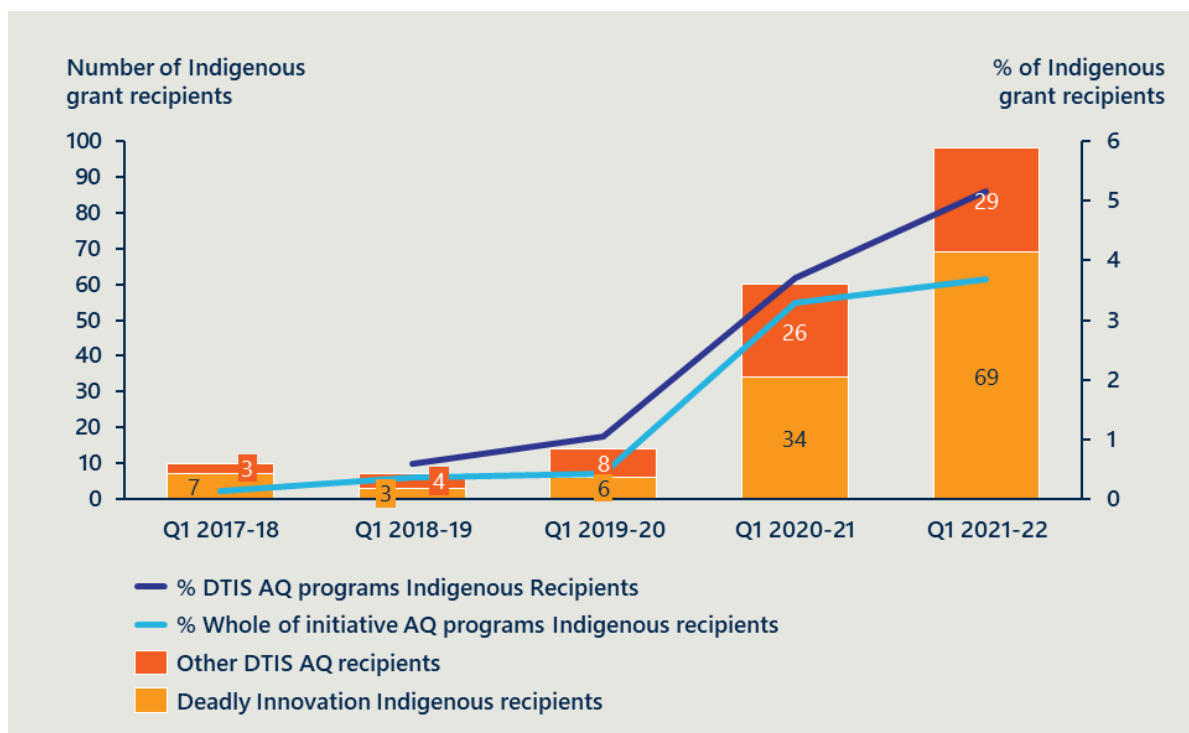
These analyses have been conducted based on available AQ program data. Data for Queensland Government innovation programs beyond AQ was not provided.

⁵⁴ As at 30 June 2022, Advance Queensland comprised approximately 140 programs administered by nine government agencies.

⁵⁵ Data provided by DTIS – as at 30 June 2022.

⁵⁶ ABS, 2021.

Figure 20 | Trend analysis of Advance Queensland recipients who have been identified as Indigenous⁵⁷



Deadly Innovation has successfully developed connections and partnerships between Indigenous innovators, businesses and community, and government and industry

Deadly Innovation made individual connections between Indigenous innovators and businesses and prospective buyers and supporters in industry and government

Many Indigenous innovators and businesses interviewed through the evaluation identified specific connections facilitated by Deadly Innovation program staff that were critical to the growth of their businesses. These connections were made directly between individuals, with generally warm referrals from Deadly Innovation program staff. Examples of these connections are detailed below:

- Through Indigenous Business Connect/Mob Invest, Deadly Innovation program staff connected a food venture capitalist with a community food business, leading to a commitment to purchase growing stock for the food business.
- Deadly Innovation program staff connected an Indigenous food business with Qantas catering team to discuss a large-scale supply contract.
- Deadly Innovation program staff brought together an Indigenous dive equipment business with a plastics manufacturer, leading to the development of prototypes and sharing of technical advice.
- Advice from Deadly Innovation program staff assisted an Indigenous building company to target the right agencies and tenders within government to win “set aside” procurements. The business now has multiple government contracts totalling over \$20 million.
- Deadly Deals connected and supported an Indigenous business to enter a 12-month pest control supply contract with an Aboriginal Shire Council.
- Deadly Innovation program staff and the INFP connected several Indigenous food businesses to an international brand management company to expand into the South-East Asian market.
- Indigenous food businesses were able to leverage DAF’s connections into the fresh food supply chain to source ingredients.

⁵⁷ Data provided by DTIS.

Deadly Innovation has supported Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities to access networking and promotional opportunities

Deadly Innovation program staff have leveraged their connections into networking and business events to create opportunities for businesses to promote themselves and networks with potential buyers. Examples of these opportunities are detailed below:

- Deadly Deals helped support an Indigenous-owned business to attend an Australian Defence Force (ADF) Innovation Day, contributing to that business winning a maintenance and supply contract with the ADF.
- Deadly Innovation program staff invited an Indigenous innovator developing a new dive equipment business remanufactured from rubbish collected from the beaches in the Torres Strait to attend a Community Cabinet event through which the business connected with local governments, regional authorities and circular economy businesses gaining new connections and pathways to explore funding, circular economy opportunities and education in waste management, recycling and dive safety.
- Deadly Innovation program staff's work with QIC has seen QIC showcase procurement opportunities at Black Coffee events to encourage Indigenous businesses to tender for government opportunities.
- The department and Deadly Innovation program staff hosted an Indigenous food showcase in Cairns for a World Economic Forum representative and Australian and Queensland Government officers. The event highlighted Indigenous native food businesses as examples of collaborative change and the work of DAF and the Far North Queensland Food Incubator. The event brought together several Indigenous food start-ups, and representatives from various state and federal government departments and industry.
- DAF and Deadly Innovation program staff hosted a Native Foods Workshop with the Australian Research Council Grant recipients for *A Deadly Solution: Towards an Indigenous Led Bushfoods Industry*. Representatives were present from University of Queensland, James Cook University, two Indigenous businesses, representatives from the Cherbourg community, Indigenous Land and Sea Council (ILSC), Everledger, DTIS and DAF.
- One Business has hosted several successful regional expos or pitch events, bringing together businesses and innovators as part of the One Business programs and the broader government and business community. An example of these is the Townsville Indigenous Business Expo. Fifteen Indigenous businesses registered for the event and over 50 general admission tickets ordered including tickets for Townsville City Council, JCU Procurement, CPB Contractors and Housing and Public Works. Two Indigenous businesses reported directly increasing their sales as a result of this event.

Deadly Innovation successfully assisted the establishment of formal partnerships between government, industry, Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities

External stakeholders from across government and industry highlighted the role Deadly Innovation has as a catalyst to bring together the right people to support Indigenous innovation and business and assist in the formalisation of partnerships. Stakeholders from industry in particular highlighted government's role as a connector and in the perception of reduced risk in the investment created by government providing part of the funding.

The Cherbourg Service Centre and the LOGiT RAP project are clear examples where Indigenous businesses or communities were brought together with government and industry through a formal partnership brokered by Deadly Innovation program staff to deliver successful outcomes. The Service Centre was formalised through a Letter of Intent with Fujitsu, Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council, the department, and the LOGiT RAP project through a four-way Collaborative Development Agreement.

There was some feedback from stakeholders that formal collaborations could benefit from greater flexibility within government when negotiating contracts, particularly related to intellectual property clauses and contract variation processes. Greater flexibility would reduce the time cost to Indigenous small businesses in negotiating contracts and assist them to increase their engagement with government.

The Indigenous Native Food Program (INFP) has contributed to growing momentum and connection across government in the native food space

The INFP aims to develop a pathway to engage Indigenous innovators to develop and commercialise products with native foods and was highlighted by internal stakeholders as a crucial opportunity for Queensland Indigenous businesses in the lead up to the 2032 Olympics and Paralympics.

Interviews with Deadly Innovation program staff, DAF staff delivering INFP, and Indigenous innovators and businesses who have been supported through the INFP indicate a high level of confidence in the success of the program in terms of the support it has provided to innovators and businesses, the structures and frameworks it has put in place related to the commercialisation pathway, and the momentum it is generating within government and the food industry more broadly.

The Indigenous Native Food Program has developed the framework and networks needed to support a pipeline of Indigenous businesses to commercialise into the future

A five-step pathway outlines key steps for INFP participants and government

The pathway formalises the progression of participants through the INFP and sets clear expectations around milestones, deliverables and the support provided to businesses at each stage. The pathway has five stages, outlined in Figure 21.

Figure 21 | Five-step INFP pathway



A steering committee brings together the relevant expertise to make decisions around project selection and the direction of the program

The steering committee included representatives from Deadly Innovation program staff and DAF and met regularly throughout Phase 1 of the INFP. The committee brought together the expertise of Deadly Innovation program staff in supporting Indigenous innovation and businesses, with the technical expertise of DAF staff in food science.

Assessment criteria support transparency and consistency in selection of projects

DAF staff delivering INFP developed an evaluation matrix to support the steering committee to make decisions about which businesses to invite into the program. Businesses are rated against the following criteria:

- Well defined project or service
- Market research on proposed product or service
- Business Plan developed
- Human resources (capability and capacity) to deliver project
- Financial resources to deliver project
- Infrastructure (capability and capacity) to deliver project
- Scalability of idea
- Previous experience in food manufacturing

Conceptual frameworks were developed to understand and communicate the Indigenous native food commercial journey

These frameworks assist staff and businesses to see where businesses are now, where they could be in the future, and what it might take to get there. This helps develop a common language for business and government as they work together.

INFP has given DAF staff a platform to grow networks across industry and the range of Queensland Government agencies relevant to supporting Indigenous native food businesses

DAF staff recently hosted a virtual event bringing together 35 representatives from DAF, Health and Wellbeing Queensland, the Far North Queensland Food Incubator and DSDSATSIP to discuss collaboration in the space. DAF staff also highlighted that they have seen INFP becoming a “one-stop shop” at the centre of a growing network, assisted by the visibility and integration of the program. INFP participants highlighted the value of the connections into this network, particularly with regards to supply chains.

Core challenges around the immaturity of the supply chain and lack of funding have been partially addressed

DAF staff and participants highlighted the substantial cost to commercialisation and scaling of businesses in the food industry created by the need for purchasing or access to specialised manufacturing equipment and facilities. A lack of direct funding for businesses attached to INFP Phase 1 was a key challenge that has been partially addressed in Phase 2 through the Native Food Product Development Fund. However, though interviews, INFP participants highlighted that limited flexibility in how this funding may be used by businesses may be a weakness of the funding model.

DAF staff also highlighted that the supply chain of Indigenous native foods will require significant strengthening to support growth in the sector. This creates an opportunity for greater numbers of community-owned businesses and cooperatives growing native food, but achieving this will require a high degree of technical support from agronomists and horticulturalists.

“It’s such a long journey going through product development and R&D, and we have just come to the starting line of launching our first two products. INFP has come along at just the right time to start thinking about diversifying and moving onto our next line of products, letting us diversify sooner, and think about the future.” – INFP participant

SNAPSHOT CASE STUDY

INFP'S SUPPORT FOR NOURISHING BITES IS PROOF OF CONCEPT FOR THE LEVEL AND TYPES OF SUPPORT NEEDED TO COMMERCIALISE A NATIVE FOOD BUSINESS AT SCALE

OVERVIEW

Nourishing Bites is an Indigenous family-owned business that sought to fully commercialise their Heavenly Hazel chocolate hazelnut spread, developing new flavour incorporating native ingredients. Nourishing Bites successfully applied for Deadly Deals, and was brought into the INFP pathway.

Nourishing Bites accessed extensive support through DAF and the INFP to develop a product that was ready for export and nation-wide distribution to supermarkets. Two major distribution partners were interested in the product as soon as production was able to be ramped up to required levels.

SUPPORT TYPES



MARKETING SUPPORT

- Indigenous artwork for labels and signage
- Brand management and market research in South East Asia
- New website



TECHNICAL PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

- Shelf life improvement
- Product presentation improvement
- Developing lower and higher end product versions
- Developing and testing flavour combinations



DISTRIBUTION SUPPORT

- Working with FNQ Food Incubator to scale up equipment
- Sourcing equipment



Deadly Innovation and INFP were very helpful to help us think about what we needed to do to be successful and more attractive to government funding. Initially, we were focussed on positioning Heavenly Hazelnut as healthier than Nutella. They pushed us to make it a high-end product, for Australians interested in cultural heritage, as well as overseas cultures, e.g. Asian markets that are willing to pay a premium for Australian products. We were able to differentiate our product to establish a unique position in the market

Shelley Grainger (Nourishing Bites)

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Deadly Innovation training, mentoring and support initiatives take a highly individualised approach to supporting innovators and businesses, ensuring they receive the support they need and want

Interviews with Deadly Innovation delivery partners involved in running training, mentoring and support highlighted the importance of one-to-one and flexible approaches to supporting Indigenous innovators and communities.

Surveys for One Business programs indicate a high level of satisfaction from participants, including “the cultural appropriateness of the material being delivered and the ability of the trainers to understand the

⁵⁸ At the time this report was finalised, Nourishing Bites had made the decision to shelve the Heavenly Hazel project due to circumstances beyond their control including significant production and freight cost increases, and difficulty accessing ingredients, all stemming from ongoing COVID-19-related disruption. Nourishing Bites have agreed to remain in contact with INFP and Deadly Innovation in the hope of reviving the project in the future when disruptions ease.

nuances of being an Indigenous person in business.”⁵⁹ One Business has modified their approach based on participant feedback and One Business staff reflections to centre participants’ needs. This includes:

- Introducing Group Accountability Sessions to give participants an opportunity to discuss matters relevant to their business and needs.
- Choosing topics for webinars based on participant feedback.
- Taking a localised approach to face-to-face delivery, with a variety of workshop lengths and formats delivered depending on what is most appropriate to the location.
- Increased emphasis on regular one-on-one mentoring and support in response to businesses facing challenges to attend larger-scale workshops.

The Yarrabah Business Accelerator took a similar approach to delivering the most relevant and needed type of support to its context. Accelerator staff focused entirely on highly flexible one-on-one and small group training and support mechanisms after unsuccessful attempts to hold larger workshops. Accelerator staff used the one-on-one and small group engagements and leveraged their partnership with the Dilin Duwa Centre for Indigenous Business Leadership at the University of Melbourne to better understand the training and support needs within the community, and are using these inputs to design workshops that will connect with local needs.

The Starlink satellite internet connection has enabled the successful delivery of the Cherbourg Service Centre and AI Project, through which Cherbourg residents are empowered to engage in digital innovation

Stakeholders in Cherbourg identified Deadly Innovation program staff’s role in identifying funding for a high-speed internet connection as critical to getting both the Service Centre and AI Project off the ground. Both projects rely on high-speed internet connections to maintain seamless contact with customers and provide a large flow of data to train the recycling AI, and major telecommunications companies were unwilling to provide a higher-speed connection.

The AI Project Coordinator is the first woman in Cherbourg to have received training and mentoring in digital and AI skills and is now considering careers in technology after having limited experience in the sector previously. She highlighted that the partnership with the Peregian Digital Hub has been instrumental to building her skills and the success of the AI Project.

Cherbourg Service Centre staff reported that although they have much to learn, they felt much more confident using technology. For several staff, this was the first time that they had used computers professionally or personally.

