

Award Winners and Indigenous Business Professionals Gather at 10th Anniversary Indigenous Business Month Awards Breakfast

Indigenous Business Month (IBM) co-founders are pleased to announce that this year's Indigenous Business Award winners have been recognised at the 10th Anniversary Breakfast event in Sydney today.

At a large gathering of Indigenous Business Professionals, comprised of Indigenous business entrepreneurs, MURRA alumni, Indigenous Business Month award winners in years previous, and of course this year's award winners, networks were strengthened and reflections occurred on how the Indigenous business sector is **Making Our Mark**.

IBM Co-founders recognise that 10 years is but a row of colour within a larger, continuing tapestry of doing business in this Country. However, 10 years of Indigenous Business Month is a marked milestone for First Nations businesses and their allies to reflect, rejuvenate, and most importantly celebrate our ways of doing business. This year's Anniversary Awards Breakfast event was kindly supported by Platinum Sponsors **CommBank** and **Dilin Duwa Centre for Indigenous Business Leadership**.

Co-founders are pleased to share that four Indigenous businesses of notable distinction have today been awarded the following **2024 Indigenous Business Month awards**:

Indigenous Ingenuity Award for an Indigenous business using business models to confront challenging community issues: **Project Net Zero**

Indigenous Digital Inventiveness Award for an Indigenous business connecting through digital enterprise and supporting cultural creativity, business nous and technology:
Empower Digital

I2I Award for an Indigenous businesses buying from and/or supplying to fellow Indigenous businesses to build an interconnected and strong Indigenous business sector and supporting each other: **Riley Callie Resources Pty Ltd**

Regional Indigenous Business Award for an Indigenous business contributing to regional economies in impactful ways: **Townsville CBD Electrical Pty Ltd.**

Dr Michelle Evans, Co-founder and Director of Dilin Duwa Centre for Indigenous Business Leadership reflected upon the Mark made by Award Winners and what Indigenous Business Month has achieved in its 10 years.

*“The Indigenous Business sector is employing at least 116,795 people and qualitative evidence points to the fact that Indigenous businesses and corporations are recruiting and developing Indigenous employees. Here we can see Indigenous businesses, such as this year’s award winners proudly demonstrating the essence of this year’s theme **Making Our Mark**” said Dr Michelle Evans.*

Simone Kenmore, Head of Indigenous Banking at CommBank, proud platinum sponsor of Indigenous Business Month this year attended the event.

“CommBank is a proud supporter of Indigenous Business Month and is committed to supporting thriving Indigenous Business Sector. Congratulations to the 2024 Award finalists and winners!, said Ms Kenmore.

Co-founders Mayrah Sonter, Leesa Watego and Dr Michelle Evans together congratulate all applicants and award winners, acknowledging the collective impact Indigenous businesses are having in their communities, looking to efficient yet environmentally conscious ways of doing business, all the while bringing others along with them, employing and sharing opportunities.

We thank all Indigenous Businesses and allies for joining us in this Indigenous Business Month journey over the last 10 years. We are particularly grateful to our sponsors and Indigenous Business Month team members.

We encourage you to follow this year's Award Winners and their continuing contributions to our communities. Join with us in the conversations online **#IndigBizMonth**
#MakingOurMark

You can find a range of resources available on our Indigenous Business Month website, for more information visit **www.indigenousbusinessmonth.com.au** or connect on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or Linked In **#IndigBizMonth #IndigenousBusinessMonth**.

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Background: Award Winners & Quotes

I2I Award for an Indigenous businesses buying from and/or supplying to fellow Indigenous businesses to build an interconnected and strong Indigenous business sector and supporting each other: [Riley Callie Resources Pty Ltd](#)

Riley Callie Resources provide education resources to see all educators across the country engaging with community, learning about their local First Nations culture, and bringing these perspectives back into their classroom through the inclusion of authentic resources which celebrate and showcase Indigenous Australia.

