



25<sup>YEARS</sup> WE DEADLY  
TOGETHER

STORY OF IMPACT  
**AES 25 YEARS**  
WE DEADLY TOGETHER

The Aboriginal Employment Strategy (AES) model has transformed career outcomes and social impact over the last 25 years.

The AES is a solution born out of a local community need to enhance the employment opportunities of Aboriginal people in the regional northern New South Wales community of Moree, on Gomeroi/ Kamilaroi country.

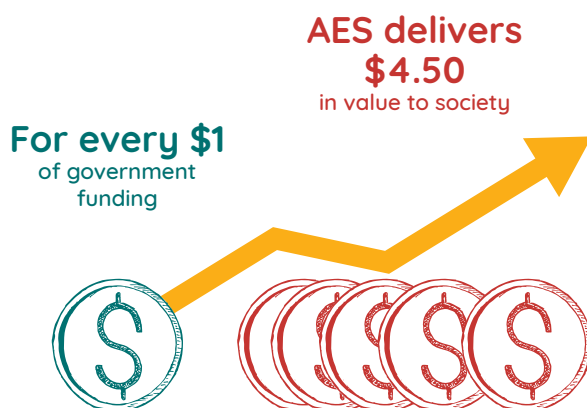
Today, AES operates in 16 regional offices, is 100 per cent First Nations governed and managed and a Supply Nation Registered Charity.

95% of AES staff are First Nations, representing more than 140 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language/ clan groups nationally. Aboriginal women make up a significant portion of our senior management.

The strength of our approach is more than just jobs. We deliver social impact, by creating shared value for employers and employees, creating workplaces that support First Nations people to thrive.

We are social entrepreneurs that build skills, capabilities and understanding in communities to deliver tangible economic and social benefits to First Nations people and to the broader local community.

We build strong relationships with employers, corporate Australia and with First Nations people, leaders and communities to secure opportunities that deliver economic independence and self-determination.



# WE DEADLY TOGETHER

## Our growth

Over the last 25 years, our organisation's structure has evolved. Our founder Dick Estens supported the vision of building a national community development approach to improving First Nations employment outcomes, fostering self-determination of Aboriginal people, communities, and regions.

Today we support many First Nations people into employment and training across multiple regions nationally. We identify new AES regions, based on community needs and the opportunities to improve employee and employer relationships creating lasting social impact.

The AES model works on long term, sustainable local and national relationships that foster an appreciation of First Nations people in the workplace and acknowledges the strength and diversity that our people bring.

It overcomes a traditional deficit-based model, of 'placing' people in jobs, and instead works to foster a mutually beneficial relationship that enhances long term sustainable, employment outcomes and career progression for our people.

As a result, whole communities are transformed, enabling local role models to drive long term sustainable change within families.

### NATIONAL RESULTS

**25,000**

career opportunities  
and counting

### NATIONAL RESULTS

**2,500**

traineeships and  
apprenticeships

Working with 550  
employers nationally,  
including corporate,  
government and not  
for profit/community  
sectors



Growing  
pathways for First  
Nations women in male  
dominated industries  
such as IT, mining,  
construction including  
civil, trades and  
transport

Delivering  
higher than  
national average  
26 week retention  
outcomes

## What we do

### Recruitment services


Our **recruitment services model** is one that provides our career seekers with access to a large range of employment opportunities nationally, culturally competent mentoring up to six months after their placement, and access to tailored pre-employment training programs that are linked to guaranteed jobs. This service is delivered at no cost for eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates nationally, funded by the Australian Government.

- ✓ AES brokers employment opportunities, with a 68% retention rate of our placements compared to 48% of mainstream providers, that are of a much higher standard than any other provider
- ✓ Support significantly high numbers of Aboriginal women into employment nationally
- ✓ AES is highly effective in supporting First Nations people with carer responsibilities (including single parents) into part time employment with excellent retention (80% retention at 26 weeks)

### Group training

We are an **accredited group training organisation**. Our field officers support trainees and apprentices into full time employment with host employers, providing coaching and mentoring to both the trainee and host workplace ensuring the work placement is a success. Our program also supports school based trainees/apprentices to complete their high school certificate, and attain an ATAR and an industry recognised qualification.

- ✓ 2,500 trainees and apprentices have built a career through the AES



**68%  
retention  
rate**

compared with 48%  
achieved by mainstream  
providers



**85%**

of AES career seekers  
that reach 26 week  
retention, do not return  
to unemployment

**Over 70%**

of trainees and  
apprentices go on  
to secure ongoing  
employment with  
their host  
employer



## What we do

### Transitional labour hire

We provide employers with a diverse range of workforce solutions.

We manage one of Australia's largest First Nations skilled contingent workforces in construction, civil construction, traffic controlling, laboring, business administration, and transport. There is no fee if workers secure an ongoing position, ensuring continuity and a seamless transition for all.

- ✓ On average annually, \$2.5 million is generated in wages from this program and 100 workers go on to secure ongoing employment with the host

### Pre employment

Our pre employment programs are designed to support individuals with the required skills, experience to be job-ready for a specific role or industry.

We develop tailored training packages, in consultation with employers to ensure a transition post program into employment.

- Construction – AES iTradies program
- Civil construction – AES iCivil program
- Rail/Trains – AES iRail and iTransport
- Traffic Controlling – AES iTraffic program

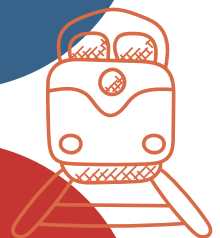
AES has tailored programs for First Nations men and women.