"It's [the Cherbourg AI Project] the first of its kind in our areas and so there's so much interest in the project and the technology world from the kids and community." – AI Project Coordinator

"The AI Project is bringing new education opportunities and is inspiring kids to learn more about digital work that interests them, keeping them out of trouble." – Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council

"The AI students will be the experts and they're thinking outside the box and looking to careers, thinking about the future." – Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council

"The call centre has shown to me that I can do something that I never had the self-belief or confidence to do. I never thought I could be a part of this digital job and it has meant so much to me." – Cherbourg Service Centre Manager

⁵⁹ One Business Milestone 5 Progress Report

6.2.3 **ACTIVATE:** Deadly Innovation has activated the right funding mechanisms and enablers to create self determination

Funding leveraged by Deadly Innovation has directly created and/or supported between 50 and 60 jobs

Quantifying a number of jobs created and/or supported is challenging given that many interviewees preferred not to disclose specific numbers due to commercial confidence and uncertainty about the direct attributability of job creation to Deadly Innovation funding. For this reason, a range has been specified. A breakdown of this figure is detailed below:

- Deadly Innovation initiatives have created employment for 10 members of the Cherbourg community through the Service Centre and AI Project.⁶⁰
- Deadly Deals has supported 15-20 jobs across eight businesses, however these figures are calculated based on final reports and do not reflect the strong growth of several businesses since grant reporting finished.⁶¹
- Funding granted through INFP has supported 4-5 jobs.⁶²
- Open for Business temporarily employed 14 business agents.⁶³
- One Business created eight trainer positions for Indigenous business owners.⁶⁴
- LOGiT's weavr product has been successful, with several high-profile large clients now using the software, however a job count was not provided.⁶⁵

The evaluation has calculated this figure based on established jobs created or supported, and not jobs forecast. This differs from the methodology utilised by the department for Advance Queensland performance reporting. Please see Appendix A.1.6 for more detail.

Change agents are creating a flow on effect on jobs and wealth generation through commitment to Indigenous employment and supply chains

As discussed in Section 6.2.1, ten of the businesses that have received funding or contracts through Deadly Innovation are strongly committed to building Indigenous employment and supply chains. Three businesses provided figures of 70-90 per cent Indigenous employees. While it is unquantifiable within the scope of this evaluation, the selection of change agents appears to be creating a flow-on effect on job creation and wealth generation beyond the businesses that have received funding leveraged by Deadly Innovation.

Funding leveraged by Deadly Innovation has supported Woorabinda, Hope Vale and Wujal Wujal to overcome significant hurdles in developing community businesses but more time is needed for jobs and wealth to be created

Deadly Innovation funded business case development for three community-owned businesses in Woorabinda (an irrigated wattle seed farm), Hope Vale (a tropical black lip oyster farm), and Wujal Wujal (a vanilla bean plantation). Interviews with Deadly Innovation program staff, delivery partners and community stakeholders indicated that the three businesses are yet to begin commercial operations due to a range of complex governance, community and approval factors but there are "green shoots"

⁶⁰ Interviews with Service Centre and AI Project staff

⁶¹ Deadly Deals final reports

⁶² Interviews with INFP participants

⁶³ Open for Business Final Report, Iscariot Media 2020

⁶⁴ One Business Milestone 4 Report, 2021

⁶⁵ [Indigenous software firm LOGiT Australia streamlines and strengthens organisations' reconciliation efforts with Azure based weavr". Microsoft, 2021](#)

demonstrating that once these factors are addressed, a sustainable business delivering jobs and wealth for the community is possible.

In Woorabinda, Deadly Innovation program staff and delivery partners indicated the business case has assisted the project to attract funding to support operational and wage costs until the farm begins turning a profit (a three-year time horizon). Delivery partners and community stakeholders also indicated the project has been successful in attracting grants to set up an Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation Rangers program, a community garden, and a project to foodscope median strips. These grants will assist the project to build community understanding, capability, and aspirations of working in agriculture.

In Wujal Wujal, Deadly Innovation program staff and program documentation indicate that a private investor connected to the project by Deadly Innovation program staff through Indigenous Business Connect/Mob Invest has agreed to purchase the growing stock required to begin operations and is awaiting the business case to proceed.

In Hope Vale, Deadly Innovation program staff and delivery partners indicated the business case and further funding has assisted the project to access the expertise to complete key approval processes needed to operate commercial aquaculture within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

Deadly Innovation has built a foundation to support sustainable employment for the Cherbourg Service Centre staff, with opportunities to significantly grow its operations

At 30 June 2022, the Cherbourg Service Centre supported the equivalent of five full-time operators and a Service Centre Manager, providing support to its foundational customer Fujitsu and more recently, to a government-owned business with national operations and annual revenue in excess of \$8 billion. Fujitsu indicated through an interview that the quality of the service provided in Cherbourg is the same or better than other teams around Australia and New Zealand, and that the Cherbourg team onboarded staff and became operational far quicker than expected.

Deadly Innovation program staff and delivery partners indicated that firm commitments to enter into contracts from two state government agencies and a major telecommunications company are in place with recruitment underway by December 2022, which will support the equivalent of a further ten full-time employees, allowing approximately 20 staff to be employed under the flexible model preferred by the Cherbourg community. Deadly Innovation program staff also confirmed that the Cherbourg Service Centre has signed service contracts to the value of \$4 million over 3 years with its customers.

According to departmental documentation, letters of intent have been signed committing to the expansion of the service centre concept in Cherbourg and its replication into other communities to support over 200 jobs in First Nations communities.⁶⁶

Interviews with Deadly Innovation Program Staff, Cherbourg Service Centre staff and Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council (ASC) staff indicated that the preferred part time model of employment allowed more members of the community to gain employment (eight to ten staff per five full time equivalent positions) and gave staff the flexibility they needed to meet family obligations.

There are two key risks to the profitability of the service centre concept created by the current reliance on in-kind support from TAFE

Work readiness training is currently provided to service centre employees as in-kind support, funded centrally by TAFE through a modified and non-accredited version of a Certificate II in work readiness. TAFE Queensland staff indicated that TAFE is able to support a small number of students through this mechanism, however significant growth in the Cherbourg or other future service centres using the same model would risk that this training be unable to be funded through TAFE. The call centre facility on TAFE's Nurunderi campus is also provided by TAFE at no cost and the room used by the service centre has limited capacity to take an extra staff if the call centre grows. Alternatives for both funding and facilities are being explored by TAFE and the department.

⁶⁶ Cherbourg Digital Transformation Project Overview, Sept 2022

Deadly Innovation has successfully leveraged funding from across local, state and federal government sources to support initiatives

As shown in Figure 14, Deadly Innovation has leveraged approximately \$1.2 million in funding from a range of local, state and federal government agencies to support Deadly Innovation initiatives. Deadly Innovation program staff and industry stakeholders highlighted the value of Deadly Innovation co-funding initiatives in that it reduced the perception of risk involved in the investment from other government and industry stakeholders.

The \$1.2 million in funding leveraged from government and industry to support Deadly Innovation includes funding from Queensland Government departments and does not include co-contributions from Indigenous businesses. Please see Appendix A.1.6 for more detailed explanation on how this has been calculated.

The community governance wealth sharing model is important for generating support for and sustainability in community businesses, however it is yet to be put into practice

Interviews with stakeholders involved in developing community-owned businesses highlighted key challenges related to establishing appropriate governance arrangements that create avenues for community leadership and Traditional Owners to exercise cultural authority and providing the right structures for successful business management.

One of the greatest barriers to establishing a community-owned business is the cost of legal advice to establish the necessary legal agreements that formalise these governance arrangements within a business. Deadly Innovation program staff and the creator of the community governance wealth sharing model agreed that creating the model was an essential step towards creating sustainable community businesses. Several stakeholders in Cherbourg also highlighted the value of the concept of the Service Centre being a community-owned business in gaining the buy-in of the Cherbourg community.

The Cherbourg Service Centre has been operating under the auspices of the Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council (ASC) rather than as a community-owned business using the community governance wealth sharing model, however there are plans to transition ownership. Other Deadly Innovation projects involving the creation of community-owned businesses in Woorabinda, Wujal Wujal and Hope Vale are yet to begin operations.

Access to funding leveraged by Deadly Innovation has helped Indigenous innovators and businesses develop sustainable businesses and grow revenue

Interviews with Deadly Innovation funding recipients, supplemented with report documentation and available information online, have highlighted quantitative and qualitative examples of the impact that grant funding has had on respective businesses:

Deadly Deals

- Deadly Deals funding provided to a pest control business enabled the company to manufacture the stock required to fill a large contract, providing proof of concept and leading to significant market penetration. The business is now receiving approximately 20 phone and 15 web enquiries per week. As a result, the company has developed into a profitable, sustainable business that is exceeding sales targets, with sales up 74 per cent since the first grant instalment.⁶⁷
- For an agricultural irrigation manufacturer, Deadly Deals funding has been used to commercialise their product through branding and marketing and has subsequently led to the development of a relationship with a leading agricultural retailer.⁶⁸
- Since receiving Deadly Deals funding, a beverage company has succeeded in getting its products onto shelves through major retailers such as Dan Murphy's and BWS⁶⁹, and has leveraged a

⁶⁷ Interview with recipient and grant report

⁶⁸ Interview with recipient

⁶⁹ Grant report

further \$1 million through crowdfunding. At the same time, the company's revenues grew by 300 per cent in the 2021 financial year.⁷⁰

- A manufacturer developing a world-first automated refrigeration alert system has leveraged Deadly Deals funding to grow through broadening its market penetration – targeting emerging needs of both the hospitality and medical sectors in response to COVID-19.⁷¹
- The LOGiT weavr RAP software has signed up 60-70 users, including KPMG, NBL, Canstruct International and Reconciliation WA.⁷²
- Deadly Deals funding had a positive impact on the commercialisation and viability of a hand-crafted treats business throughout the Townsville flooding event and COVID-19-related disruptions.⁷³
- Deadly Deals funding for an Indigenous artist and gallery owner enabled the business to attend and exhibit in the Australian Pavilion at World Expo in Dubai. This event realised over \$16,000 in sales. The funding has also enabled exhibitions at WOMADelaide 2022 and the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair 2022. The business is now wholesaling to National Gallery of Australia.⁷⁴

It is important to note that Deadly Deals recipients were unsuccessful or ineligible for other grants, making their success an even stronger indication of the effectiveness of Deadly Innovation.

Indigenous Industry Business Case

- Deadly Innovation funding enabled a dive equipment company to progress their business to the next stage through prototype development and a business case.

Indigenous Native Food Program

- An INFP participant is optimistic that they are nearing realisation of the business case they developed through Deadly Innovation support. This will lead to significant diversification of product, reducing their reliance on revenue from catering (which can be unreliable due to COVID-19 disruptions), and the employment of 5-7 new staff.

Other AQ funding

Though it did not lead to increased revenue, Deadly Innovation funding assisted a medical device developer to expand their networks within the medical research community. The business secured funding to modify their product to ensure COVID-19 safety. Over time, as the medical community's understanding of COVID-19 matured, it became clear that product modifications were not necessary. The research and design project was abandoned and the grant funds were returned to the department.

"I never expected it to go this far. Turnover expectations were initially tens of thousands [of dollars], but it's currently hundreds of thousands. Looking forward, we may be talking millions." – Deadly Deals recipient

Deadly Innovation has strengthened the self-determination of Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities

The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) defines self-determination as "an 'on going process of choice' to ensure that Indigenous communities are able to meet their social, cultural and economic needs."⁷⁵ In addition to building the sustainability of businesses through funding, there is strong qualitative evidence that Deadly Innovation has strengthened the ability and confidence of Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities to choose to engage in innovation. Interviews and reports provided the below examples:

⁷⁰ ["Sobah First - purposeful beer for social good"](#), Birchal, 2021

⁷¹ Grant report

⁷² ["Indigenous software firm LOGiT Australia streamlines and strengthens organisations' reconciliation efforts with Azure based weavr"](#), Microsoft, 2021"

⁷³ Interview with recipient

⁷⁴ Grant report

⁷⁵ Taken from AHRC, [Right to self determination](#)

- Support and funding from Deadly Innovation gave an Indigenous medical technology innovator the confidence and legitimacy to expand her networks. This was critical for an Indigenous woman to build successful relationships in medtech, industrial design and research.⁷⁶
- The Yarrabah Business Accelerator supported a young Indigenous man with a passion for photography to set up a business, learn about capturing rock art and culture, and sell his first photo. Being able to do so has brought pride to his family.⁷⁷
- Receiving a Deadly Deal supported an Indigenous artist to build her confidence and capability to attend and undertake larger scale exhibitions.⁷⁸
- In an interview, an INFP participant stated that the support and encouragement received through INFP was incredibly important to help their business and them personally to work through COVID-19 and natural disasters, and has motivated them to continue with their business.
- Yarrabah Business Accelerator staff indicated that community leadership in Yarrabah sees strong potential for the Business Accelerator to help the community provide more of the services it needs locally rather than relying on services being brought in from external providers.

"I never would have dreamed that I could become a successful business owner, let alone to be competitive in a medtech space that is not commonly occupied by Indigenous people, particularly Indigenous Women."
– Deadly Deals recipient

Indigenous Pathways Scholarships have supported students to complete and undertake further studies in their desired career path

Completion rates for students studying with the support of the AQ Indigenous Pathways Scholarships through TAFE are approximately 80 per cent.⁷⁹ This is double that of the national average of Indigenous VET students studying a Certificate III or above.⁸⁰ Central Queensland University (CQU) has not been offering the scholarships long enough to reliably measure completion, however approximately 75 per cent of their scholarship students have either completed studies or are currently enrolled.⁸¹ This is a particularly positive outcome given that students completing their studies have navigated COVID-19. Three students have received 'top up' scholarships to undertake higher-level studies, however stakeholders from TAFE and CQU indicated that greater flexibility in terms of both the level of study and courses eligible for top up scholarships would assist in increasing the number of scholarships awarded.

There is qualitative evidence of the scholarships' success in supporting students to complete studies and follow their desired career path. A survey conducted by TAFE showed that students used the scholarship payments for a variety of purposes to support their studies including tuition costs, course fees, books and other materials and equipment needed for studies, but also childcare, living and travel costs. Profiles of two scholarship recipients published by TAFE and CQU speak of their desire to give back through working with Indigenous communities, and another scholarship recipient was named the 2022 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year in the DESBT South East region Queensland Training Awards.⁸²

⁷⁶ Interview with recipient

⁷⁷ Program documentation (case study)

⁷⁸ Grant report

⁷⁹ Program data provided by TAFE through DTIS

⁸⁰ [Australian Productivity Commission, 2020](#).

⁸¹ Program data provided by CQU through DTIS

⁸² "[Nursing student is determined to give back to First Nations communities](#)", article published by CQU, 2022

"[Stephen's helping others](#)", article published by TAFE Queensland, 2022

6.2.4 KLE 4: How effectively did the Deadly Innovation approach respond to the needs of Indigenous innovators and communities to achieve outcomes for key stakeholders, including government and indigenous innovators? (Effectiveness)

4

Key finding: Deadly Innovation successfully responded to the needs of Indigenous innovators and communities to achieve outcomes

The novel Deadly Innovation approach has empowered Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities to initiate, continue and lead innovation activity

Interviews with Indigenous businesses, innovators and communities highlighted that Deadly Innovation initiatives have supported them to build their confidence in innovation and business. Qualitative evidence to support this is included throughout Section 0, particularly related to self-determination.

