Aboriginal Engagement and Planning Strategy 2018 - 2023
Our organisation develops customised, integrated, cost-effective organisational development support and ecological planning solutions. We assist in the development of meaningful enterprises and provide technical expertise in balancing the competing demands of the community, the environment and economic viability.

Our aim

We aim to become the organisational development and ecological planning service choice for Indigenous Australia.

What’s unique

We provide a service to Aboriginal organisations that reviews their business model, looking for opportunities and enacting strategies to ensure current capability and build future capability.

Our business model

Our organisational health assessment (OHA) consists of: 2 days on site with key organisation personnel and a final OHA report.

Our performance management program consists of: 4 separate, 3-day performance management sessions, 12 separate 1-hour video or telephone conference sessions (conducted over a 12-month period).

What’s innovative

Our business model commits to offering 1 directorship, 5 trainees, and 5 internships to Aboriginal people. Technical skill transfer to Aboriginal people through "on the job" and "off the job" mentoring. Engagement that brings real relationships and benefits, creating change both within the business and community sectors.
Our team

Andrew Cuttriss  
**Director**
Co-founder, took the idea to market, organisational mentor and NRM technical expert.  
Master of philosophy, BSc Protected Area Management.

Michael Clarke  
**Technical Advisor**
Technical advisor, technical expert in NRM and project delivery.  
PhD Marine Ecology.

Steven Brooks  
**Consultant**
Senior consultant, community engagement expert.  
BSc in Park Management.

Clive Ahoy  
**Aboriginal Affairs Advisor**
Aboriginal affairs and community engagement advisor, enterprise and business development.

Our business targets

75 separate organisations to deliver our organisational health assessment.

75 separate organisations to deliver our performance management program.

35 separate ecological and organisational development consultancy projects.

Finances

$4.5K per organisational health assessment and report, $15K per performance management program.
Ecobalance was established in 2010 as an organisational development and ecological planning business to address the lack of high-quality affordable services that were available to assist Aboriginal organisations, the corporate sector and government entities increase their effectiveness, efficiency and ecological stewardship.

Ecobalance has since undertaken numerous projects for both the private and government industry sectors.

Over the years, we’ve reflected on our learnings and experience in working together with Aboriginal Australians. We’ve gained experience and insights and shared these regularly with community, our stakeholders and clients. The journey has changed us as a business and we are richer for it.

Our key learnings include:

- **Capacity building** – directly engaging with Aboriginal organisations brings real relationships and benefits, creating change both within our business and in the community. We aim to provide employment opportunities, create business partnerships and lift awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culture.

- **Sustained commitment** – building genuine and respectful relationships takes time and our ability to make commitments and honour them is key to building trust. This presents opportunities to engage new people and build their cultural experience and knowledge.

- **Technical knowledge transfer** – our strengths and experience in organisational development and ecological planning initiatives have allowed technical skills to be transferred to Aboriginal people through our “on the job” and “off the job” mentoring program.

- **Outcome focused** – our capacity to reach targets in often complex and challenging areas of addressing Indigenous disadvantage requires perseverance, patience and the ability to maintain focus. When piloted initiatives did not achieve the desired outcomes, we have been bold and taken tough decisions or discontinued our work.

- **Quality assurance and reporting** – the ongoing measurement, quality assurance and return on investment evaluation of our programs are critical in ensuring continued organisational support and funding while also demonstrating our ongoing commitment and accountability to Indigenous Australia.
Our vision

Our vision is a world that is healthy, ecological sustainable, compassionate and vibrant.

Our mission is to provide Aboriginal communities and industry sectors with affordable and practical tools for achieving their long-term aspirations.

Success for Aboriginal people is having a strong connection to culture, country and community.

Success is empowerment in action to achieve business and career aspirations.

Success is building meaningful and mutually beneficial partnerships to help build strong, inclusive and sustainable communities.

Through creating shared value, we aim to become the organisational development and ecological planning service choice for Indigenous Australia.

