



MINERALS COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

SUBMISSION TO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS -
INQUIRY INTO PATHWAYS AND PARTICIPATION
OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS IN
EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS

5 FEBRUARY 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
2.	EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS	3
3.	ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT	8
4.	SHARING LESSONS FOR SUCCESS	10
5.	SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS	11

Box 1: Common features of Indigenous employment strategies	3
Box 2: Tailored work readiness programs in Queensland and Western Australia	5
Box 3: Career development programs	6
Box 4: Inspiring Indigenous students to pursue STEM careers.....	7
Box 5: Indigenous business engagement strategies	9

1. INTRODUCTION

The Minerals Council of Australia (MCA) is pleased to make a submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs inquiry into pathways and participation opportunities for Indigenous Australians in employment and enterprise.

The MCA represents Australia's exploration, mining and minerals processing industry, accounting for the majority of national minerals production. MCA members share a commitment to operating in a way that supports sustainable development for current and future generations.¹ Advancing responsible business practices through policy engagement and practical support is an important part of the MCA's role.

The minerals industry has long supported policies and programs that empower Indigenous Australians, understanding that improved quality of life is tied to cultural, social and economic wellbeing. Economic participation both contributes to, and results from, improved quality of life.

Various government policy initiatives aim to address the disproportionate social and economic exclusion experienced by Indigenous Australians relative to non-Indigenous Australians. Accordingly, this submission does not address the broader socio-economic factors affecting economic participation. Instead it contributes to the inquiry by outlining key minerals industry's employment and business pathways for Indigenous Australians.

A long-term commitment to partnering for economic empowerment

Economic independence and empowerment of current and future generations is a priority for many Indigenous Australians – including Traditional Owners – in regions that host minerals development. Recognition that the minerals industry is uniquely placed to support economic development has led to decades of shared focus on mining-related Indigenous enterprise development and employment.²

Indigenous economic development programs are well-established among MCA members. Native title and land rights regimes also provide a framework for minerals companies to make specific training, employment and business commitments with host Traditional Owner groups. Company-wide Indigenous economic development approaches may complement these local commitments.

The minerals industry offers various tailored employment and enterprise pathways for Indigenous Australians with a focus on Traditional Owners and Indigenous Australians in host communities.³ A range of industry, Indigenous-led, government and other initiatives support meaningful and respectful engagement with Indigenous businesses and promote mining employment and business pathways.

Tailored employment pathways across the minerals industry

More than 6,600 Indigenous Australians, mostly in remote and regional areas, are directly employed in the minerals industry – a 2.5 times increase in the decade to 2016.⁴ Furthermore many Indigenous Australians are pursuing careers in other sectors after gaining skills and experience in the minerals industry. Tailored employment pathways are integral to this outcome, particularly in remote areas.

Leading practice mining employment pathways can include locally-focused work readiness programs, apprenticeship, traineeship and cadetship opportunities and targeted recruitment. Mentoring and career development support and workforce cultural awareness training support Indigenous employment pathways. Leading practice approaches are highlighted in this submission.

Supporting current and future Indigenous employees to develop the skills and capabilities for the future workforce is an industry priority. Increasing the number of Indigenous Australians pursuing science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) careers is crucial.

¹ See [Enduring Value – The Australian Minerals Industry Framework for Sustainable Development](#).

² Minerals Council of Australia, *Indigenous Economic Development Strategy*, MCA, Canberra, 2012.

³ Note this submission uses Indigenous Australians to refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

⁴ Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, [Closing the Gap Report 2018](#), Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Canberra, 2018, p. 78.

A thriving Indigenous mining equipment, technology and services (METS) sector

Supporting further growth in the thriving Indigenous business sector is a long-standing industry priority. Indigenous mining and METS businesses provide diverse goods and services to the minerals industry. Engaging and supporting businesses owned by local Traditional Owners and Indigenous Australians in host regions in an industry focus.

Indigenous procurement targets underpinned by tailored policies and programs are well-established. Targeted Indigenous business engagement and providing access to specialist business development support are often part of such programs. MCA members may require major contractors and suppliers to adopt complementary Indigenous business targets. Leading practice examples are highlighted in this submission.

2. EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS

- Indigenous Australians make an immense and valued contribution to Australia’s minerals workforce. Around 6,600 Indigenous Australians are directly employed in the minerals industry. Many Indigenous Australians are pursuing careers in other sectors after gaining new skills and experience in the minerals industry.
- Work readiness programs, targeted recruitment and apprenticeship, traineeship and cadetship opportunities provide important pathways for Indigenous Australians, particularly in remote and regional communities.
- New strategies to support current and future Indigenous and other employees to develop skills and capabilities needed for the future minerals workforce are a priority.

Indigenous Australians, including Traditional Owners and Indigenous Australians from host communities make an immense and valued contribution to Australia’s minerals workforce.

Over more than two decades the minerals industry has worked to develop tailored pathways for Indigenous Australians considering a mining career. These pathways can assist Indigenous Australians to transition into operational, trades, technical and professional employment opportunities. Company - and sometimes site - Indigenous employment strategies support these pathways.

Strong foundations – Indigenous employment strategies

Linked to a company’s broader corporate workforce strategy, Indigenous employment strategies provide a framework for maximising Indigenous workforce participation. Indigenous employment strategies often link to a company’s social responsibility framework, Reconciliation Action Plan and other commitments.

Effective Indigenous employment strategies establish employment pathways tailored to the local context. Contextual factors include local socio-economic conditions, geographic distance between the site and host communities and employment opportunities.

Box 1: Common features of Indigenous employment strategies within the minerals industry

Feature	Description
Consultation with Traditional Owners and other Indigenous Australians	Co-designing or consulting with Indigenous Australians and organisations supports culturally-appropriate and effective employment strategies.
Clear Indigenous employment targets	Targets to understand how success is measured. Additional targets could relate to employment of Traditional Owners and career development.
Specific Indigenous employment policies	Indigenous employment policies outlining how the company or operation intends to achieve its Indigenous employment target.
Recruitment processes	Specific processes tailored to attract and support Indigenous Australians. Processes may be locally, regionally or nationally focused. For example, Newcrest’s Telfer operation works with local community groups to establish a register of potential candidates and identify potential training needs. ⁵

⁵ Minerals Council of Australia and Cardno International Development, [Leading the way in Indigenous relations: Newcrest, local employment and partnerships](#), MCA and Cardno, Melbourne, 2018.

Cultural awareness training	Tailored training to build awareness of local Traditional Owner cultures to support a culturally-safe environment. Cultural awareness training also supports broader appreciation of the richness and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.
On-site mentoring and support	Dedicated or appropriate mentoring and support programs for new and ongoing Indigenous employees and contractors.
Cultural leave entitlements	Cultural leave entitlements to support Indigenous employees to participate in cultural and community activities.
Continuous improvement and leadership	Participating in initiatives that assist to develop meaningful and respectful relationships with Indigenous Australians, including the Reconciliation Action Plan framework. ⁶

Work readiness programs

Indigenous Australians continue to experience disproportionate social and economic exclusion relative to non-Indigenous Australians.⁷ Disadvantage is particularly high in regional and remote communities, including Indigenous communities. Work readiness programs provide pathways for candidates that may benefit from additional assistance to transition into the minerals workforce.

Tailored work readiness programs seek to meet both candidate needs and business requirements. Most are developed in consultation with local Traditional Owner groups and/or Indigenous organisations to provide a culturally-safe and appropriate environment for participants. Common features include:

- An education and life skills component, including financial literacy skills
- Foundational mine and workplace health, safety and wellbeing skills
- Participant access to mentoring and other support by Indigenous or appropriate non-Indigenous mentors
- Transitional arrangements to adjust to mining shift and rostering arrangements.

Programs are usually fully or majority-funded by minerals companies. Programs may extend from several weeks to up to one year, depending on the location, need and other factors.

Successful completion of a work readiness program usually leads to fulltime employment with the company or a partner organisation. Work readiness program employment opportunities often include operational roles to traineeship and apprenticeship placements.

Apprenticeship, traineeship and cadetship pathways

Apprenticeship, traineeship and cadetship opportunities for Indigenous Australians are another important employment pathway. For example during 2013-15 BHP employed 274 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainees and apprentices.⁸

Companies may prioritise or allocate certain apprenticeship, traineeship and cadetship opportunities for candidates from host Traditional Owner groups or Indigenous Australians living locally. Apprenticeship and traineeship programs may include a work readiness component.

⁶ Reconciliation Australia, [What is a reconciliation action plan?](#), viewed 16 January 2020.