"I wouldn't be where I am now without Deadly Innovation. Having a product in hand makes us credible and serious." – Deadly Innovation funding recipients

"We are looking to the future - it feels like there are people around us supporting us, that believe in us and are supporting our journey. Even if we launch and nothing sells straight away, there are still options and next steps." – INFP participant

Deadly Innovation program staff and the DITID Indigenous Participation Plan have had a positive impact on government practices and process as it begins to work towards Treaty

Deadly Innovation program staff played a key role in the development of the DITID Indigenous Participation Plan (IPP). The IPP established a "common vision, agreed benchmarks, and reporting framework" across the Department to "ensure Advance Queensland and all of DITID is taking active steps to integrating Indigenous businesses into the activities".⁸³ Innovation Senior Executive and divisional staff supporting Deadly Innovation highlighted the transformative impact that Deadly Innovation program staff and the IPP has had on building cultural capability and embedding new ways of working within the department. Deadly Innovation program staff also suggested that the Deadly Innovation extension activities across government assisted them to increase their presence and remain connected across agendas.

The IPP has supported DTIS and other government departments to rethink their approach to increase their Indigenous procurement spend

The IPP was the catalyst for increasing Indigenous procurement within the department. In the financial year following the introduction of the IPP (2019-2020), the department's proportion of total addressable spend awarded to Indigenous businesses was 7.7 per cent, an increase of 6.2 per cent on the previous financial year. The department grew the number of Indigenous businesses providing an opportunity to quote by 17.4 per cent, and the success rate of Indigenous businesses tendering for contracts by 10.9 per cent.⁸⁴

Deadly Innovation program staff collaborated with DSDILGP to embed Indigenous procurement in business as usual

⁸³ [Indigenous Participation Plan, 2018 - 2021](#)

⁸⁴ DITID Procurement Report, Q4 2019-2020.

Following ongoing collaboration between Deadly Innovation program staff (including secondment) and DSDILGP, DTIS and DSDILGP commissioned the development of a First Nations Procurement Toolkit through a memorandum of understanding to support the DSDILGP in meeting commitments under the Queensland Indigenous Procurement Policy and maximizing opportunities to empower Indigenous communities and businesses. The completed Toolkit makes a range of recommendations related to procurement processes, governance and cultural change to further embed Indigenous procurement at all levels of DSDILGP.⁸⁵

Deadly Innovation program staff have supported QIC to grow its Indigenous procurement

The work of Deadly Innovation program staff included building a collaborative relationship with the Indigenous Partnerships Manager of QIC. Ultimately, this collaboration was an organic, mutually-beneficial partnership – rather than a bona fide program or piece of work – driven by shared aims. The partnership has focused on strengthening QIC's Indigenous procurement processes and commitments through:

- Deadly Innovation program staff sharing information on Indigenous businesses with QIC for potential consideration.
- QIC showcasing procurement opportunities at Black Coffee events, aimed at encouraging Indigenous businesses to tender for these opportunities.
- Demonstrating the capabilities and viability of Queensland Indigenous businesses to QIC budget managers to build confidence in Indigenous procurement activities.

QIC staff interview indicated that Indigenous procurement had grown from \$100,000 to \$600,000 in two years (FY 2020 to 2022), driven heavily by the partnership and support from Deadly Innovation. QIC also highlighted the internal cultural shift associated with the increased spend on Indigenous businesses:

"There's been a big shift internally around how Indigenous procurement is approached and perceived – there's far less stigma." – QIC Indigenous Partnerships Manager

The IPP and Deadly Innovation program staff were foundational influences in the development of the Yhurri Gurri Framework that will guide DSDILGP in its commitment to progressing self-determination

DSDILGP has published a landmark framework detailing their commitment to working with Indigenous peoples as the Queensland Government walks the Path to Treaty. DTIS and DSDILGP staff who were part of the development of these frameworks expressed that the DSDILGP framework was profoundly influenced by the DITID IPP and Deadly Innovation program staff, and that together the three documents have prepared their respective departments to work towards Treaty. The strength of the DSDILGP Yhurri Gurri Framework is in its translation of the high-level outcomes into specific key performance indicators (KPIs) and performance at all levels of the department that will embed it in business as usual.

Staff from DTIS and DSDILGP highlighted that the ability of Deadly Innovation program staff to adapt language and concepts to suit the internal culture and ways of working of different departments was critical to the success of the influence of Deadly Innovation.

Deadly Innovation program staff also suggested that they played a similar role in developing the Department of Environment and Science's (DES) Gurra Gurra Framework, however the evaluation was unable to interview DES staff to more fully understand the impact of this work.

Deadly Innovation extension activities have led to an increase in Indigenous participation in the DSDILGP Defence and Aerospace Industry Development Fund (DAIDF)

Deadly Innovation program staff reviewed the guidelines and processes for the DAIDF, making important recommendations related to acknowledging country and encouraging Indigenous participation in DAIDF documentation, and that successful Indigenous businesses should be eligible for greater co-funding from DSDILGP given the increased barriers to their participation. DSDILGP accepted these recommendations,

⁸⁵ DSDILGP First Nations Procurement and Contract Management Toolkit, 2022.

implementing a 75:25 co-contribution funding model (75 per cent from the DAIDF, 25 per cent from the business) for Indigenous businesses, compared to 50:50 for non-Indigenous businesses. Deadly Innovation program staff also assisted by promoting the DAIDF to Indigenous businesses through their networks. Data on Indigeneity was not captured in Round 1, however DSDILGP staff interviewed stated, from their observations, Indigenous participation in Round 2 was a significant increase on Round 1.

Table 5 | Key statistics for DAIDF Round 2⁸⁶

Metric	DAIDF Round 2
Businesses in total applied	59
Indigenous businesses applied	12 (20 percent of all applicants)
Applicants in total approved for funding	51
Indigenous businesses approved for funding	10 (noting 1 of the 10 companies approved have since declined the offer)
Total approved funding	\$536,422
Total funding approved for Indigenous businesses:	\$110,000 (21 percent of total funding)

Deadly Innovation assisted in the development of DAF’s Indigenous Fishing Licenses policy and application process

The DAF Indigenous Fishing License is designed to offer a short-term, more cost-effective and simpler solution for Indigenous businesses to trial commercial fishing without going through the onerous and expensive process of obtaining a full commercial fishing license. Deadly Innovation program staff provided advice and support to DAF staff to refine the policy and develop the application process, leveraging the Deadly Innovation program staff’s experience supporting Indigenous businesses. While there has been limited uptake of the license, DAF staff highlighted that engaging with Deadly Innovation program staff had significantly strengthened their confidence engaging with Indigenous businesses and opened networks and referral pathways between DAF and Deadly Innovation. DAF staff also highlighted that Deadly Innovation program staff were highly collaborative and supportive throughout the process.

Deadly Innovation influenced a significant increase in Indigenous representation on the Queensland Register of Nominees to Government bodies (QRON)

A coordinated communications and outreach campaign led by Deadly Innovation program staff and the BIRG saw a 33.65 per cent increase in Indigenous people registering for consideration on QRON in 2019.⁸⁷ The campaign included web content and promotional video collateral amplified through Deadly Innovation and BIRG networks.

⁸⁶ Data provided by DSDILGP.

⁸⁷ QRON Case Study provided by DTIS

Deadly Innovation has an opportunity to build on its momentum to strengthen its position as an Indigenous innovation network hub

The presence of Deadly Innovation program staff and their support of key networks such as Black Coffee and the SEQ Indigenous Chamber of Commerce has increased the visibility of the portfolio and helped Deadly Innovation recipients connect with Indigenous innovators

Deadly Innovation program staff and several Deadly Innovation grant recipients highlighted Black Coffee as the mechanism through which crucial connections were made resulting in grants and other projects, and more broadly as an important part of a network of Indigenous innovators and businesses. Deadly Innovation has provided ad hoc financial and in-kind support to Black Coffee over several years, assisting in maintaining and growing the network's presence.

The Deadly Innovation budget has supported South East Queensland Indigenous Chambers of Commerce (SEQICC) to lease a space in The Precinct⁸⁸ (an innovation space run through the Advance Queensland initiative), giving SEQICC a strong presence in one of the state's foremost innovation places.

However, there was limited facilitated connection within and between Deadly Innovation initiatives

While there is strong connection within One Business through Group Accountability Sessions and regional face-to-face workshops, and the Yarrabah Business Accelerator small group workshops, it is unclear the extent to which Deadly Innovation has created opportunities to bring participants in its initiatives together. Deadly Deals and INFP participants interviewed through the evaluation expressed a desire to connect with others who had been part of the same journey, and Indigenous Pathways Scholarships recipients were not facilitated to connect with each other or with any other Deadly Innovation initiatives. Interviews with several Deadly Innovation funding recipients suggested that the small number of Deadly Innovation program staff and their existing workload made generating this kind of connection difficult.

Deadly Innovation has focused on promoting and showcasing Indigenous businesses and innovators to the business community and government at the individual level, and worked at the system level to increase access

As highlighted in Section 6.2.2, Deadly Innovation has been successful in generating individual connections between Indigenous businesses and innovators, with several larger scale events run through One Business. As mentioned above, Deadly Innovation has also supported key Indigenous networks, and worked to influence Indigenous procurement and engagement across several government departments. These outcomes indicate that it has achieved significant success in working towards the actions detailed under "Share" in the Deadly Innovation Strategy (see Figure 8): "supporting platforms for Indigenous businesses and innovators to connect to jobs and opportunities", and "enlivening networks to maximise opportunities". Deadly Innovation grant recipients' success and the Indigenous representation among winners at the recent Buy Queensland awards are a qualitative indicator of the impact of the Deadly Innovation portfolio.⁸⁹

Deadly Innovation generally relies on personal connections and word of mouth, with a limited social media and online presence promoting and showcasing Indigenous businesses and innovators. There may be opportunity to leverage momentum and reputation in the sector by strengthening this presence.

Success at the community level has created interest from other Indigenous communities in what innovation could look like in their own community

Stakeholders from Cherbourg and the Yarrabah Business Accelerator indicated that leaders from other Indigenous communities including Aboriginal Shire Councils had expressed interest in Deadly Innovation initiatives, including conducting visits.

⁸⁸ Deadly Innovation financial data provided by DTIS

⁸⁹ [Buy Queensland Supplier Awards](#)

"Cherbourg is a proof of concept. Deadly Innovation has succeeded in doing things that would usually take a very long time to get up and running in terms of funding a program and bringing parties together. Cherbourg sets an example that this can be done, to show corporate Australia how they can do this." – BIRG member

TAFE Queensland has been able to leverage the experience gained attracting and supporting Indigenous Pathways scholarships students to increase its Access and Equity Scholarships portfolio

According to TAFE Queensland staff interviewed, the explicit focus that TAFE Queensland placed on Indigenous students through its engagement in the AQ Indigenous Pathways scholarships initiative has subsequently encouraged TAFE Queensland to be more proactive, deliberate and mature in how they attract and support a broader cohort of Indigenous students.

TAFE Queensland staff indicated that corporate donors in TAFE's existing Access and Equity Scholarships program are both growing in number and becoming increasingly interested in supporting Indigenous TAFE students in specific regions or towns. Anecdotally, it is believed that this is, in part, driven by corporations' RAPs, which often include a commitment to giving back. TAFE Queensland staff stated that they have leveraged their experience delivering the AQ Indigenous Pathways scholarships to support the interest of these donors, therefore allowing them to offer a greater number of Indigenous scholarships.

Marrawah Law has been successful in becoming part of a government panel and has provided legal advice to several councils regarding the community governance wealth sharing model

Marrawah Law staff indicated during an interview that the firm has had follow on business from local councils seeking legal advice on community wealth sharing models. The Deadly Innovation project also provided a strong case study to win work with government clients, and they have successfully become part of a Queensland Government legal services panel, and through their interview for the evaluation, stated that their work with Deadly Innovation had established a reputation for their firm as unique problem solvers.

7 Lessons Learned

The learnings discussed in this section reflect the key insights emerging from evaluation findings, as articulated by both evaluation's co-design and the evaluation team.

KLE 5: What lessons learned from the design, implementation and delivery of Deadly Innovation can be applied or replicated to inform future design and performance of programs to create an inclusive approach to innovation and economic growth?

5

Key findings

- Relationships have been key to connecting spheres of influence across the Indigenous innovation ecosystem.
- The success of Deadly Innovation has important learnings for government as an approach for investment in Indigenous innovation.
- Success factors of Deadly Innovation can be applied to programming for other cohorts that may face barriers or discrimination.
- Deadly Innovation offers insights into enabling inclusivity in innovation policy and programming more broadly.

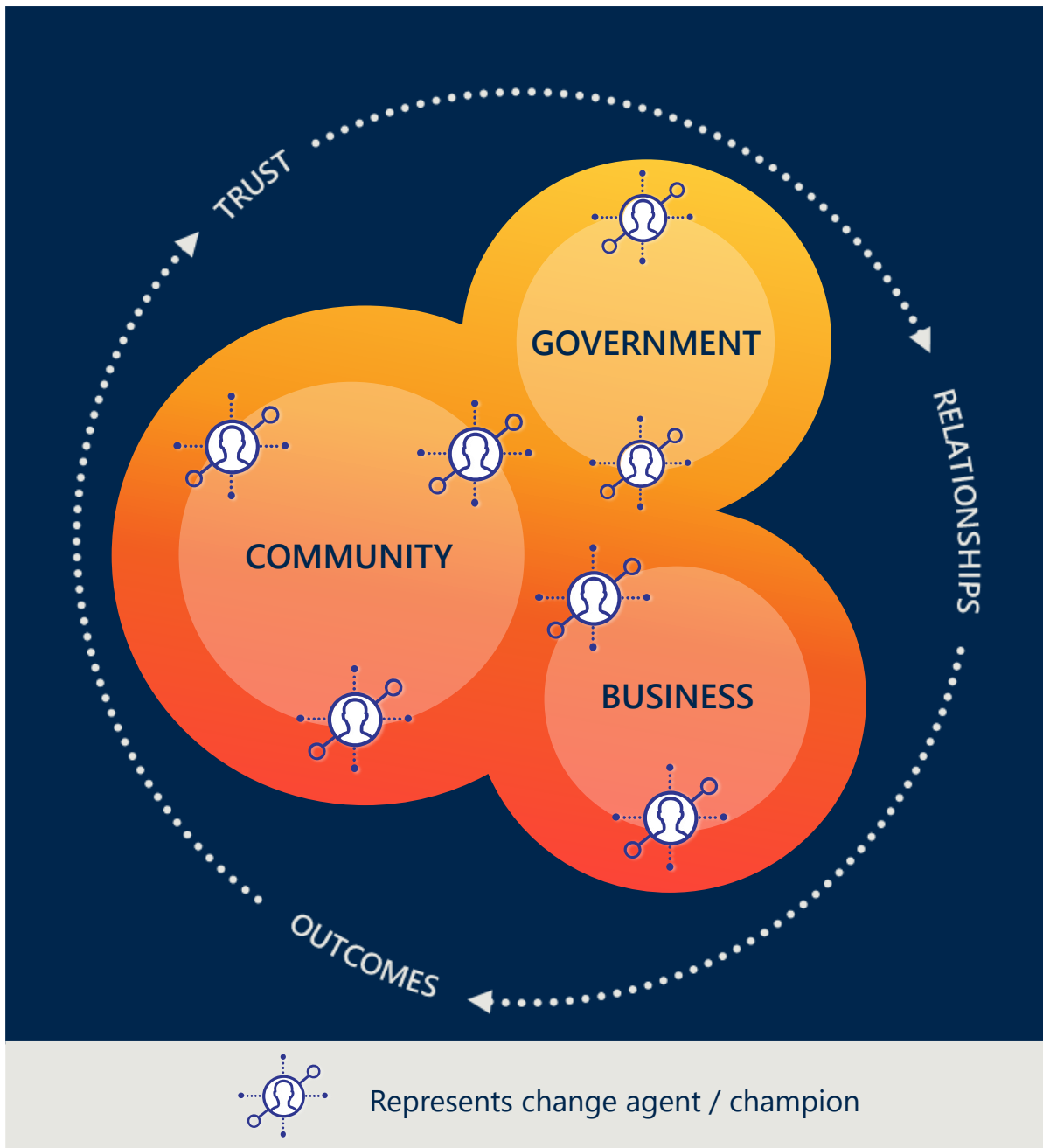
7.1.1 Relationships have been key to connecting spheres of influence across the Indigenous innovation ecosystem

The success of Deadly Innovation has been anchored by change agents' and champions' ability to connect across ecosystems from the local level to the system level. Change agents and champions drive a mutually reinforcing cycle of trust, relationships and outcomes, as shown in Figure 22.