- ✓ 500 program completions
- ✓ 35 tailored industry programs delivered

**\$2.5 million**  
generated in First Nations wages annually

**99%**  
pre employment program completion rate

**78%**  
of pre employment program participants secure employment



## What we do

### Social enterprises

We run two social enterprises in our hometown of Moree, in regional northern NSW.

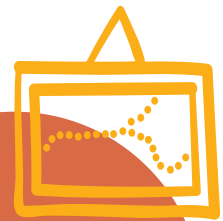
**Yaama Ganu Gallery** is a not-for-profit Aboriginal art gallery operated in regional NSW that supports the ethical sale of Aboriginal art from regional and remote Aboriginal communities nationally. It is a significant contributor to supporting careers on Country and to the sustainability of remote communities and economic independence through the creation of local jobs.

- ✓ Registered with the Indigenous Art Code
- ✓ Partnerships with 27 Aboriginal Owned Art Centres from across the country
- ✓ \$3 million in ethical sales



**Café Gali** offers an Aboriginal inspired menu and catering and is situated within the Yaama Ganu Art Gallery. Café Gali provides invaluable employment and on the job training opportunities in hospitality to local Aboriginal people.

- ✓ 5-7 local Aboriginal Employees, including a school based Gallery trainee
- ✓ Over 80 local employment opportunities created



**\$3 million**  
in ethical Aboriginal  
Art sales



Partnerships with  
**27 Aboriginal  
Owned**  
Art Centres from  
across the  
country

**Over 80**  
local employment  
opportunities  
created

## Shared value, generating economic and social impact

**We know that a job is more than just a job. It's a stepping stone to self-determination, often supporting individuals and families to complete their education, secure ongoing employment and achieve career goals, create opportunities through access to better resources and contribute to a better quality of life.**

Creating First Nations role models that transverse generation are the result of these programs enabling our people to create their own narrative and giving them the skills and mentoring to be successful.

We are shifting the narrative from welfare and disadvantage to Indigenous success, contribution and empowerment.

**Our programs support and foster self-determination for First Nations people, families and communities.**

- ✓ Year 12 attainment
- ✓ Apprenticeships, traineeships and accreditation
- ✓ Tailored job ready programs
- ✓ Ongoing employment
- ✓ Career progression
- ✓ Transitional labor hire
- ✓ National network of employers
- ✓ First Nations qualified counsellors
- ✓ Mentoring and career coaching
- ✓ Connections to other services and supports

Over the last 25 years, we have grown to be a leader in First Nations employment nationally and demonstrated the impact that can be achieved when working together in a partnership approach.

Central to our ethos is shared value. We ask ourselves, how does what we do support our people, and our employers? As a result, our collaboration is at the heart of what we do.



- ✓ \$55m cost savings from reduced welfare payments
- ✓ \$180m in benefits from increased tax revenue
- ✓ \$178m in benefits from reduced medical costs
- ✓ \$1.7m cost savings on the health system
- ✓ \$1.1m in savings from reduced criminal justice costs
- ✓ \$4.4m benefits in reduced property crime



## Trends over time

**95%**  
Aboriginal staff

**65%**  
of managers  
are Aboriginal women

- ✓ Increased demand for Trainees and Apprentices, across all sectors and industries, in particular trades, and health and community sectors.
- ✓ More young people completing schooling and entering industry accredited training.
- ✓ Increase in early competency based completions of traineeships and apprenticeships to allow direct employment of young people earlier to meet demands.
- ✓ Greater demands from schools to prepare young people for employment.

Sector opportunities for improvement:

- ✓ Inadequate pathways nationally to support young people to transition into employment.
- ✓ Continued trend of 'training for training sake' rather than building career aspirations, and links to tangible career options.



### More Women in Construction



**First Nations workers are a third more likely to be in construction than other industries, with a 5.1 per cent rise in apprentices each year for the previous five years.**

Despite the construction industry being one of the highest industries employing First Nations people, only 10 per cent of those employed are women (according to the ABS).

Wiradjuri sisters Tara and Tarni Proberts-Roberts successfully completed training via the Aboriginal Employment Strategy programs to enable First Nations women entry into construction careers.



## Growth and priority areas



Photos: Recent AES graduates celebrate their achievements.

**Expansion  
of AES  
revenue  
streams**

**Increasing  
employment  
through AES  
enterprises**

We are now 100 per cent First Nations governed and managed, having transferred to a fully First Nations board in late 2021.

The future of AES is in expanding our impact nationally, driven for and by First Nations people.

## Proven impact model



**Our scale, experience and business model is tried and tested, and enables us to:**

- ✓ Design and test new approaches to First Nations employment without government seed funding.
- ✓ Design and implement employment solutions that contribute to closing the gap between First Nations and non-Indigenous people.
- ✓ Compliment and work with non-employment programs and services to positively impact on the 'overall wellbeing' of First Nations people which will allow a greater chance of employability.
- ✓ Build more effective partnerships with employers due to AES' track record.
- ✓ Respond quickly and effectively to the emerging needs of employers, particularly large scale employers with quality jobs and in locations which typically have limited employment opportunities.
- ✓ Provide a reliable, consistent service in small First Nations communities where a single-office model is not financially viable but where a physical office is critical for First Nations community engagement, cultural safety and community activities.
- ✓ Run sustainable services in diverse local labor markets during peaks and troughs in the market.
- ✓ Support self-determination, community development, local decision making and local solutions to local challenges.
- ✓ Invest into other not for profit and for profit First Nations businesses to build their capability and financial viability.



25<sup>YEARS</sup> WE DEADLY  
TOGETHER

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

KRISTY MASELLA, MANAGING DIRECTOR

M/ 0438 700 075 E/ [KRISTY.MASELLA@AES.ORG.AU](mailto:KRISTY.MASELLA@AES.ORG.AU)