⁷ Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, [Closing the Gap: Prime Minister's Report 2018](#), Canberra, 2018, p. 9.

⁸ BHP, [Reconciliation Action Plan 2017-2020](#), BHP, Melbourne, 2017, p. 10.

Box 2: Tailored work readiness programs in Queensland and Western Australia

Glencore's Indigenous employment programs, Queensland

Glencore's northwest Queensland Mount Isa Mines provides \$1.3 million each year to an Indigenous Employment Program that supports Indigenous Australians to gain work ready skills. Glencore's Queensland coal operations will commence a similar program in 2020.

While tailored to local needs the programs share common elements. Both include two phases that provide both foundational work readiness skills and training and paid work experience. Graduates may progress into fulltime employment with Glencore or one of its partners.

Newcrest Telfer operation Indigenous employment program, Western Australia

Newcrest's Telefer operation developed a specialised skills development program with the Martu people. This includes at least eight trainee positions annually with guaranteed employment upon completion. Short-term employment provide Indigenous Australians opportunity to trial a mining career. It is complemented by travel assistance program. More than 500 Martu men and women have been employed at the mine since 2003.

AngoGold Ashanti and the Get into mining program, Western Australia

AngoGold Ashanti supports the *Get into mining* program, an initiative run by Aboriginal business Carey Mining and Macmahon Holdings. Eight Aboriginal students graduated from the program in early 2019. Participants transition into roles at Tropicana Gold Mine.

Source: Mount Isa Mines, [Indigenous Employment Program](#), Glencore, viewed 17 January 2020. Glencore Australia, [Society: 2020 Indigenous Employment Pathways Program](#), Glencore, viewed 17 January 2020. Cardno International Development, [Leading The Way On Indigenous Relations](#), commissioned by the MCA, Melbourne, 2018. Gold Industry Group, [Indigenous Graduates Get Into Mining](#), GIG, 17 January 2019.

Cadetship pathways support Indigenous Australia with an interest in the minerals industry to complete tertiary education. For example, Newmont's Indigenous Scholarship provides both financial support and industry experience to Indigenous Australian students at the Northern Territory's Charles Darwin University.⁹ Rio Tinto's Indigenous Scholarship and Cadetship Programmes support Indigenous Australians from Western Australia to complete tertiary education in-state. Scholarships are also available for Pilbara Traditional Owners undertaking mining and non-mining related studies.¹⁰

Targeted recruitment

Targeted recruitment to encourage and support Indigenous Australians to apply for employment is another important pathway. Targeted recruitment approaches can include:

- Working with host Traditional Owners and local Indigenous Australians to identify potential candidates. This is especially important in areas where telecommunications access is limited or communities are geographically dispersed. For example, Newcrest works with local community groups to maintain a skills register in host Indigenous communities.
- Establishing specific mechanisms for Indigenous Australians to apply for positions. For example, BHP and Rio Tinto have dedicated online application portals to encourage Indigenous Australians to apply for positions.
- Ensuring that advertisements encourage Indigenous Australians to apply for positions and broader promotional and marketing materials include Indigenous Australians.

⁹ Charles Darwin University, [Newmont Goldcorp Indigenous Scholarship](#), CDU, viewed 20 January 2020.

¹⁰ Rio Tinto, [Indigenous Scholarship Programme](#), Rio Tinto, viewed 20 January 2020.

Supporting activities

A range of other activities support effective Indigenous employment pathways. These include:

- Transportation assistance to assist Indigenous Australians from geographically dispersed communities to travel and from sites. For example, Newcrest supports Martu drivers to transport employees from dispersed communities to and from its Telfer site. Drivers collectively travel more than 500,000 kilometres a year. The program has significantly increased employee retention rates¹¹
- Initiatives to celebrate the success of Indigenous Australians working in the minerals industry. The Queensland Resources Council Indigenous Awards recognise exceptional Indigenous employees and Minerals and Energy Academy students among other awards.¹²
- Telling the story of Indigenous Australians working in diverse roles across the minerals industry. For example, the MCA's *More to Mining* careers guide featured a female Aboriginal geologist (and second generation miner) and the founder of Indigenous Women in Mining and Resources, a grassroots organisation celebrating and advancing the contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in the Australian minerals industry.
- Tailored career development programs to support Indigenous Australians to transition into different or leadership roles (see Box 3).