This recognition and empowerment of change agents reflects the role and positioning of government as a facilitator and partner, rather than the holder of the answers. In this sense, government invites communities and business to co-invest in and be agents of problem-solving and solution-finding. This necessitates government champions to be fully immersed in the community to have greater impact, and a deep understanding of the dual worlds that Indigenous change agents and champions inhabit as members of community first, and public servants or employees of a business second.

Deadly Innovation has successfully achieved momentum through this cycle, however it remains highly reliant on individuals and relationships held at the individual level. Relationships will need to be broadened and supported with the right systems, processes and other enablers to sustainably enable connections at scale. Lessons learned through the delivery of Deadly Innovation should assist the Department to identify and design these systems, processes and enablers.

Figure 22 | Activation of change agents and champions across communities, businesses and government



7.1.2 The success of Deadly Innovation has important learnings for government as an approach for investment in Indigenous innovation

Focus on building trust between community, government and business

"Moving at the speed of trust" was a common quote from both internal and external stakeholders throughout the evaluation. It highlights the importance of strong, trusted relationships when investing in Indigenous communities and innovation – it also highlights Deadly Innovation program staff and delivery partners' success in building these relationships.

The evaluation found that the trust that Indigenous communities and business owners placed in Deadly Innovation was likely the combination of multiple deliberate and culturally responsive approaches to the Strategy's design and implementation of the portfolio. These include:

- investing time into building personal, authentic relationships
- valuing mutual accountability and honouring commitments
- providing differentiated, individualised support
- being present in community.

The flexibility offered by the Deadly Innovation Strategy, which was underpinned by a responsiveness to communities and innovators, reinforced these capabilities in staff and championed these approaches.

See Section 6.2.1 for detailed findings related to how Deadly Innovation program staff built trust between community, government and business.

Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities lead design and delivery

From the outset with the co-design of the Deadly Innovation Strategy by the BIRG, the department and Deadly Innovation program staff have ensured Indigenous voices have played key roles in the design and delivery of programs and initiatives, including significant engagement with community.

"Having a program designed by a successful Indigenous company, delivered by Indigenous business owners to Indigenous business owners on Country, in regional and remote areas has been a defining difference to the ongoing demand for One Business." – One Business trainer

Identify and leverage change agents and champions across community, government and business to build coalitions of the willing

Deadly Innovation program staff have successfully empowered and connected change agents and champions from a wide variety of sectors to deliver initiatives through both formal and informal partnerships. The complexity and diversity of supports required to grow Indigenous innovation and the need to be led by Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities has necessitated this approach.

See Section 6.2.1 for detailed findings related to the pivotal role that change agents and champions have played in delivering Deadly Innovation activities and initiatives.

Building on communities' strengths and leveraging existing momentum and in-community resources to design initiatives improves success

Greatest success in growing community businesses has been achieved where the design of a Deadly Innovation initiative or project was informed by key elements already at work in the community.

Examples of this identified by the evaluation include:

- The Cherbourg AI Project, which is housed within and supported by the Materials Recovery Facility which has been in operation for over a decade, and leverages TAFE trainers to deliver workforce readiness training.
- The Cherbourg Service Centre, which is co-located on the TAFE Queensland Nurunderi campus and leverages TAFE trainers to deliver workforce readiness training.
- The Yarrabah Business Accelerator, which leverages the staff and resources of Wugu Nyambil employment services which has been embedded in the community since 2018.

Create sustainable partnerships through building strategic alignment between partners and a shared appreciation of success between community, government and business

Deadly Innovation program staff's careful selection of partners and facilitation of listening and relationship building with communities created the space for all parties to appreciate what success means for each other. This allowed initiatives to be built in a way that reflected this concept of success. For example, the jobs in the Cherbourg Service Centre were specifically designed to be flexible and part time, creating

employment opportunities for more community members, and ensuring higher satisfaction and retention of staff, leading to better commercial outcomes. In an interview, an industry stakeholder reflected that this concept of success for the Service Centre was shared at the highest level across community, government and industry, and had been co-created through extensive engagement led by Deadly Innovation program staff and reinforced by the concept of community wealth sharing governance model.

Strengthen training and mentoring activities through flexible and culturally appropriate delivery

As discussed in Section 6.2.1, Deadly Innovation program staff and delivery partners adapted their training in the following ways to respond to the needs of Indigenous innovators, business and communities:

- Delivering training flexibly over a longer period of time rather than intensive, multi-day workshops.
- Being flexible with training content to provide opportunities for Indigenous innovators and small business owners to engage in topics best aligned to their context and training needs.
- Building momentum, connection and trust in community through induction events for participants in regional and remote communities combining community engagement, networking and introductory program content.
- Tailoring training materials to be culturally appropriate, including mob-friendly language and visuals, delivered by experienced trainers.
- Ensuring that training is part of participants' employment and is ready to begin immediately, and that training timelines and milestones align to give a clear sense of completion and success.

7.1.3 Success factors of Deadly Innovation can be applied to program design and delivery for other cohorts that may face barriers or discrimination

Focus on building trust as first step through a gradual, iterative delivery of activities to identify what works and strengthen relationships by delivering what was promised

The Deadly Innovation program staff and delivery partners' capability to develop strong, trusted relationships with Indigenous communities and innovators (see Section 6.1.2 above), also provides insights into how to engage, support and partner with other cohorts facing barriers or discrimination. In addition to the approaches shared above, Deadly Innovation program staff suggested that building trust through the gradual, iterative delivery of activities was a core element of potential approaches to engaging with other cohorts facing barriers or discrimination. This entails starting initiatives within a confined scope to minimise perceptions of over-promising and under-delivering and to build proof of concepts. The learnings and the relationships developed in these early phases can then be built-upon as the foundation for broader implementation, leveraging the trust and connections to generate greater buy-in.

Co-design programs with senior members of the community from within target cohorts to identify what is important to them and build programming around their definition of success

Building relationships with senior members of the community and involving them deeply in the design process was a critical success of Deadly Innovation that can be replicated in other contexts. This will allow design to incorporate what success means to that cohort and build momentum through generating early trust and connections to the cohort.

Build a strong and trusting relationship between staff and leadership that empowers and supports staff to lead change and work differently in their context

Just as Deadly Innovation program staff needed to work differently within government to deliver programming in a culturally responsive way, other cohorts may require government to work differently. Fostering high levels of trust between staff and leaders through strong communication, accountability and

delivering results will help empower staff who deeply understand what is required to work differently, and support them to change or refine government processes to embed new ways of working.

Take a strengths-based approach led by the target cohort

The Deadly Innovation Strategy and Deadly Innovation activities and initiatives recognise and are led by the strengths of the Indigenous community rather than focusing on a deficit model. This has the potential to resonate strongly with other cohorts.

A flexible and localised approach to delivery that recognises diversity and lets people stay local maintains connection to community

A focus of building innovation in Indigenous communities has been supporting local jobs and wealth creation so that community members can stay in their community. This necessitated a flexible and localised approach that recognises the non-homogeneity of Indigenous communities and businesses. Maintaining connection to community and the support networks within it could be highly valued by other cohorts that may face barriers or discrimination.

Maximise delivery of programs by people from the target cohort to ensure the target cohorts can “see themselves” and increase community connection

One of the greatest contributors to the success of Deadly Innovation was the visible and central leadership of Indigenous people throughout its implementation – including Deadly Innovation program staff, BIRG members and delivery partners. The remark, “You can’t be what you can’t see”, was offered as reinforcement of this. It points to the importance for government agencies to ensure members of an initiative’s target cohort are the face of the initiative.

The Deadly Innovation cultural context and focus on relationships is unique and may not resonate as strongly in other contexts

The unique role and positioning of community and relationships within Indigenous culture may mean that the explicit focus on community may be less critical for other target cohorts. Members of the Co-design Group highlighted that for example, broadly speaking, the sense of community and relationships might not be as pronounced for a female cohort and therefore may not be the key driver when delivering government programs aimed at engaging, supporting and partnering with women.

7.1.4 Deadly Innovation offers insights into enabling inclusivity in innovation policy and program design and delivery more broadly

Building coalitions of the willing from across government and industry could enhance many innovation initiatives

The inclusiveness and reach of Deadly Innovation activities were reinforced through collaborative practice across multiple organisations. For example, the cross-agency collaboration through INFP between DTIS and DAF brought together the expertise and voice of respective government portfolios to address shared challenges and find inclusive, well-informed solutions. Similarly, the department has played a key role in Cherbourg as an intermediary, identifying connections, synergies or shared challenges between community, government and industry, and brokering coalitions to generate collaborative, more holistic outcomes.

Working on both commercial push and pull increases the probability of successful investments

Understanding the commercial landscape has been critical to the success of many Deadly Innovation investments. The dual focus on supporting a business – as a seller – and creating the enabling conditions within the market – for buyers – was earlier conceptualised as working towards both commercial push and

pull (see Section 6.1.2). This approach aligns with the broader Advance Queensland emphasis on creating commercial pathways and making mutually rewarding connections between innovators and markets.⁹⁰

Application processes should recognise the value of the applicant rather than their application writing skill, and first-time applicants should be supported through the process

Deadly Innovation program staff suggested that the grant application process implemented by Deadly Innovation had two characteristics that each increased inclusivity: firstly, the primary focus when assessing applications was on the commercial viability of the service or product – not on the quality of the writing. Secondly, the way in which Deadly Innovation program staff worked alongside prospective applicants further reduced barriers that may otherwise prevent innovators from accessing government support. Grant recipients were generally highly positive about application process (see Section 6.2.1). Additionally, members of the Deadly Innovation evaluation Co-design Group emphasised that the learned language of government and government processes means that the most established grant application writers are based in South East Queensland, which can inadvertently lead to the overrepresentation of government grant recipients in this region. Applying similar approaches to application processes across government is possible through greater use of expression of interest processes to identify first time applicants or applicants from priority cohorts and offer them support and building the capacity of assessors to look beyond the language used in applications to the value of the business.

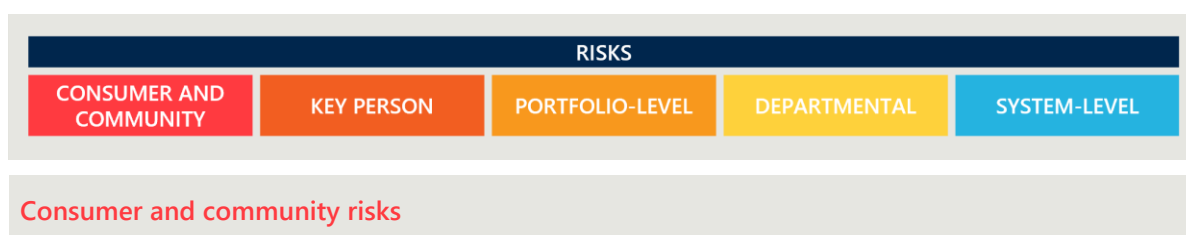
Giving programming the time and space to be considered, planned and piloted without pressure for announcements and success allows for solid foundations to be built

Deadly Innovation program staff suggested that the period of time between the announcement of Deadly Innovation and its implementation allowed for deliberate planning and scoping. Program staff have acknowledged this time and space – which was free of pressures to make new announcements or submit deliverables – as formative in developing the novel and culturally responsive approach through which activities in the Deadly Innovation portfolio were implemented. This is particularly important to enable Deadly Innovation program staff’s emphasis on “moving at the speed of trust” as discussed in Section 6.2.1. However, this must be balanced with the need to generate momentum and positive media coverage through announcements and media releases.

7.1.5 Key risks identified through the evaluation should be considered in shaping future Indigenous innovation program design, delivery and policy

For the purposes of this evaluation, a risk has been defined as a potential future event that would have a negative consequence. The evaluation has explored risks across five categories, as shown in Figure 23.

Figure 23 | Categories of risk



Community’s trust in government could be broken if projects are discontinued or defunded

As highlighted in Section 6.2.1, Deadly Innovation program staff’s focus on building trust through delivering on commitments has successfully overcome community perceptions and experience of government support being unreliable and changing with political priorities. Exiting or discontinuing programs must be carefully managed and communicated to maintain community trust in government.

⁹⁰ [Building our Innovation Economy: Advance Queensland Strategy, 2019](#)

Businesses supported may become reliant on Deadly Innovation funding to maintain sustainability

Deadly Innovation program staff's focus on "what's next" and the commercial pathway reduces the risk that businesses are reliant on Deadly Innovation and other government funding to maintain sustainability, however this risk may not be fully mitigated.

'Black cladding' will remain a key risk in the community's eyes

Supply Nation defines 'black cladding' as the practice of a non-Indigenous business taking advantage of an Indigenous business to gain access to Indigenous procurement policies or contracts.⁹¹ Deadly Innovation program staff stated that they rely on a combination of established registers of Indigenous-owned businesses such as Supply Nation, statutory declarations attesting to the Indigeneity of a business and informal information gathering through networks and contact with businesses to firmly establish the Indigenous ownership and authenticity of a business before engaging it. However, community perceptions of government supporting black cladding businesses will remain a key risk to Deadly Innovation investments.

Key person risks

Relationships and trust key to delivery of initiatives are held at the individual level, leaving Deadly Innovation initiatives and the portfolio as a whole susceptible to negative impacts of personnel changes

Externally, change agents and champions were consistently identified throughout the evaluation as being critical to the successful delivery of Deadly Innovation initiatives (see Section 6.2.1). The evaluation observed that these individuals have built significant trust and reputation, and have generally unique skill sets and experiences that equip them to work the way they do. This presents a significant risk to future delivery should one or more of these individuals leave without being able to handover trust and relationships, or breaks the trust that has been developed.

Internally, Section 6.1.2 highlighted the importance of the strong and trusting relationship between Deadly Innovation program staff and leadership, and the criticality of the informal authorising environment through senior executive support. Deadly Innovation program staff suggested that changes in key personnel within the Deadly Innovation team, the Innovation division or departmental leadership and the subsequent loss of this informal authorising environment could have negative impacts on their ability to continue to work differently.

A potential perceived risk of a "gatekeeper" created by the Deadly Innovation team structure may cause concern from the Indigenous business community

While Deadly Innovation program staff and the Innovation division have successfully built and mobilised existing processes to ensure that applications and proposals are considered transparently and in line with probity, the entry of potential funding recipients into the Deadly Innovation pipeline is to some extent dictated by the judgement and experience of a small number of departmental staff. While this judgement and experience have demonstrated significant success, there is nonetheless a potential risk of the Indigenous business community perceiving a "gatekeeper" to Deadly Innovation funding opportunities.

Deadly Innovation program staff suggested that this risk was partially mitigated initially through the informal use of the BIRG as a sounding board to investigate potential investments, though this avenue has been lost. The personal ethics framework discussed in Section 6.1.2 also partially mitigated this risk.