Our objectives

We aim to expand our services to assist a larger number of Aboriginal organisations and the corporate sector. Our business model keeps costs low and ensures that the social, environmental and financial performance of our organisation is continually evaluated.

Specifically, our objectives are to:

- **Provide** a service to Aboriginal associations that reviews their business model, looking for opportunities and enacting strategies to ensure current capability and build future capability;
- **Expand** our organisational health assessment and performance management program to a larger number of Aboriginal organisations;
- **Provide** employment opportunities for Aboriginal people to assist with the delivery and implementation of our services.
Our strategy

Through our sustained work, we believe a “turn key” organisational toolkit will enable Aboriginal organisations to be more effective in meeting the challenges of a rapidly changing local and global economy.

The customised program is conducted over a 12-month period and consists of: 4 separate, 3-day performance management sessions, 12 separate 1-hour video or telephone conference sessions.

The organisational development tool kit (see below) has been designed to enable organisations to rapidly self-assess their current and future challenges, whilst identifying and developing targeted strategies that allow organisations to be ready, effective and to prosper in a dynamic business sector.

Tool A: Strategic review

Review the organisation’s strategic vision and service delivery, focus and identify key weaknesses, strengths and future opportunities.

Tool B: Strategic capability assessment

Assess the suitability of the organisation’s business model to meet the challenges of today and of the future.

Tool C: Capability development plan

Develop an action plan based on the information gathered in Tool B to strengthen your organisation’s operations and services.

The organisational health assessment consists of: 2 days on site with key organisation personnel (i.e. 1-day workshop and 1-day follow up discussions and review) and a final OHA report.

Performance management program

The OHA report findings are used to develop a customised performance management program that identifies and mitigates specific organisational challenges, whilst developing result focused strategies for addressing the organisation’s current and future opportunities.

The performance management program is based upon a number of key capabilities that an organisation will need to strategically manage to be relevant and ready for the future. These are:

- Strategic Capability
- Governance & Leadership
- Client and Market Focus
- Financial Sustainability
- Workforce Planning & Development
- Innovation, Quality and Improvement
- Information, Knowledge and Process Management
- Collaboration & Partnering
- Results

The customised program is conducted over a 12-month period and consists of: 4 separate, 3-day performance management sessions, 12 separate 1-hour video or telephone conference sessions.

*The Organisational Development Toolkit (ODT) was developed through the Sector Readiness and Workforce Capacity Initiative by the Queensland Council of Social Service and has been modified to suit this strategy. The ODT is registered through a creative commons license. For further information visit: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.5/au/deed.en.
Case studies

Ngarang-Wal Gold Coast Aboriginal Association Incorporated

Ecobalance developed a strategic pathways plan for Ngarang-Wal Gold Coast Aboriginal Association Incorporated. This project involved numerous workshops to discuss aspirations, current and future opportunities capabilities. Ecobalance has been involved in the ongoing support of the plan’s execution against its objectives.

Dorodong Association Incorporated

Ecobalance in partnership with Dorodong Association developed and implemented a successful organisational performance management program that delivers ‘on the job’ training and ‘off the job’ support focusing on improving Dorodong’s organisational development capabilities.

Kooma Traditional Owners Association Incorporated (KTOAI)

Ecobalance was engaged to evaluate Dhandan Duringala Indigenous Protected Area’s (JDDIPA) NRM performance, and assisted KTOAI in achieving their vision for JDDIPA, enabling improved communication and understanding of how JDDIPA’s NRM objectives will be achieved. Ecobalance also assisted KTOAI identify assumptions about how NRM targets will be achieved and the likelihood and consequence if these assumptions are wrong.