Box 3: Career development programs

BHP's Indigenous Development Program

BHP employs more than 1,000 Indigenous Australians across its Minerals Australia operations. In 2018 BHP established its tailored Indigenous Development Program to support the career goals and progression of its Indigenous workforce. 147 Indigenous employees had completed a tailored Indigenous Development Program to support career progression by the end of May 2019. 97 participants completed the program during the first half of 2019; of these, 40 per cent moved into new roles and 19 per cent into leadership roles following the program.

Source: BHP, [BHP Sustainability Report 2019](#), BHP, Melbourne, September 2019.

Preparing for the workforce of the future

Across all sectors of the economy the nature of work is changing. The minerals industry is actively working to support its current and future workforce to develop skills and capabilities. Key skills include core technical skills coupled with cognitive or 'soft skills' as well as technological literacy and specialist skills in complementary disciplines.

Key initiatives led or supported by the minerals industry include:

- The Resources Skills Organisation Pilot as part of the Australian Government's reform of the vocational education and training system. The MCA was appointed to establish the organisation which will trial new ways of working within the current training system.¹³
- Joint initiatives to encourage Indigenous Australians to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Major initiatives include the BHP Foundation and CSIRO's Indigenous STEM Project and Rio Tinto's support for the Karratha Indigenous STEM Centre (see Box 4)

¹¹ Cardno International Development, [Leading The Way On Indigenous Relations](#), commissioned by the Minerals Council of Australia, Melbourne, 2018.

¹² Queensland Resources Council, [QRC Indigenous Awards](#), QRC, viewed 22 January 2020.

¹³ Minerals Council of Australia, [Resources Skills Organisation Pilot](#), MCA, viewed 22 January 2020.

- Development of new qualifications in automation and technology. 30 Rio Tinto Iron Ore employees are involved in a pilot for the new Certificate IV in Autonomous Control and Remote Operations.

Box 4: Inspiring Indigenous students to pursue STEM careers

Inspiring Indigenous students in Karratha

The Karratha STEM Centre at Tambrey Primary School aims to inspire Indigenous students to pursue science, mathematics and technology careers – the skills needed for the future minerals workforce. It will support a tailored programme of hands-on, problem-solving based learning that also includes activities with the Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation’s Wickham STEM Centre and Roebourne Learning Club.

Rio Tinto is investing almost \$1 million towards the centre over five years as part of its partnership with the Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation.

Inspiring careers in STEM

The joint BHP Foundation and CSIRO Indigenous STEM Education Project aims to inspire Indigenous students to pursue STEM careers. Its six interconnected programs develop teacher competency, support Indigenous students to pursue STEM tertiary students and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander STEM role models.

Approximately 18,000 Indigenous students, 1,755 teachers and 166 schools engaged in the program between 2016 and 2019. Key outcomes include 74 per cent of Aboriginal Summer School in Excellence in Technology and Science participants intending to pursue a STEM career.

The BHP Foundation fully funds the project.

Indigenous Engineering School

For more than two decades Engineering Aid Australia has inspired Indigenous secondary school students to pursue an engineering career through engineering schools. It enables approximately 20 Indigenous students to attend week-long workshops at Sydney University and Curtin University at no cost. Students may also receive financial assistance to complete engineering studies and support to find work experience and career pathways.

The MCA is a proud long-standing sponsor.

Source: Rio Tinto, [New Karratha STEM Centre to promote pathways for the jobs of the future](#), viewed 20 January 2020. CSIRO, [Indigenous STEM Education Project](#), viewed 20 January 2020.

3. ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

- The minerals industry has demonstrated a long-term commitment to engaging Indigenous businesses and supporting Indigenous entrepreneurs and business owners
- Tailored business engagement and development programs can include preferential arrangements for Indigenous businesses and requirements for major contractors to provide opportunities for Indigenous suppliers
- MCA members actively participate in major Indigenous business initiatives including Supply Nation and local Indigenous business chambers of commerce.