Partial reliance on in-kind support and volunteer work from delivery partners and program staff needing to be accessible to Indigenous business is a risk to the sustainability of the portfolio and to the department's ability to quantify the resources and funding required to deliver initiatives

As discussed in Section 6.1.1, stakeholders across Deadly Innovation highlighted that Deadly Innovation program staff and delivery partners go above and beyond to support delivery. Multiple examples of non-

⁹¹ ['Black cladding'](#), Supply Nation, 2022

government delivery partners volunteering time were reported through the evaluation, and several initiatives were reported as being partially reliant on in-kind support (see Section 6.2.3 for relevant discussion of the Cherbourg Service Centre). Stakeholders from across the Indigenous business community also praised Deadly Innovation program staff for their willingness to be accessible outside of standard working hours for support. This demonstrates a strong commitment to the Deadly Innovation portfolio, however, is a risk in terms of underestimating resources required to deliver initiatives, burnout and the sustainability of the portfolio.

Portfolio-level risks

The small scale of Deadly Innovation has kept it within risk tolerances, but growth may challenge existing risk, governance and decision-making processes, reducing flexibility

Deadly Innovation program staff, Innovation division staff supporting Deadly Innovation and Innovation Senior Executive agreed that processes are sufficient to appropriately manage current levels of investment, generally operating within the department's financial delegations. As discussed in Section 6.1.2, these processes are crucial for generating trust between government and Indigenous innovators, businesses and community through delivering on government commitments in a timely manner. However, increasing the size of the Deadly Innovation budget or the size of individual investments would risk reducing the flexibility and responsiveness of current processes.

Potential future political expectations for "quick wins" in an environment where change is slow and difficult to quantify could undermine ministerial support

As discussed above in Section 7.1.4, the Deadly Innovation portfolio has benefited significantly from being given the time and space to develop the trust, relationships and foundations which are needed to drive outcomes in Indigenous innovation. As evidenced by the Indigenous business cases, building a community business can be a slow process, and as discussed in Section 6.1.1, there are challenges within the portfolio related to communicating and reporting on the qualitative impact of Deadly Innovation. Deadly Innovation program staff suggested that being unable to meet demands from senior government stakeholders for easily communicated and rapid success stories (particularly quantitative metrics) are a risk to maintaining the ministerial support that the Deadly Innovation portfolio has benefited from to date.

Applying a more focused and Western-centric understanding of innovation centred on technology and digital solutions could become a limiting factor in project choice

As discussed in Section 6.1.2, Deadly Innovation applies a deliberately broad understanding of innovation building on Advance Queensland's focus on innovation as a driver of economic growth and job creation, and that this broad understanding is necessary in the Indigenous context. An example of this is the Cherbourg Service Centre. The concept of a service centre would not ordinarily be considered "innovative", however, the concept of a service centre that is owned and operated by an Indigenous community and located in the community itself could be considered highly innovative. Deadly Innovation program staff highlighted that narrowing this understanding to focus on technology and innovation (as often applied by governments) could greatly reduce the number of potential projects given the small number of Indigenous innovators and businesses who have been able to overcome the many barriers to entering this space.

Departmental risks

The variety of collaborative supports to get community businesses off the ground may lead to a perception that Deadly Innovation or the Innovation division is acting beyond its mandate and therefore lose support from government stakeholders

Deadly Innovation program staff have successfully leveraged coalitions of the willing across government to support innovation in a broad range of contexts (see Section 6.2.1), and clearly articulates its approach through the Deadly Innovation Strategy (see Section 6.1.1). Deadly Innovation program staff highlighted that the complex nature of support and enablers required to get a community business off the ground spans multiple government departments and expressed some frustration when support from these government departments was not forthcoming.

Innovation Senior Executives suggested that the wide variety of activities in the Deadly Innovation portfolio creates risks that Deadly Innovation is perceived by others to act outside of the Innovation division's core mandate. However, by taking initiative and acting where others can't, Innovation seeds activity (proof of concept) and supports the first stage of implementation before transferring to another partner to continue the activity or make it sustainable.

System-level risks

The Deadly Innovation portfolio's broad range of initiatives and investments may risk duplicating initiatives and investments from other government and non-government stakeholders

Deadly Innovation program staff have strong networks and understanding of Indigenous-focused innovation and business programs across government, and thorough mapping was conducted at the beginning of the implementation. However, risk remains that Deadly Innovation investments and initiatives duplicate similar investments and initiatives from other government departments (across different levels of government), or private sector or not-for-profit sector organisations.

7.1.6 Challenges identified throughout the delivery of the Deadly Innovation portfolio should shape refinements to the portfolio

The evaluation and Co-design identified challenges that have occurred at four levels: community, government, business, and cross-cutting.

Community-level challenges

Auspicing organisations in community may lack capability and capacity to administer grants, and this is a key consideration for partner selection during program design

Interviews with Deadly Innovation delivery partners highlighted that in many remote and regional Indigenous communities, there are few organisations in the community that have the capability and capacity to auspice and administer government grants, with the local council often taking on a large part of this workload. As discussed in Section 6.1.1, this is particularly true in the cases of the Indigenous industry business case projects in Wujal Wujal and Woorabinda (see Section 6.1.1). In Wujal Wujal, community stakeholders and Deadly Innovation program staff reported that the ASC handed back funds due to a lack of capability to manage them, and in Woorabinda, delivery partners reported that the Woorabinda Council experienced high turnover in the CEO role, and that the new CEO had put a hold on the wattle seed project to rebuild the council's capacity and capability to manage grants.

The complexity of community governance may be a barrier to setting up community-owned businesses, highlighting the need to build strong relationships with community and co-create what success looks like

Interviews with Marrawah Law and Deadly Innovation delivery partners highlighted that setting up governance and legal agreements for community businesses is a slow process that requires a high degree of cultural understanding and skill to negotiate. There are often complex dynamics and layers of formal and informal community governance and leadership throughout which consensus must be achieved, coupled with difficult legislative and land ownership requirements and limitations associated with native title. Interviews with stakeholders in one of the Aboriginal Shire Councils involved in Deadly Innovation initiatives added weight to this challenge by highlighting the challenging relationship between the council and local Prescribed Body Corporate and that this relationship made the council reluctant to add another level of community governance through introducing the community wealth sharing governance model.

Capital may be inaccessible in rural and remote communities due to collective land ownership or lack of significant assets, creating a barrier for some Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities to participate in the innovating economy

Through interviews, Deadly Innovation delivery partners suggested that because many Indigenous rural and remote communities in Queensland are situated on non-freehold land (i.e. cannot take out a

mortgage) and have a generally lower ownership of significant assets, this prevents them from leveraging private capital to support business ventures.

Deadly Innovation program staff have been challenged by a lack of trust in government within parts of the Indigenous community

As discussed in Section 6.2.1, Deadly Innovation program staff and Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities interviewed through the evaluation highlighted some Indigenous communities' perception of governments as over promising and under delivering on social impact for Indigenous communities. Deadly Innovation Indigenous program staff members also reported receiving negative reactions at times from Indigenous community members when they said they worked for the government. The design of the Deadly Innovation Strategy itself was profoundly shaped by this challenge with its focus on first building trust and relationships, and while the evaluation has found that trust and relationships have been built between Deadly Innovation program staff and Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities that they have had contact with, no evidence could be examined as to any broader fostering of trust beyond this.

The current method of supporting Indigenous businesses to complete applications may represent a hidden cost to the department

A condition of the Deadly Deals grants was that recipients had been unsuccessful in applying for other sources of funding⁹², and Deadly Innovation program staff suggested that the success of these businesses (as discussed in Section 6.2.3) after receiving Deadly Deals funding was a key indicator of the lower capability and capacity of some Indigenous businesses to complete funding applications. While providing additional support to Indigenous applicants seeking funding through Ignite Ideas through the My Innovation Advisor Service was a direct cost to Deadly Innovation, the significant time reported by Deadly Innovation program staff and delivery partners spent supporting enquiries, project development and application processes may be an invisible cost to the department as the time spent and number of businesses supported is not being tracked.

Remote and regional communities can have poor access to digital infrastructure and lower digital capability, creating barriers to participating in digital innovation and increasing program costs

Deadly Innovation program staff suggested that even though Cherbourg is one of the least geographically isolated Indigenous communities in Queensland, the necessity of the Starlink connection highlights that digital capability and infrastructure are a significant barrier for remote and regional communities to participate in business and innovation, and are also a barrier to virtual service delivery, requiring significant resources to ensure program staff or delivery partners can be present on the ground. This may increase the cost to the department to expanding engagement with remote and regional communities.

Wealth generation can have unintended consequences in community, highlighting the need to listen deeply to Indigenous communities and work slowly

Through interviews, Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council staff members indicated that many residents and Service Centre employees live in means-tested public housing and that this places a limit on their earning potential through the Service Centre and partly necessitates the flexible working model adopted by the Service Centre. This is an example of the unintended consequences that wealth generation can have in community.

Innovation often relies on unpaid work which is an additional barrier for some Indigenous Australians to participating in the innovation economy

Given that Indigenous Australians often earn lower than average incomes or have higher levels of financial stress⁹³, some Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities do not have a safety net that would enable them to run a business without breaking even. A Deadly Innovation delivery partner highlighted this as a significant barrier to the development of community-run businesses, stating that rewarding

⁹² [Deadly Deals frequently asked questions - Eligibility](#)

⁹³ [Indigenous income and finance, 2021](#)

unpaid work or “sweat equity” of individuals driving forward these businesses once the businesses have become profitable would partially alleviate or recognise this challenge.

Government-level challenges

Understanding of the progress of projects outside of formal milestones is held outside of systems, heightening key person risks and challenging reporting to senior executives

The evaluation received limited documentation of portfolio-level reporting, regular monitoring of the progress of projects beyond milestone reporting, and limited documentation of extension activities. The small size of the Deadly Innovation program team may not require a more systematic approach, however the difficulties experienced by the evaluation in establishing the current state of initiatives and activities within the Deadly Innovation portfolio suggests that the Innovation division would be challenged to communicate progress at the portfolio level to government if and/or when it is requested to do so. The evaluation has also established a significant internal key person risk, and the informal approach to portfolio monitoring heightens this risk through increasing Deadly Innovation program staff's potential reliance on lengthy person to person handovers.

The qualitative nature of the success of Deadly Innovation and lack of quantitative measures of success makes impact difficult to communicate to government and community

The evaluation found strong qualitative evidence that Deadly Innovation has achieved its objectives. However as discussed in Sections 6.1.1 and 6.2.1 (related to understanding participant learning journeys), the lack of qualitative and quantitative metrics established at the portfolio level through the Deadly Innovation Strategy creates a risk that Deadly Innovation is unable to communicate its impact in a way that government and the broader community are able to easily understand.

The absence of a peak or industry body for Indigenous small business and innovation reduces the ability of Deadly Innovation to remain connected to regional and remote communities

Deadly Innovation program staff have demonstrated their ability to build and leverage connections in regional and remote communities. However, Deadly Innovation program staff highlighted that access to a formal body of senior leaders from across the Queensland Indigenous business sector was a valuable mechanism for gaining real-time intelligence about these communities and the Indigenous business community more broadly (see Section 6.1.2). The current lack of a similar mechanism creates a risk that the Deadly Innovation portfolio is not able to respond as swiftly or effectively to the needs of regional and remote communities. Deadly Innovation is potentially further challenged by the lack of both an industry or peak body in the innovation ecosystem more broadly.

Building trust requires program staff to undertake negotiations with communities, challenging internal approval processes to maintain flexibility and empower staff while maintaining appropriate oversight

As discussed in Section 6.1.2, a core strength of the Deadly Innovation approach is empowering program staff to undertake negotiations with communities, and internal communication and team structures were put in place to ensure commitments had the support of departmental executive. However, these structures were put in place in response to challenges that were reported by Innovation Senior Executive related to their being unaware of negotiations being undertaken by program staff until approval for funding was being requested, at which point there was significant reputational and relationship risks associated with not approving funding. Through interviews, Innovation Senior Executive stated that the internal communication and team structures put in place had only partially alleviated this challenge.

Going outside typical public service protocols and speaking directly to those in positions of power and influence in order to progress activities creates tension within government

As discussed in Section 6.1.2, Deadly Innovation program staff spoke directly to those in positions of power and influence to overcome internal barriers to the delivery of the Deadly Innovation portfolio. While Deadly Innovation program staff reported that this direct approach was necessary and achieved results, Innovation Senior Executive highlighted that bypassing public service protocols created challenges and tension within government.

The lower-than-expected uptake of the Deadly Digits software is an example of the challenges for government investment in innovation when consumers do not take up products from businesses that have received government funding

The success of many of the businesses and innovators supported through Deadly Innovation speaks to the strength of internal processes and Deadly Innovation program staff's experience in backing businesses and innovators with strong growth prospects. However, just 13 of the 1,000 available Deadly Digits licenses had been taken up by Indigenous business by the evaluation period.⁹⁴ Through interviews, Deadly Innovation program staff and Reckon representatives indicated that community concerns over the non-Indigenous ownership of the software and a poor cut-through of marketing to the target market were the main drivers of the lower than expected uptake, and that solutions were being developed to address these concerns.

Government and other funding sources may lack a framework to assess grant applications from Indigenous businesses

Deadly Innovation program staff suggested that Indigenous businesses and innovators need to be assessed and understood by different criteria, but government has not yet developed or adapted frameworks and criteria specific to assessing grant applications from Indigenous innovators, leaving it reliant on a small number of staff with the expertise in doing so. Evaluation findings related to the success of Deadly Deals whereby recipients had been previously unsuccessful in funding applications may in part support the suggestion that other funding sources, including government did not have the framework to understand the potential value of the Deadly Deals recipients' businesses, though there are other factors such as eligibility that must be considered.

Evaluation findings related to change agents' focus on growing Indigenous employment and supply chains within their business suggest that for some Indigenous businesses, there is a broader understanding of a business' value that may not align with more profit-driven grant criteria. This was articulated clearly by one Deadly Innovation funding recipient, who stated that they disliked reporting purely on sales figures for grant reporting. They prefer to report internally on the number of people the business helps each month alongside sales figures.

Tailoring training, mentoring and support activities to local contexts is resource-intensive

The high levels of flexibility, tailoring and expertise required to deliver fit-for-purpose training, mentoring and support activities across Queensland impose significant time and financial costs during the design phase. The diversity of activities also creates a challenge in terms of being able to understand the collective impact of these activities.

Elements within government may have a lower understanding and confidence in the capability and capacity of Indigenous business

Deadly Innovation program staff and several Indigenous businesses interviewed through the evaluation reported being challenged by poor understanding and confidence in Indigenous business' ability to successfully deliver products and services, creating barriers to entry for Indigenous business in government procurement.

Government approaches to contracting with small businesses and government partners may not be appropriate to the innovation or Indigenous business context

The complexity of negotiations for the 4-party Collaborative Development Agreement was partly attributed by CSIRO and MEGT stakeholders to a lack of flexibility on the part of the Queensland Government, and highlighted by them as a potential ongoing challenge for Queensland Government when working with Indigenous small businesses. Several Indigenous businesses interviewed stated similar views related to a lack of flexibility (particularly with the need for repeated contract variations) through interviews with the evaluation.

⁹⁴ Deadly Digits Milestone 5 report

Other government agencies may not be empowered to complete work needed to support innovation in community

Deadly Innovation staff reported that government staff from other departments working in community do not always have the flexibility in their job description or the discretion in allocation of their resources to support innovation activities that align with their department's work. This is challenging for Deadly Innovation program staff, who are unable to leverage potentially valuable relationships and resources.