"Lifting other Indigenous businesses in our own business journey has been a key priority of Riley Callie Resources since day one, which is why this award means so much; it is such an honour to have this recognition." said Deborah Hoger.

Indigenous Ingenuity Award for an Indigenous business using business models to confront challenging community issues: [Project Net Zero](#)

Project Net Zero is a 100% Indigenous owned and operated business, providing national de-fit services to corporates, companies and businesses for both loose furniture and fixed assets, along with make good services.

"Thank you for this recognition, which honours how Indigenous leadership in the circular economy embodies our deep commitment to caring for Country and creating sustainable, regenerative solutions for future generations", said Aron Kurzdlyo.

Indigenous Digital Inventiveness Award for an Indigenous business connecting through digital enterprise and supporting cultural creativity, business nous and technology:
Empower Digital

Empower Digital are passionate advocates for small business, offering digital training and support services Australia-wide.

Specialising in digital commerce on the Shopify platform, Empower Digital's point of difference is in its name - they work to empower businesses to take control of their own online presence, overcoming barriers and gaining sustainable outcomes for their long-term success.

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been at the forefront of entrepreneurship & trade for thousands of years. We’re so grateful to receive the Digital Inventiveness award for 2024 as we continue this legacy of supporting Indigenous businesses to restore trade song lines in the digital age”, said Adam Wooding.

Regional Indigenous Business Award for an Indigenous business contributing to regional economies in impactful ways: **Townsville CBD Electrical Pty Ltd.**

Owned and operated by Michael Prien Townsville CBD Electrical is qualified for both residential and commercial electrical services. They provide fast, efficient and friendly electrical, refrigeration and energy efficient services for residential, commercial and industrial markets in the Northern region and surrounding areas.

“A very proud moment for our CBD Team”, said Michael Prien.

Background: IBM Co-founder and Judges Quotes

Indigenous Business Month is a collective movement that celebrates and showcases the diversity and excellence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses across Australia in October. Now a well-recognised and celebrated concept across the country, *Indigenous Business Month* was co-founded by three First Nations women Dr Michelle Evans, Leesa Watego and Mayrah Sonter in 2015.

Since then, the economic landscape has continued to evolve. Indigenous business numbers have grown by almost 75% in that time and we are beginning to recognise the multiplying effect of Indigenous businesses in Regional and Rural Australia in the way they can meet service needs and create employment.

“Building a business is not a sprint but a marathon. I think it’s a great time to celebrate the businesses and business owners that have been in business for a decade or more.

*“Riding the success also means weathering the lows. Congratulations to all those Indigenous businesses who are here for the long-haul”, said IBM Co-Founder and Director of Iscariot Media, **Ms Leesa Watego.***

*“I think what’s most incredible to observe is the Indigenous business to business partnerships that have been formed, and our collaboration amongst one another to meet the needs of our communities over the last ten years”, said IBM Co-Founder and Director of 33 Creative, **Mayrah Sonter.***

*“Our individual activities as business owners, guided by collectively shared cultural protocols, means that when we do business, we make our mark in modern society as we now live, we continue our stories, care for our communities, celebrate our Country as we know it can be”, said IBM Co-Founder, Associate Professor and Director of Dilin Duwa, **Dr Michelle Evans.***

This year's guest judges of Indigenous Business Month Award Applications were:

Rory Chapman an experienced technology leader and owner of [Embrace Tech](#), empowering Indigenous organisations through technology.

"I was incredibly impressed to see the calibre of the applicants and winners for the Indigenous Business Month awards this year. There were some truly exceptional businesses and business owners, showcasing remarkable innovation and blak excellence!", said Rory Chapman.

Nicole Brown best practice community engagement strategist, who prides herself on creating spaces for First Nations communities to thrive.

"A tough job for us as judges, the incredible talent thriving across Australia serves as a reminder that our mob are incredibly talented and innovative and are helping to shape a narrative of economic prosperity now and into the future," said Nicole Brown.