A long-term commitment to enterprise development

The minerals industry was one of the first – if not the first – sectors to establish specialised Indigenous business development and procurement commitments and programs.¹⁴ While initially linked to agreements developed through native title and land rights frameworks, the industry's commitment has expanded over time. This commitment was articulated in the MCA's 2012 *Minerals Industry Indigenous Economic Development Strategy* and 2014 *Getting It Right: Indigenous enterprise success in the resource sector*.¹⁵

The increase in Indigenous business incomes during the minerals investment phase demonstrates the strength of this partnership. In real 2016 terms PwC estimated the economic value of Indigenous enterprises serving the mining industry as between \$200 million and \$350 million. This does not include enterprises servicing the industry classified under 'other business types'.¹⁶

Minerals industry Indigenous business development approaches

The minerals industry understands how historic policies limiting the ability of Indigenous Australians continue to act as barriers for Indigenous entrepreneurs and business owners. Key barriers include low intergenerational wealth transfer and access to assets affecting access to finance. Distance between Indigenous entrepreneurs and major cities may also impact opportunities.

Minerals companies have developed tailored Indigenous business development strategies and programs to assist to overcome these barriers. While tailored to the local context and business needs, many programs share common elements. These include:

- Preferential arrangements for Indigenous businesses, with a focus on Traditional owners and Indigenous Australians from host communities
- Dedicated procurement officers with responsibilities for engaging with potential and existing Indigenous suppliers and contractors
- Programs that provide Indigenous entrepreneurs and businesses to access specialist and independent business support if required
- A requirement for major suppliers to actively engage with Indigenous businesses
- Active engagement in Supply Nation and other organisations and initiatives contributing to a growing Indigenous business sector. This includes participation in *Meet the buyer*, supplier expos and other events.
- Public targets and commitments to increase expenditure with Indigenous businesses. BHP and Rio Tinto are also signatories of the Business Council of Australia's *Raising the bar* initiative.

¹⁴ N. Mundine & E. Henderson, [Crafting the future: Minerals industry engagement with Indigenous Australia](#), Minerals Council of Australia, Canberra, 2017, p. 27.

¹⁵ Minerals Council of Australia, *Minerals Industry: Indigenous Economic Development Strategy*, MCA, Canberra, 2012.

¹⁶ PwC, *The contribution of the Indigenous business sector*, PwC, Australia, April 2018, p. 15.

Box 5: Indigenous business engagement strategies

BHP Indigenous procurement and content

BHP is committed to supporting the economic empowerment of Indigenous Australians. The company awarded \$345 million of contracts to Indigenous businesses between 2013-15.

BHP Minerals Australia's Indigenous contracting spend increased by 40 per cent between 2018 and 2019 following the introduction of new Indigenous procurement and content strategies. Strategies included allocated opportunities for Indigenous businesses and targeted engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander registered suppliers.

Newmont

In 2018 Newmont strengthened its commitment to Indigenous business development through its first Reconciliation Action Plan. Key commitments included updated existing procurement policies to preference and support Indigenous businesses and increasing the number and value of commercial relationships with businesses owned by Indigenous Australians.

Rio Tinto's Amrum bauxite mine

In 2019 Rio Tinto's Amrum bauxite mine was awarded the 'Best Company Indigenous Procurement' initiative award at the sixth Queensland Resources Council Indigenous Awards. The mine is located on Wik and Wik-Waya Traditional Lands.

The award recognised Rio Tinto's Amrun Project Local and Indigenous Participation Strategy for creating sustainable Indigenous procurement opportunities. Key aspects of the plan strategy included:

- Development of a Northern Indigenous Business Director to support awareness of regional Indigenous business capability
- A requirement for all bidders for work packages over \$1 million to prepare Local and Indigenous Participation Plans.

17 Indigenous businesses supplied goods directly and indirectly during project construction.

Whitehaven Coal's intergenerational approach

Whitehaven Coal's Indigenous economic development program is founded on an intergenerational approach. It includes an Indigenous employment strategy, Indigenous business engagement and support for families and children. Key commitments are articulated in Whitehaven's Reconciliation Action Plan. Key outcomes include:

- Approximately nine per cent of Whitehaven Coal's workforce identify as Indigenous Australians, including approximately 13 per cent of its Maules Creek workforce
- Pre-employment programs developed in consultation with local Indigenous organisations
- Support for the Clontarf Foundation to establish an academy Narrabri High School and for the Girls Academy at Gunnedah High School
- \$1.83 million in spend with Indigenous businesses during the 2019 financial year.