Ensuring staff can be on the ground in regional and remote communities is cost-intensive

A core element of building trust and relationships in community is committing to having staff on the ground as often as possible. This involves significant travel and time costs, as well as a potential burden on staff in terms of their work-life balance.

Business-level challenges

Some non-Indigenous businesses may have a lower understanding and confidence in the capability and capacity of Indigenous business

Deadly Innovation program staff and several Indigenous businesses interviewed through the evaluation reported being challenged by the perceptions of non-Indigenous businesses of Indigenous businesses' ability to successfully deliver products and services.

Some elements within industry may have a lack of understanding of the commercial value of supporting Indigenous innovation beyond corporate social responsibility

Industry stakeholders interviewed through the evaluation and Deadly Innovation program staff suggested that there may be a perception within non-Indigenous businesses that supporting Indigenous innovation or business is a loss-making venture that belongs within corporate social responsibility programs, rather than being an opportunity to deliver shared commercial (and social) value.

Cross-cutting challenges

New ways of working may be resisted due to a lack of consistent understanding of why a different approach is needed

The Deadly Innovation Strategy and portfolio of activities are an example of how supporting Indigenous innovation requires government and industry to work differently. Deadly Innovation program staff, in particular its Indigenous staff, reported that their efforts towards influencing government to work differently created tension and challenge, and that this was amplified by unconscious bias and barriers stemming from a lack of consistent understanding of the nature of Indigenous innovation and the reasons the approach needs to be different within existing processes and systems.

Funding available may be insufficient to support the variety and scope of investments needed

Deadly Innovation program staff and delivery partners suggested that growing the Indigenous innovation ecosystem requires significant investment across sectors at a minimum to bridge the gap to non-Indigenous innovators, and at best to "leapfrog" it into a powerful position. These stakeholders, and also INFP participants, highlighted that funding availability across government and industry has been a significant challenge throughout the delivery of Deadly Innovation. Specific challenges related to funding in the Indigenous food sector are discussed in Section 6.2.1.

Appendix 1: Detailed Methodology

A.1.1 Approach to cultural safety and co-design

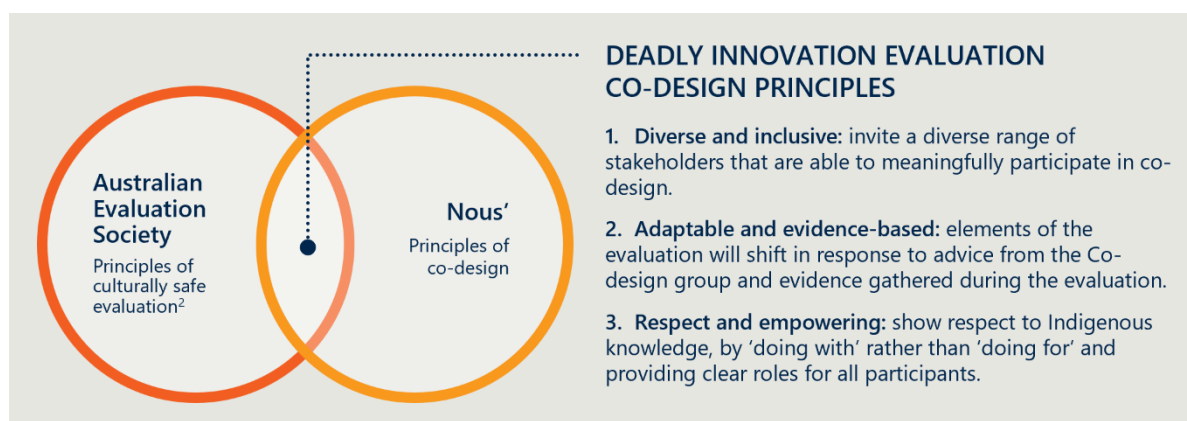
Culturally safe Indigenous stakeholder engagement was critical to the conduct of the evaluation. The Australian Evaluation Society (AES) sets out 10 principles for culturally safe evaluation involving Indigenous peoples including: Sovereignty, know and understand the truth, diversity and uniqueness, time, decision-making, respect, adaptability, leadership and expertise, benefit, intellectual and cultural property. This evaluation adopted those principles both by keeping them front of mind for the evaluation team, and through building out specific approaches that connected with those principles.

The two key ways this was done was by forming a Co-design Group for the evaluation (Principle 5 – decision-making) and bringing forward specific operational approaches under three principles (respect, benefit, and intellectual and cultural property).

The Co-design Group agreed to three principles that inform the evaluation’s approach to culturally safe and rigorous evaluation (diverse and inclusive, adaptable and evidence-based, respect and empowering). In undertaking this evaluation, Nous adhered to the principles agreed by the Co-design Group and shaped three Co-design sessions to progressively build the evaluation’s understanding. This also captured Nous’ principles of Co-design as well as AES principles of culturally safe evaluation.

Figure 24 outlines the agreed Deadly Innovation Evaluation Co-design Principles. Throughout the evaluation, the group continued to make warm connections between the evaluation team and stakeholders, testing findings and recommendations.

Figure 24 | Overview of Deadly Innovation Co-design Principles and approach



The evaluation relied on understanding perspectives of Indigenous innovators, businesses, communities and other stakeholders to assess the success and effectiveness of the Deadly Innovation portfolio. Culturally safe engagement was required not only to understand these perspectives, but also to preserve the relationships and trust that Advance Queensland had developed through Deadly Innovation.

To engage in a culturally safe way, the evaluation was led by its Indigenous team members during stakeholder engagement, guided by the Co-design Group, and adhered to cultural safety principles set out below:

- Approaching engagement as genuine knowledge sharing rather than a consultation to respect expertise and truth.
- Allowing time to develop relationships and trust before seeking knowledge.
- Respecting cultural values, protocols and knowledges.
- Valuing and planning for flexibility to hear perspectives expressed in different ways.
- Honouring commitments made to stakeholders, particularly with regards to sharing findings.
- Valuing the diversity of Indigenous cultures by avoiding the assumption that what was true somewhere is true everywhere.

Figure 25 highlights the principles used for communicating the evaluation's findings, respecting Indigenous stakeholder's input when communicating back to stakeholders.

Figure 25 | Principles established by the Co-design Group for communicating evaluation findings



The evaluation was also guided by *Maiam nayri Wingara Indigenous Data Sovereignty Principles*, which provides an Australian set of Indigenous Data Governance protocols and principles at the inaugural "Indigenous Data Sovereignty Summit" in 2018.⁹⁵ Via a Communique, the Summit delegates asserted that in Australia, Indigenous peoples have the right to:

- Exercise control of the data ecosystem including creation, development, stewardship, analysis, dissemination and infrastructure.
- Data that is contextual and disaggregated (available and accessible at individual, community and Indigenous levels).
- Data that is relevant and empowers sustainable self-determination and effective self-governance.
- Data structures that are accountable to Indigenous peoples and First Nations.
- Data that is protective and respects [their] individual and collective interests.

Operationally, the evaluation approached data sovereignty by considering:

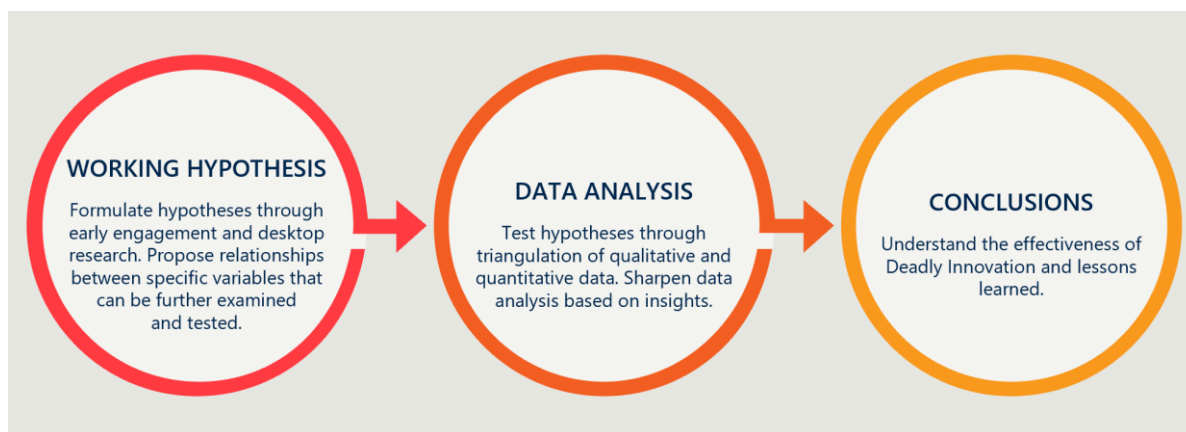
1. Contribution of data to the evaluation is on an opt-in rather than opt-out basis, and Indigenous stakeholders were provided with an information sheet detailing the purpose of the evaluation and how their data will be used to ensure informed consent.
2. Stakeholders had the option to withdraw their data at any point of the evaluation up to publication, and to have relevant sections of the final report redacted once finalised.
3. The evaluation had planned to attribute all data used to the relevant Indigenous owners, either directly or in an appendix detailing key datasets created and analysed, however Indigenous businesses interviewed throughout the evaluation preferred that their data remain anonymous in the public sphere.
4. To enable the above, the ownership of all data was comprehensively tracked throughout collection, analysis and reporting.
5. The Co-design Group guided the evaluation to ensure that findings were communicated in a way that was of most benefit to Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities.

A.1.2 Evaluation approach

Evaluation activities took a qualitatively dominant robust mixed methods approach led by hypotheses formed through qualitative analysis (see Figure 26 below).

⁹⁵ [Maiam nayri Maiam nayri Wingara Indigenous Data Sovereignty Principles, 2018](#)

Figure 26 | Overview of mixed-methods deductive approach incorporated in evaluation

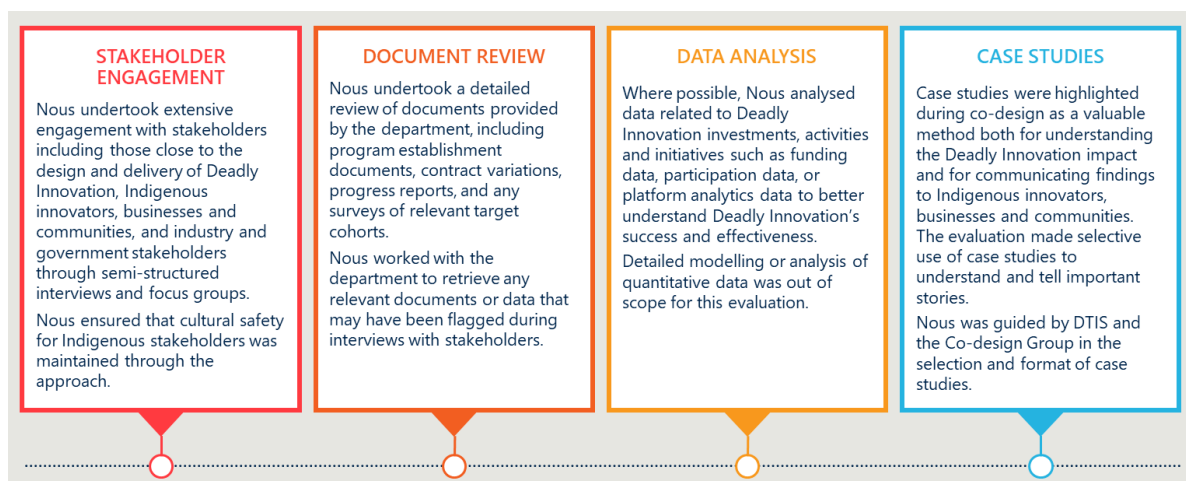


The three key factors driving this deductive approach were:

- Being driven by the voice of Indigenous businesses and innovators provides a culturally appropriate framework for capturing, analysing and understanding these voices as the primary measure of the effectiveness of Deadly Innovation.
- Articulating lessons learned from the design and delivery of Deadly Innovation requires extensive engagement with internal and external stakeholders to synthesise findings.
- Understanding the availability, reliability and completeness of quantitative data will determine which hypotheses can be tested through quantitative analysis.

Nous triangulated a range of data (see Figure 27) to test evaluation findings based on the key lines of enquiry. The integration and comparison of qualitative insights and quantitative data enabled a balanced and accurate evaluation of the effectiveness of Deadly Innovation.

Figure 27 | Overview of data sources used to test evaluation findings



A Program Logic was used to understand the intent of Deadly Innovation, the delivery landscape and key achievements. The program logic links the portfolio of AQ-funded investments, and other activities and initiatives that contribute to the aims and objectives of the Deadly Innovation Strategy, and the intended outcomes of Deadly Innovation. It steps through the inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes of the portfolio, describing the expected links and assumptions that underpin these links between each step.

We have developed a program logic (see Appendix A.1.3) for Deadly Innovation as a whole, drawing together outputs from multiple individual investments, activities and initiatives. The Program Logic also assisted in answering five key lines of enquiry to identify indicators of success and guide the analysis, these were: Process, Effectiveness, and Lessons Learned (see Appendix A.1.4).

The evaluation was limited by its focus on voices that have been part of Deadly Innovation

The evaluation engaged extensively with stakeholders that have played key roles in the delivery of Deadly Innovation, participated or engaged with Deadly Innovation initiatives, or been directly influenced by Deadly Innovation program staff members. The evaluation's scope did not allow engagement with the broader Indigenous and Queensland business and innovation community or government more broadly. The evaluation scope also did not allow engagement with Indigenous businesses and innovators that were not successful in applying for or becoming part of Deadly Innovation initiatives.

Evaluation findings have been tested through triangulation across multiple data sources and review through co-design, however the evaluation's scope creates an inherent limitation due a success-biased sample. While this represents a limitation, it also aligns with the Deadly Innovation approach by identifying and amplifying the strengths and successes of activities supporting change agents.

The evaluation was also limited by the availability of data and key stakeholders to participate in interviews

Data provided to the evaluation by the department included documentation related to the design of the Deadly Innovation Strategy, financial and reporting data at the Deadly Innovation portfolio level, and contract, approvals and reporting documentation related to the individual initiatives, investments and projects. Key limitations of the data provided included:

- No portfolio-level progress reporting was included dated after 2020
- Reports from various grant recipients were missing or contained insufficient information
- Data and surveys on participant engagement with training, mentoring and support programs was unavailable beyond what was included in-text in reporting
- Very limited documentation of the Deadly Innovation extension activities or influence projects within government was provided.

Indigenous business owners were generally unwilling to share exact numbers of jobs and quantify the wealth generated through engagement with Deadly Innovation and funding received due to the potential for the report to be made public. They also expressed that it was difficult to directly attribute increases in job numbers of wealth generated to Deadly Innovation funding even though it was a key contributor.