Wathaurong Aboriginal Cooperative (WAC)

Ecobalance was commissioned to develop an ecological restoration management plan. This plan was developed as part of the ‘lessons learned’ (Ecological Restoration Practises) section of WAC’s Monitoring Evaluation Reporting and Improvement (MERI) plan. Specifically, the plan has developed to provide clear management guidelines for undertaking restoration activities within Wurdii Youang IPA over a five-year period (2013-2018).
Ecobalance was engaged to facilitate and support a cultural language revitalisation program that was consistent with the cultural requirements of the local community. Providing assistance with investigating Aboriginal language related research/programs that have been successful in addressing Aboriginal language revitalisation. Develop strategies that support local Aboriginal communities to support and maintain their own health and quality of life.

Ecotourism Feasibility Consultation Project

The property known as ‘Dorodong’ forms part of the traditional lands of the Gumbaynggirr Aboriginal people. The association’s vision is to develop economic opportunities for Aboriginal people through the creation of business enterprises that provide long term financial independence.

Ecobalance was commissioned to undertake a study to identify the critical planning factors for determining an economically viable ecotourism enterprise at Dorodong, which could provide training and employment opportunities for Dorodong Association and its respective members.

Aboriginal Employment and Capacity Building Pilot Program

Ecobalance was engaged to assist Banbai Enterprise Development Corporation develop their ‘pilot employment and capability building program’ business plan. This fee for service business strategy takes advantage of the commercial opportunity to undertake land planning and cultural management activities within a number of national parks and nature reserves including Single National park and Warra National park within the Guyra region.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry sectors</th>
<th>Activities undertaken</th>
<th>Performance measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Corporate Governance</strong></td>
<td>• &quot;MERI&quot; consultation &amp; reporting</td>
<td>• Improved corporate capabilities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• AGM &amp; steering committee facilitation</td>
<td>• Development of Industry mentoring program/acceptance by community &amp; government agencies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Human resource management support</td>
<td>• Training &amp; educational requirements identified/continuation of funding</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Business Planning</strong></td>
<td>• Ecotourism feasibility studies</td>
<td>• Enhanced NRM &amp; Aboriginal capacity building capabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pilot Aboriginal capacity building and employment business planning</td>
<td>• Management &amp; reporting guidelines accepted by community &amp; government agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>^NRM and Cultural Planning</strong></td>
<td>• Pest planning &amp; reporting</td>
<td>• Enterprise development opportunities enacted</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Language workshop facilitation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Cultural fire management planning &amp; mapping</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• OH&amp;S planning &amp; reporting</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ecological restoration planning &amp; reporting</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Financial Management</strong></td>
<td>• Funding &amp; grant preparation &amp; reporting</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Budget preparation and prioritisation</td>
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</table>

Further organisational development benefits that have been achieved from our organisational performance management program include:

**Perspective**
Allowing people to look at problems and situations from a different perspective.

**Improving skills**
Providing needed ‘on the job’ training to improve the organisations project management, financial management and NRM planning capabilities.

**Venting**
Giving people of the organisation the ability to vent, which often then starts the process to solve the cause of their frustration.

**Methods and strategies**
Assisting with strategies to effectively deal with conflict resolution and financial problems.

**Confidence**
Providing confidence to people who face difficult governance decisions.

**Encouragement**
Providing first hand experiences that allow people to realise that the struggles they are having now are preparing them for the future.

**Networking**
Giving people the opportunity to get in touch with contacts that have helped make their organisation more successful.

*MERI=Monitoring Evaluation Reporting and Improvement - business planning framework.

“The biggest benefit for me has been having someone you can ask questions and get advice from. Our organisation and our people have also gained on the job skills in corporate governance, NRM planning, grant submission, report writing and interpersonal communication”.

Stan Kelly – Project Manager Dorodong Association 2015.
We aim to continue building on strong program foundations to deliver outcomes and innovation which creates real jobs, improves cultural understanding and leadership, and builds business partnerships.

We aim to add further value, as programs evolve and mature by:

- Offering support to improve access, promote inclusion and lift our engagement; and
- Providing opportunities to enable economic and social prosperity and build our cultural understanding.

Our aim is to contribute thought leadership, drive innovation and keep building on our strong reputation. We have an important role to play in driving thought leadership which supports Aboriginal communities achieve their aspirations for economic and social development.