Source: BHP, [Reconciliation Action Plan 2017-20](#), BHP, Melbourne, 2017, p. 11. BHP, Sustainability Report 2019, BHP, Melbourne, 2019, p. 68. D. van der Westhuizen (Rio Tinto Weipa Operations General Manager), [Amrun wins Indigenous Procurement Award](#), Rio Tinto, 28 May 2019. Whitehaven Coal, Indigenous Engagement, [Whitehaven Coal](#), viewed 29 January 2020.

4. SHARING LESSONS FOR SUCCESS

- New forums to support the public and private sector to enhance employment and business engagement with Indigenous Australians could drive best practice.
- Across the minerals industry key ongoing initiatives include the MoU Indigenous Initiative to Increase Indigenous Participation in the Queensland Resources Sector and a new Community of Practice pilot initiative between the MCA and National Native Title Council
- The minerals industry would welcome opportunities to share successes and lessons learned with other private and public sector entities seeking to develop or enhance capability to engage with Indigenous Australians.

A commitment to continuous improvement

The minerals industry works to continuously improve how it engages with Indigenous Australians. Sharing, learning and collaborating to enhance and adapt employment and enterprise development pathways to increase opportunities are part of this commitment.

Forums enabling peer-to-peer learning opportunities within industry and with other sectors assist the minerals industry to continuously improve. Several key forums provide an open and collaborative space to learn and engage with Indigenous business and organisations to build shared understanding and improved outcomes.

Existing forums include:

- The MoU to Increase Indigenous Participation in the Queensland Resources Sector is a joint Queensland Resources Council and Queensland Government initiative. The MoU undertakes targeted initiatives to increase training, education and employment outcomes for Indigenous Australians in the sector. These include:
 - Forums for minerals company human resources practitioners to share strategies and programs to support participation by Traditional Owners and other Indigenous Australians
 - ‘Meet the buyer’ sessions
 - An annual Indigenous business procurement survey.
- The annual Aboriginal Enterprises in Mining, Energy and Exploration conference. The conference provides a platform for Indigenous business owners and operators, Traditional Owners, minerals companies, governments and academia to share and learn. More than 200 Indigenous business owners, Indigenous organisation, industry and government delegates attended the 2019 Darwin conference.
- A pilot Industry and Indigenous Partnerships ‘community of practice’ initiative to enhance outcomes from implementation of minerals-related partnerships.¹⁷ It is co-convened by the MCA and National Native Title Council. A collaborative planning process identified addressing barriers to mining and non-mining supply chains as a priority. The first initiative meeting was held in September 2019.¹⁸

Sharing with other industries

While continuing to improve its approach, the minerals industry has developed extensive experience and expertise that may assist other sectors to increase procurement from Indigenous businesses and/or develop tailored Indigenous employment pathways. The minerals industry would welcome opportunities to share how it has developed appropriate capability and processes.

¹⁷ Minerals Council of Australia, [Working together – A new community of practice for minerals industry and Indigenous partnerships](#), MCA, Melbourne, 2019, p. 2.

¹⁸ University of Queensland, [Indigenous Mining Futures](#), Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining, viewed 22 January 2020.

5. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The MCA makes the following recommendations to enhance pathways to participation:

Private and public sector engagement capability

- Supporting new guidance and information for companies seeking to enhance Indigenous engagement opportunities, including how to engage and tailor approaches for local contexts
- Support the minerals industry and other relevant sectors to share and advance approaches, including with the infrastructure and renewable energy sectors

Employment pathways

Government should continue to support programs aimed at:

- Promoting and championing Indigenous Australian STEM leaders and role models
- Encouraging and supporting Indigenous Australians to pursue STEM careers
- Complement minerals industry efforts to promote the diversity of mining careers, including STEM careers, available for Indigenous Australians.

Enterprise development pathways

Governments should continue to support programs aimed at:

- Connecting Indigenous businesses with potential customers and promote the Indigenous business sector, (e.g. Supply Nation)
- Enabling Indigenous businesses owners to expand peer-to-peer networks, including the Aboriginal Enterprises in Mining, Energy and Exploration conference, Indigenous chambers of commerce and other forums
- Promoting female Indigenous entrepreneurs in regional and remote areas
- Providing tailored business development financing and support through Indigenous Business Australia and other organisations.

Integrating Indigenous business development into regional development

Government should continue to:

- Pilot new initiatives to better integrate Indigenous economic participation activities into broader regional development activities
- Support and participate in multi-stakeholder initiatives harnessing expertise, resources and focus for the shared goal of increased Indigenous economic participation.