Several key stakeholders were unable to take part in interviews. Please see Appendix 2 for a list of stakeholders that the evaluation intended to speak with but was unable to

A.1.3 Program logic

CONTEXT	INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES	LONG-TERM OUTCOMES
<p>The Deadly Innovation Strategy was co-designed by the then Department of Innovation, Tourism Industry Development and the Commonwealth Games (DITID), the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Business and Innovation Reference Group (BIRG) and key stakeholders.</p> <p>The vision for the Deadly Innovation Strategy was to increase economic opportunities and independence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through greater involvement in the innovation economy.</p> <p>Three core aims were identified within the strategy for action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim 1: Government will hear, by identifying and supporting a pathway for Indigenous businesses and innovators to achieve success. • Aim 2: Government will share, by broadening access to existing opportunities. • Aim 3: Government will activate, by securing funding and backing feasible deals. <p>For the purpose of this evaluation, Deadly Innovation is considered to be a portfolio of AQ-funded investments, as well as other activities and initiatives that contribute to the aims and objectives of the Deadly Innovation Strategy.</p> <p>Through delivering Deadly Innovation, a novel approach to government supporting Indigenous innovation has been developed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding: \$2.75m Deadly Innovation Fund and \$1.73m Queensland strategic funding • Funding leveraged from other government and industry sources • Deadly Innovation staffing and administration • Relationships with other government departments, industry, Indigenous innovators and communities 	<p>AQ Deadly Innovation fund – key programs/projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deadly Deals • One Business • Indigenous Innovation & Entrepreneur Pathways (IIEP) • Indigenous Industry Business Cases • Open for Business • LOGIT Reconciliation Action Plan reporting tool (Weavr) with CSIRO • Community Governance wealth sharing model • AQ Indigenous Native Food Program Phase 2 • First Nations Call Centre <p>AQ Deadly Innovation activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AQ TAFE Indigenous Pathways Scholarships • Yarrabah Innovation Hub • AQ Indigenous Native Food Program Phase 1 • First Nations Call Centres • Cherbourg AI including Starlink • Deadly Digits • Therabubble <p>Deadly Innovation extension activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous Business Connect/Mob Invest (with overseas visa holders) • Review Defence Industry supply change opportunities for Indigenous businesses (with Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning) • Fisheries Licenses – Deadly Aquaculture (with Department of Agriculture and Fisheries) • Mob Invest (with Trade and Investment Queensland) • DTIS Indigenous Participation Plan <p>Activities supporting the delivery of Deadly Innovation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal and external advocacy activities • Relationship building • Policy and practice development activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct grant funding to Indigenous innovators and businesses • Funding leveraged by Deadly Innovation from other sources to support Indigenous innovators and businesses • Number of Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities supported to apply for and access funding from Deadly Innovation and other sources • Community Governance Wealth Sharing Model produced • Number of students supported with scholarships • Number of Indigenous businesses and innovators trained and mentored in core innovation and business skills • Number of Indigenous businesses and innovators supported with technical product development support (e.g. Native Food) • Amount of funding provided for Indigenous innovators and businesses to access technology supports • Number of networking events hosted • Relationships built with industry to support Indigenous innovation • Meetings, presentations and conversations advocating for Indigenous business • Relationships built within DTIS and with different government departments to support Indigenous innovation • Government policies and practices reviewed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased investment in Indigenous innovation as a result of Deadly Innovation (II2)* • Indigenous innovators build their capacity to develop their businesses (BC1)* • Indigenous businesses and innovators progress the development of a product, process or service (SJ1, SC2)* • Communities develop innovative businesses that share wealth (SJ2, SC1, SC2)* • Indigenous innovators build their digital innovation capacity (BC1)* • Partnerships are established between government, industry, Indigenous innovators and communities (FC1, FC2)* • Government has improved understanding of and practices for supporting Indigenous innovation (FC1)* • Indigenous businesses are promoted to a range of government, business and industry stakeholders (FC1)* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities achieve self determination through wealth creation (SJ2)* • Increased Indigenous employment in innovation (SJ2)* • Queensland has an increased number and proportion of Indigenous owned and operated businesses (II1)* • Increased Indigenous participation in digital innovation (SC2)* • A strong, thriving and networked Indigenous innovation sector is connected strongly with government and industry (SC2, FC1, FC2)* • Increased Indigenous participation in government innovation programs (SC1, SC2)* • Improved understanding of and practices for supporting Indigenous innovation are embedded across government (FC1)*

A.1.4 KLEs and indicators

The indicators and research questions of key lines of enquiries is summarised in Table 6 below. This information has been derived from the Deadly Innovation evaluation plan.

Table 6 | Overview of Deadly Innovation KLEs

KLE	Research question	Indicator
KLE1 (Process): To what extent has the design, implementation and delivery of Deadly Innovation been successful, and why?	To what extent has Deadly Innovation been delivered as intended or planned, and how has this intent evolved throughout implementation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key internal stakeholders agree that Deadly Innovation has been delivered as intended or planned. Design documents for Deadly Innovation accurately document the intended implementation and delivery of Deadly Innovation.
	To what extent have Indigenous innovators, business, communities, and the business sector more broadly taken up opportunities to be part of Deadly Innovation investments, activities and initiatives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation rates in Deadly Innovation individual investments, activities and initiatives match or exceed intended scope. Perception that projects coming into the program are of a high quality and are ready for commercialisation/growth.
	What are the key outputs of Deadly Innovation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal data from individual elements of Deadly Innovation (see Outputs Section of the Program Logic) matches or exceeds the intended scope described in design documents.
KLE2 (Process): What are the core characteristics of the Deadly Innovation approach?	What are the core principles of the approach?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key internal stakeholders articulate common themes in their approach to design, implementation and delivery of Deadly Innovation. Indigenous innovators, businesses, and communities articulate common themes related to their experience of Deadly Innovation.

KLE	Research question	Indicator
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perception of key internal stakeholder and Indigenous innovators, businesses, and communities that Deadly Innovation has been delivered in line with these core principles.
	<p>What governance mechanisms, team structures and decision-making processes enable the approach?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key internal stakeholders articulate a shared understanding of governance and decision-making processes. Team structures effectively implement decisions made and the intent of Deadly Innovation.
	<p>What are the capabilities and staffing requirements that enable the approach both internally and in terms of what external stakeholders need?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key internal and external stakeholders articulate a core set of skills, knowledge and experiences that enables the design, implementation and delivery of Deadly Innovation. Staff involved in the delivery of Deadly Innovation agree that staffing levels are sufficient.
	<p>What key internal and external relationships enable the approach?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal and external stakeholders identify relationships that have been critical to the design, delivery and implementation of Deadly Innovation.
<p>KLE3 (Effectiveness): To what extent did the Deadly Innovation portfolio of investments, activities and initiatives achieve its intended outcomes and contribute to Advance Queensland more broadly?</p>	<p>Hear: To what extent did Deadly Innovation build trust and relationships with Indigenous peoples and communities to identify change agents and business/innovation pathways (includes promotion/platforming, participation, leadership)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perception that Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities value and trust their relationship with Deadly Innovation. Perception that 'change agents' identified through Deadly Innovation have enabled the delivery of investments, activities and initiatives through leadership, relationships or other means. Perception of Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities that they have built skills, knowledge and experience to engage in innovation.

KLE	Research question	Indicator
	<p>Share: To what extent did Deadly Innovation create increased access to innovation opportunities for Indigenous businesses, individuals and communities (includes platforms for connection, support for businesses, networking creation, access and connection with industries)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities that they are better connected to the right businesses, industries and/or government agencies. • Perception that Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities have received the support they need and want to develop their businesses. • Perception that Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities use improved digital infrastructure to engage in innovation. • Number of networking opportunities created for Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities in innovation. • Number of promotional opportunities created for Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities in innovation. • Number of connections and partnerships are established between government, industry, Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities. • Number of Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities accessing support through Deadly Innovation to progress product, process or service development. • Number of Indigenous innovators involved in government innovation programs.
	<p>Activate: To what extent did Deadly Innovation activate the right funding mechanisms and enablers to create self-determination? (Includes wealth creation, jobs, access to funding)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of funding leveraged through Deadly Innovation, Advance Queensland and other sources to support Indigenous innovators and businesses. • Number of jobs created and supported by funding leveraged.

KLE	Research question	Indicator
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of wealth shared through community wealth sharing models. • Perception that Indigenous innovators, businesses, and communities have developed sustainable businesses through access to funding. • Perception that employment pathways created through Deadly Innovation for Indigenous communities are sustainable. • Perception of Indigenous innovators, businesses, and communities that their self-determination has been strengthened through Deadly Innovation.
<p>KLE4 (Effectiveness): How effectively did the Deadly Innovation approach respond to the needs of Indigenous innovators and communities to achieve outcomes for key stakeholders, including government and Indigenous innovators?</p>	<p>To what extent has the novel approach empowered and mobilised the Indigenous innovation sector?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities that they would have been unlikely to engage in innovation without Deadly Innovation. • Perception of Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities involved in Deadly Innovation that they are motivated to continue engaging in innovation in the future. • Perception of Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities that they are confident to initiate, take action, identify and lead innovation activity in their business or community.
	<p>To what extent has Deadly Innovation influenced and embedded new ways of working within the Innovation division, DTIS and Queensland Government more broadly?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reported changed practices of government stakeholders related to Indigenous innovation and engagement. • Number of consultations of internal stakeholders (DTIS, AQ) with other Queensland Government stakeholders to develop or modify policies and procedures.

KLE	Research question	Indicator
	To what extent has Deadly Innovation showcased Indigenous innovation to the Queensland business community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of Indigenous innovators and businesses that they have been supported to connect with the Queensland business community. • Perception of Indigenous innovators and businesses that their work has been promoted and showcased to the Queensland business community.
	To what extent has Deadly Innovation created a network of Indigenous innovators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Indigenous innovators who have connected with other Indigenous innovators through Deadly Innovation. • Perception of Indigenous innovators who feel connected to a broader network.
	What are the positive and negative unintended outcomes of Deadly Innovation for all stakeholders?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of key internal stakeholder and Indigenous innovators, businesses, and communities that Deadly Innovation has delivered positive or negative unintended outcomes.
KLE5 (Lessons learned): What lessons learned from the design, implementation and delivery of Deadly Innovation can be applied or replicated to inform future design and performance of programs to create an inclusive approach to innovation and economic growth?	What are the success factors of Deadly Innovation as an approach for investment in Indigenous innovation?	
	What are the success factors of Deadly Innovation that can be applied to programming for other cohorts that may face barriers or discrimination?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons learned were derived from insights drawn from Process and Effectiveness evaluation and developed by the Co-design Group.
	What are the success factors of Deadly Innovation that can be applied to innovation policy and programming broadly to enable inclusivity?	

KLE	Research question	Indicator
	What risks of the approach need to be mitigated to enable greater success?	
	How can challenges faced during design, implementation and delivery be avoided or minimised in the future?	

A.1.5 Data sources

A range of data sources informed the evaluation. Data that the evaluation sought to consider in the evaluation plan and was able to consider is coloured in navy.

Legend

Data that the evaluation sought to consider in the evaluation plan and was able to consider

Data that the evaluation sought to consider in the evaluation plan but was unable to consider

Type	KLE	Indicators	Key data sources					
			Qualitative program documentation and reports	Quantitative program data	Interviews with internal stakeholders	Interviews with Indigenous innovation community	Interviews with external stakeholders	Data and surveys from platforms created through Deadly Innovation

Process	KLE 1	Key internal stakeholders agree that Deadly Innovation has been delivered as intended or planned.			■	■	■	
		Design documents for Deadly Innovation accurately document the intended implementation and delivery of Deadly Innovation.	■		■			
		Participation rates in Deadly Innovation individual investments, activities and initiatives match or exceed intended scope.	■	■				■
		Perception that projects coming into the program are of a high quality and are ready for commercialisation/growth.			■	■		
		Internal data from individual elements of Deadly Innovation (see Outputs Section of the Program Logic) matches or exceeds the intended scope described in design documents.	■	■				■
	KLE 2	Key internal stakeholders articulate common themes in their approach to design, implementation and delivery of Deadly Innovation.			■			
		Indigenous innovators, businesses, communities articulate common themes related to their experience of Deadly Innovation.				■	■	
		Perception of key internal stakeholder and Indigenous innovators, businesses, and communities that Deadly Innovation has been delivered in line with these core principles.			■	■		
		Key internal stakeholders articulate a shared understanding of governance and decision-making processes.			■			
		Team structures effectively implement decisions made and the intent of Deadly Innovation.			■	■		
Key internal and external stakeholders articulate a core set of skills, knowledge and experiences that enables the design, implementation and delivery of Deadly Innovation.			■	■	■			

		Staff involved in the delivery of Deadly Innovation agree that staffing levels are sufficient.						
		Internal and external stakeholders identify relationships that have been critical to the design, delivery and implementation of Deadly Innovation.						
Effectiveness	KLE3	Perception that Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities value and trust their relationship with Deadly Innovation.						
		Perception that 'change agents' identified through Deadly Innovation have enabled the delivery of investments, activities and initiatives through leadership, relationships or other means.						
		Perception of Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities that they have built skills, knowledge and experience to engage in innovation.						
		Perception of Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities that they are better connected to the right businesses, industries and/or government agencies.						
		Perception that Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities have received the support they need and want to develop their businesses.						
		Number of networking opportunities created for Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities in innovation.						
		Number of promotional opportunities created for Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities in innovation.						
		Number of connections and partnerships are established between government, industry, Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities.						
		Number of Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities accessing support through Deadly Innovation to progress product, process or service development.						
		Perception that Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities use improved digital infrastructure to engage in innovation.						

	Number of Indigenous innovators involved in government innovation programs.					
	Amount of funding leveraged through Deadly Innovation, Advance Queensland and other sources to support Indigenous innovators and businesses.					
	Number of jobs created and supported by funding leveraged.					
	Amount of wealth shared through community wealth sharing models.					
	Perception that Indigenous innovators, businesses, and communities have developed sustainable businesses through access to funding.					
	Perception that employment pathways created through Deadly Innovation for Indigenous communities are sustainable.					
	Perception of Indigenous innovators, businesses, and communities that their self-determination has been strengthened through Deadly Innovation.					
KLE 4	Perception of Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities that they would have been unlikely to engage in innovation without Deadly Innovation.					
	Perception of Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities involved in the Deadly Innovation motivation to continue engaging in innovation in the future.					
	Perception of Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities that they are confident to initiate, take action, identify and lead innovation activity in their business or community.					
	Reported changed practices of government stakeholders related to Indigenous innovation and engagement.					

Lessons learned		Number of consultations of internal stakeholders (DTIS, AQ) with other Queensland Government stakeholders to develop or modify policies and procedures.						
		Perception of Indigenous innovators and businesses that they have been supported to connect with the Queensland business community.						
		Perception of Indigenous innovators and businesses that their work has been promoted and showcased to the Queensland business community.						
		Number of Indigenous innovators who have connected with other Indigenous innovators through Deadly Innovation.						
		Perception of Indigenous innovators who feel connected to a broader network.						
		Perception of key internal stakeholder and Indigenous innovators, businesses, and communities that Deadly Innovation has delivered positive or negative unintended outcomes.						
KLE 5	Lessons learned will be derived from insights drawn from Process and Effectiveness evaluation.							

A.1.6 Notes on calculating funding leveraged and jobs created and supported

The evaluation used a different approach to calculating funding leveraged and jobs created and supported compared to the Advance Queensland reporting arrangements detailed. These differences and the rationale are detailed in Table 7.