Our new initiative to create opportunities for collective impact with like-minded organisations and partners to build awareness, recognition and respect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culture.

Our commitments are aligned to three action themes: relationships, respect and opportunities.

**Relationships**

Ecobalance seeks out Aboriginal led solutions. Our relationships are built on the principles of listening, respect, understanding and consultation with Aboriginal staff.

**Respect**

Ecobalance aims to deliver outcomes which are grounded fundamentally in respect, understanding and celebrating Indigenous cultures and aspirations.

**Opportunities**

Ecobalance aims to deliver outcomes that bring real change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We recognise these opportunities become possible through partnerships based on the principles of relationships and respect.

Ecobalance will continue to maintain annual reporting on our progress against these targets and results will be quality assured by an independent third party.

We have developed indicators to illustrate how performance targets will be implemented across the five-year period.
We have set ourselves a challenge to explore new employment opportunities for Aboriginal Australians. Our business model provides opportunities for talented Aboriginal Australians who want to pursue a career in organisational development and ecological planning services. An industry leading innovation of Ecobalance has been the investment in the career development of Aboriginal emerging leaders.

### Employment and Innovation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Performance target</th>
<th>Timing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FY 18</td>
<td>FY 19</td>
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#### Support - Engage Aboriginal employees to provide support throughout their career

| Provide support and networking opportunities for Aboriginal employees at all stages of their career | Quarterly networking and support teleconference | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 |
| Develop and implement a network of colleagues to support new trainees, interns and expand to new employees | Group create by June | Group operating | Group operating | Group operating | Group operating |

#### Opportunities – Focus on creating real jobs and career opportunities

| Employ Aboriginal trainees | 5 trainees recruited | 1 trainee | 1 trainee | 1 trainee | 1 trainee |
| Offer internships for university students with potential for graduate employment | 5 internships offer | 1 internship | 1 internship | 1 internship | 1 internship |

#### Empowerment – Target high potential individuals for career and successional planning

| Offer company directorship for high achieving employees | 1 directorship offered | - | - | - | - | 1 executive position |
Eco balance currently delivers a number of highly successful organisational development programs that focus on developing capacity and transferring skill to Aboriginal people. We believe an opportunity now exists to expand our ‘turn key’ organisational assessment toolkit to a larger number of organisations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Cost per unit</th>
<th>Performance target</th>
<th>Timing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implement Ecobalance’s organisational health assessments</td>
<td>$4500</td>
<td>75 separate organisations to deliver our organisational health assessment</td>
<td>FY 18</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>FY 19</td>
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<td>FY 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implement Ecobalance’s Performance management program</td>
<td>$15000</td>
<td>75 separate organisations to deliver our performance management program too</td>
<td>FY 18</td>
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<td>FY 19</td>
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<td>FY 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop ecological and organisational development consultancy projects for Aboriginal organisations</td>
<td>$140 p/h</td>
<td>35 separate ecological and business plans for clients</td>
<td>FY 18</td>
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Ecobalance is leading the way with its reporting transparency and data quality assurance and we continue to advocate the benefits of this approach. We commit to developing an Aboriginal advisory committee to guide program development and implementation. Our commitment extends to maintaining annual reporting and releasing annual report cards of our progress and performance.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Performance target</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FY 18</td>
<td>FY 19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop Aboriginal advisory committee to guide program development</td>
<td>Conduct biannual meetings with Aboriginal advisory committee to guide and program development and implementation</td>
<td>2 meetings</td>
<td>2 meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner with Prime minister’s office in Cabinet to monitor programs performance</td>
<td>Conduct biannual meetings with government representative</td>
<td>2 meetings</td>
<td>2 meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain transparency and accountability</td>
<td>Conduct annual Audit and provide Audit report to funding body</td>
<td>1 audit report</td>
<td>1 audit report</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Report annual progress on performance targets to the funding body</td>
<td>1 report</td>
<td>1 report</td>
</tr>
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