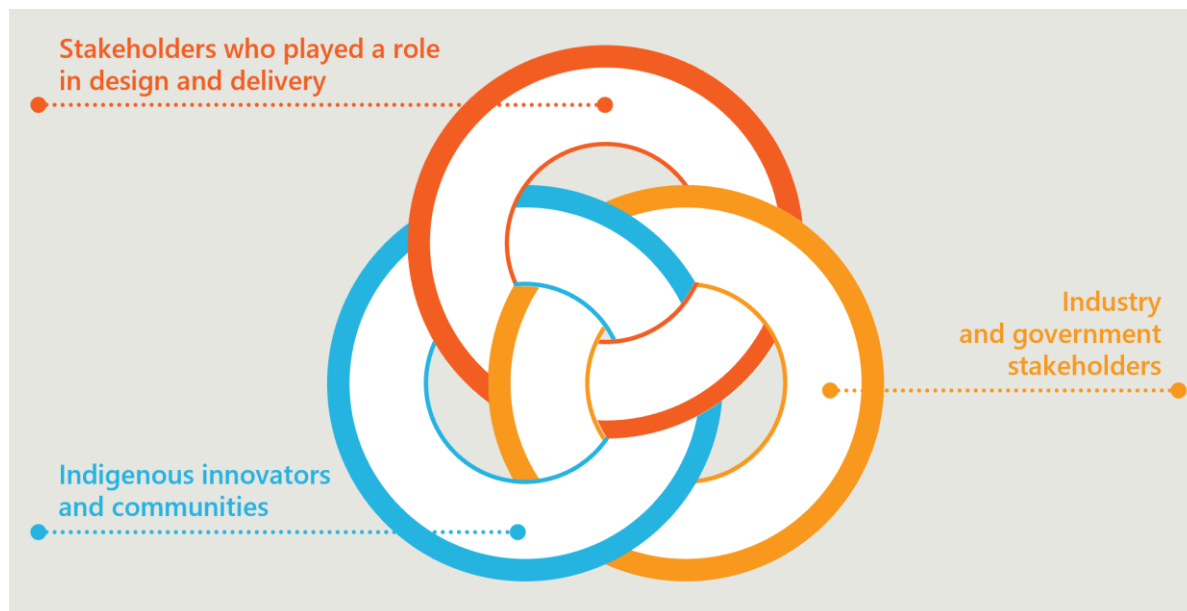
Table 7 | Notes on calculating funding leveraged and jobs created and supported

Metric	AQ method	Nous method	Rationale
Funding leveraged	AQ does not count co-funding from other state government agencies, and does not count co-contributions from businesses receiving funding.	The evaluation counted co-funding from other state government agencies, and did not count co-contributions from Indigenous businesses receiving funding.	<p>A core element of the success of the Deadly Innovation, identified through the evaluation, has been program staff's ability to build collaborations across state government agencies, therefore co-funding has been counted as funding leveraged.</p> <p>The program logic defines a key output of Deadly Innovation as "Funding leveraged by Deadly Innovation from other sources to support Indigenous innovators and businesses". The evaluation did not consider co-contributions from Indigenous businesses as meeting this definition.</p>
Jobs	AQ counts new Queensland jobs reported and new Queensland jobs forecast.	The evaluation counted established jobs created and/or supported, and not jobs forecast.	<p>Jobs created and/or supported have been counted as a combined figure because businesses interviewed through the evaluation were reluctant to directly attribute growth in jobs in their businesses to Deadly Innovation funding or support.</p> <p>Jobs forecast have not been counted as they are self-reported figures only available through Deadly Deals standard reporting.</p>

Appendix 2: Stakeholder engagement summary

The evaluation drew upon the perspectives and experiences of three broad stakeholder groups, forming a holistic understanding of the Deadly Innovation approach and its effectiveness.

Figure 28 | Overview of stakeholder groups



Stakeholders who played a role in design and delivery - Engagement purpose: Was to understand the approach undertaken to deliver Deadly Innovation and the extent to which the portfolio of investments achieved its intended outcomes, including contribution to the broader Advance Queensland strategy. The lessons learned through the design, delivery and implementation was surfaced through engagement with this group.

Indigenous innovators and communities - Engagement purpose: Was to understand how effectively the Deadly Innovation approach, including the modalities of investments, activities and initiatives responded to the needs and strengths of Indigenous innovators, businesses and communities.

Industry and government stakeholders - Engagement purpose: Was to understand the extent to which Deadly Innovation provided a model for increased engagement of target cohorts in industry and government initiatives. The strengths and challenges of adapting the approach in other government settings was also understood through this engagement.

Note: some individual stakeholders have played multiple roles throughout the design and delivery of Deadly Innovation; in some instances ranging from reference group member, business partner and grant beneficiary. These stakeholders were included more than once in the following Engagement Plan, with their participation in the evaluation being tailored in response to the multiple roles they have played.

Table 8 | Stakeholders engaged in evaluation

Stakeholder group	Stakeholder/s
Stakeholders who played a role in design and delivery	<i>Names withheld from published version to protect privacy</i>
Indigenous innovators and communities	<i>Names withheld from published version to protect privacy</i>
Industry and government stakeholders	<i>Names withheld from published version to protect privacy</i>

Appendix 3: Mapping of Deadly Innovation programs against Hear, Share, Activate and the Advance Queensland Strategy

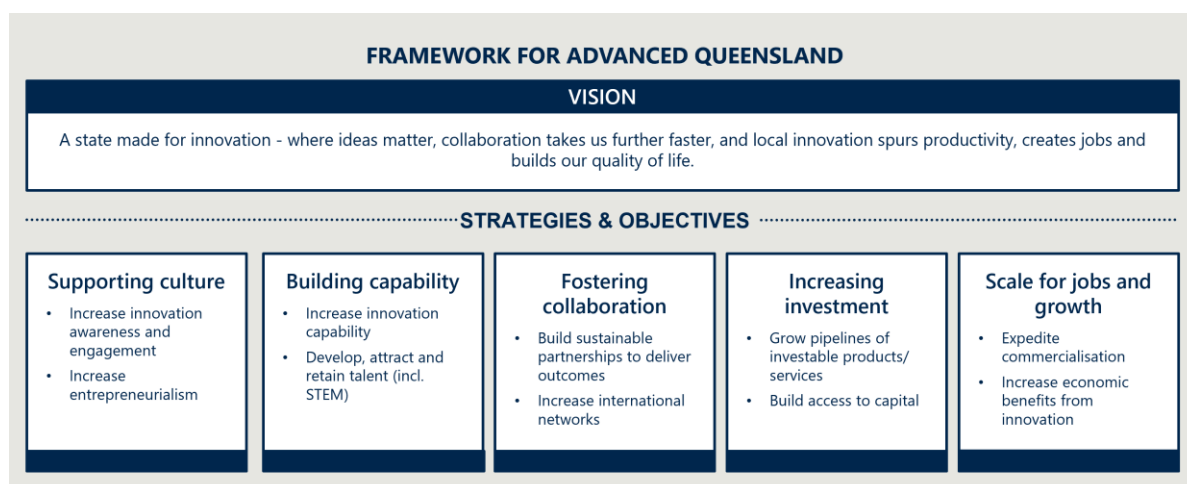
The Deadly Innovation Strategy placed Indigenous innovators and their communities at the centre of its activities. Figure 29 below outlines the three aims and their supporting actions that enable the Deadly Innovation Strategy.

Figure 29 | Deadly Innovation Strategy aims that underpinned the evaluation



Deadly Innovation is a component of the Queensland Government’s Advance Queensland (AQ) initiative, providing dedicated, culturally responsive support for Indigenous businesses, innovators, leaders, or future leaders. Figure 30 below outlines the Advanced Queensland Framework’s vision, strategies and objectives.

Figure 30 | Framework, strategies, and objectives for Advanced Queensland initiative



Using both the Deadly Innovation Strategy aims and Advance Queensland’s strategies, programs were mapped in Table 9 below.

Table 9 | Mapping of Deadly Innovation programs with Hear, Share, Activate and AQ strategies

Program	Hear, Share, Activate			AQ strategy alignments				
	Hear	Share	Activate	Supporting culture	Building capability	Fostering collaboration	Increase investment	Scaling jobs for growth
Deadly Deals								
One Business (TAFE partnered)								
Indigenous Industry Business Cases								
Open for Business								
LOGiT Reconciliation Action Plan Reporting Tool								
Community Governance Wealth Sharing Model								
AQ TAFE Indigenous Pathway Scholarships								
Yarrabah Business Accelerator and Innovation Hub								
AQ Indigenous Native Food Program								
First Nations Call Centre								
Cherbourg AI								
Deadly Digits								

Appendix 4: Description of Deadly Innovation initiatives and investments⁹⁶

A.4.1 Deadly Innovation Fund – programs/projects

a) Deadly Deals

Deadly Deals was a targeted program designed to fill a very specific gap and build on existing business and innovation successes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous) businesses.

Deadly Deals focussed on supporting a key step to deliver significant change in an existing Indigenous business to take its innovative product to market or expand existing market opportunities and lead to quick scaling for sustainable jobs.

Deadly Deals was not available to support establishment costs of new businesses or 'business as usual' activities of existing businesses. Businesses looking for support to build their business and keep current operations active were not the target of Deadly Deals as they are better served by support from alternative programs or through alternative networks.

Grant recipients under Deadly Deals:

- Sobah Beverages: <https://sobah.com.au/>
- Nourishing Bites: <https://www.nourishingbites.com.au/>
- BCF Concreting: <https://bcfconcreting.com.au/>
- Solar Relief: <https://www.solarrelief.com.au/>
- PWRON: <https://www.pwron.net.au/>
- Islex: <https://islex.com.au/>
- Davis Trading Pig Control – Trackers Traps: <https://www.trackerstraps.com/>
- Delveen Cockatoo-Collins: <https://cockatoocollins.com/>

b) One Business – Advance Queensland Indigenous Innovation and Entrepreneur Pathways Program

The One Business – Advance Queensland Indigenous Innovation and Entrepreneur Pathways Program provides workshops, one-on-one coaching, support and advice. The training provides support to enhance resilience, promote and highlight successes, find areas that require growth then plan for improvement and provide reassurance to clients, investors and employees.

<https://advance.qld.gov.au/entrepreneurs-and-startups-small-business-universities-and-researchers/onebusiness>

c) Indigenous Industry Business Cases

This targeted program supports Indigenous communities to obtain feasibility studies for site-specific on-country industry which could support the community and local shire councils to prosper through establishing sustainable businesses and jobs for community.

Grants to develop business cases have been made to communities in Woorabinda for a potential wattle seed industry, Hopevale for a potential oyster industry, Wujal Wujal for a potential vanilla bean industry, Torres Strait Islands for a recycled plastics industry and Cherbourg for recycling, circular economy industries.

d) Open for Business – Indigenous B2B Support Service

An innovative and immediate approach to communications to provide an Indigenous B2B Support Service to the Indigenous business and innovation sector in response to the impacts felt during the COVID-19 pandemic.

⁹⁶ Taken from "Meso-level Evaluation of Deadly Innovation – Overview and Requirements RFQ document"

Funding was provided to procure a provider (Iscariot Media) to deliver a service to facilitate information flow and engagement with the Indigenous business sector using a hotline; online town hall meetings; social media networks; email and radio to engage with Queensland Indigenous business as quickly as possible.

e) LOGiT Reconciliation Action Plan reporting tool (weavr) with CSIRO

LOGiT is a Supply Nation Certified Indigenous business providing opportunities for local Indigenous communities in all areas of business by creating career paths for Indigenous people providing technical skills, mentoring and support to ensure they create sustainable change. LOGiT developed the weavr RAP reporting system as a Software as a Service (SaaS).

Funding was provided for CSIRO, MEGT and DTIS to pilot the automated system as lead customers with the intention to enable LOGiT to establish weavr as a commercial product and potentially attract further government, corporate and other customers in consultation with Reconciliation Australia.

<https://advance.qld.gov.au/industry/weavr-threads-community-change>

f) Community Governance Wealth Sharing Model

The Department sought to facilitate the development of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous) Corporate Wealth Sharing Model to enable Indigenous communities to activate commercial companies that can equitably share the profits with their communities.

Through a procurement contract, work was conducted by a law firm (Marrawah Law) to develop an off-the-shelf economic model for wealth sharing in Indigenous communities including developing principles, special purpose vehicle template documents and a guide to support communities to activate a special purpose vehicle.

A.4.2 Other AQ funded programs/projects

a) AQ TAFE Indigenous Pathways Scholarships

Funding was provided to TAFE Queensland and Central Queensland University to run scholarship programs to support Indigenous students to undertake Certificate III and above courses in science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) fields. Further 'top-up' scholarships are available where a student successfully completes the initial course and enrolls for a higher certificate, diploma or degree course.

b) Yarrabah Business Accelerator and Innovation Hub

The Business Accelerator and Innovation Hub provides a robust and thorough process for ideas and/or concepts to contribute to sustainable change in Yarrabah through local ownership of the process, transfer of knowledge and skills to local people and streamlining timeframes between identification and implementation.

<https://www.wugunyambil.com.au/business-accelerator-hub/> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/yarrabahbusinesshub/>

c) AQ Indigenous Native Food Program

This program creates a supporting commercial pipeline, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous) native food businesses, innovators and entrepreneurs, to access services to improve the commercial success of their produce.

A 'food expert in residence' was engaged to work across the food incubators in Far North Queensland and at Coopers Plains, supplemented with additional resources and other supports. A pilot program was established to help successful applicants progress the development of their innovative products and increase their capability to develop successful products to either take the product to market, and/or work with partners to secure follow-on funding from other sources.

<https://advance.qld.gov.au/small-business/indigenous-native-food-program>

d) First Nations Service Centres

This project facilitates the development of business cases to establish Service Centres in Indigenous communities and aims to establish opportunities for digital/knowledge-economy jobs for Indigenous people.

The first successful implementation has been development of a service centre in Cherbourg through a partnership with DTIS, Fujitsu, Cherbourg Council and TAFE Queensland. The service centre commenced operations in March 2022 initially working with Fujitsu but will likely be expanded to service more clients.

The Cherbourg Service Centre is a three-year pilot program to provide community members on-the-job training and employment opportunities. Trainees will work towards a Certificate III from TAFE Queensland as part of the program.

<https://www.fujitsu.com/au/about/resources/news/press-releases/2022/fujitsu-launches-first-nations-led-pilotprogram-with-qld-gov-to-promote-digital-inclusion.html>

e) Cherbourg Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Led by the Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council, the Cherbourg AI Material Recovery Facility has worked collaboratively with community, government, industry, and investors to maximise the re-use of resources and to minimise waste sent to landfills in local government areas.

Since 2016, the project has created more than 25 new job opportunities for the Cherbourg community. Most recently, the project partnered with Noosa Council and the Peregian Digital Hub to introduce AI that can automatically classify and count waste items into their correct categories, in real-time.

Matched funding was provided by the Advance Queensland Deadly Innovation strategy and the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation to expand their technology Australia-wide.

<https://advance.qld.gov.au/whats-happening/stories-about-innovation/small-town-recycling-facility-using-aiagain-leading-edge-waste-industry>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QAYhk3Qotl4>

f) Deadly Digits

The Queensland Government partnered with Reckon to launch the Deadly Digits platform – an accounting software and support resource hub for Indigenous businesses.

Advance Queensland supported up to 1,000 Indigenous businesses – providing a Deadly Digits Essentials licence, giving them free access to the online training and support services for three months. Reckon then provides ongoing discounted rates for Indigenous businesses that participated in the online training program.

<https://advance.qld.gov.au/small-business/deadly-digits>

g) Therabubble

Therabubble is a product that can optimise the health of affected and vulnerable people to reduce their chance of admission to hospital. The product supports people with airway clearance whilst at home, unable to exercise normally or access their standard clinic visits. By doing so this will prevent exacerbation of their condition related to bacterial growth during periods of compromised airway clearance. This will not only reduce the burden on the hospitals at this time but will also reduce the risk of these vulnerable patients being exposed to COVID-19 when entering the hospital system.

Physiotherapy Innovations had product development plans in place to explore a device with an export port filter to prevent contamination of the patient environment during use. Funding was provided to support additional research and development to ensure there is a PEP product available for use in patients with COVID-19 to assist with their airway clearance and ultimately survival.

<https://advance.qld.gov.au/whats-happening/stories-about-innovation/world-first-indigenous-innovationbreath-fresh-air>



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