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AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS SOCIAL ENTERPRISE: MEASURING PERFORMANCE

Abstract

While Indigenous entrepreneurial activities have been found to be effective in addressing Indigenous disadvantage in Australia, little is known about their community impact. In this paper an analysis is presented – employing an integrated framework for performance management of nonprofit organisations – of the local entrepreneurial activities of an Indigenous social enterprise in northeast Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory. The results attest to the enterprise’s social efficacy measured in terms of income, employment and social capital generation and show it to be an effective community-based vehicle to increasing Indigenous economic participation.

Introduction

Australian government policy seeks to overcome persistent Indigenous disadvantage by way of economic mainstreaming. Yet, policies targeting mainstream employment for Indigenous Australians presume people will migrate from home communities because of the lack of employment opportunities in remote regions. Yet, not only do such policies align poorly with Indigenous cultural goals (Peterson 2005), they potentially disrupt local efforts to build economically sustainable and culturally relevant livelihoods (Brueckner et al. 2014) and leave little room for alternative approaches to Indigenous economic participation (Altman 2009; Altman and Hinkson 2010). It is suggested in this paper that the growth of Indigenous social entrepreneurial activities occurring outside the economic mainstream, especially in remote parts of Australia, offers culturally safe and appropriate pathways to economic participation and that these alternative employment models should sit alongside mainstream employment options for they provide avenues to economic, political and cultural participation. In support of this argument the application of an integrated framework for performance measurement of nonprofit organisations to an Indigenous social enterprise is presented to demonstrate the socio-economic efficacy and positive cultural impact of this local business. The integrated framework is derived from Lee and Nowell’s (2015) meta-analysis of nonprofit performance measurement.

Performance measurement in the nonprofit sector is more complex than in other sectors because nonprofit organisations “often pursue missions whose achievement is difficult to measure” (Lee and Nowell 2015, 2); nevertheless, scholarly attention is increasingly being given to this area (e.g., Kanter and Summers 1994; Oster 1995; Forbes 1998; Sawhill and Williamson 2001; Drucker 2010; Bryson 2011). Currently, the nonprofit sector faces competitive pressure to secure government funding with a growing emphasis on accountability. Competition for funding becomes even more challenging in the Indigenous context in Australia with the recent rationalisation of funding streams under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (Australian Government 2014), which effectively reduced what were 150 programmatic funding avenues to five. It is in this context that nonprofit organisations are under pressure to validate their performance in order to both secure more funding (Martikke 2008) and demonstrate their social and cultural impact in the wider community (Brueckner et al. 2014).

Approaches for measuring performance in the nonprofit sector vary widely, focusing on different aspects of performance such as profit, organisational effectiveness, services rendered, clients served and so on. However, there is a range of different perspectives that can be distilled and synthesised from across these different approaches. Lee and Nowell (2015) – based on a meta-analysis of the literature on performance measurement of nonprofit organisations – have devised an integrated framework for performance management, providing a holistic approach for measuring the social effectiveness of nonprofits. Their synthesis of the extant literature resulted in the distillation of the seven core perspectives on nonprofit performance measurement including: inputs; organisational capacity; outputs; outcomes (behavioural and environmental changes); outcomes (client and customer satisfaction); public value accomplishment; and network/institutional legitimacy.

Measuring ‘inputs’ concerns how nonprofits procure and utilise resources to optimise their financial position and support their activities. The term ‘organisational capacity’ refers to the human and structural features of the nonprofit to deliver services. Nonprofits also create ‘outputs’ (products and/or services) by utilising their resources and their capacity and have impacts on their either internal or external target groups captured here under ‘behavioural and environmental outcomes’ or ‘client and customer satisfaction outcomes’. Finally, ‘public value’ refers to the creation of community value measured in terms of wellbeing and happiness, social capital or social inclusion while ‘network and institutional legitimacy’ is gauged for the management of an organisation’s stakeholder relationships and its ability to develop and maintain partnerships.

The above metric is applied in this paper to the entrepreneurial activities of Nuwul Environmental Services (hereafter Nuwul), an Indigenous social enterprise operating in Yirkala in northeast Arnhem Land. The framework is used to guide a social audit – akin to what Diochon (2013) refers to as a bottom-up impact assessment – to measure Nuwul’s social effectiveness within the local community, shedding light on its organisational success understood here in terms of the creation of local employment and income as well as ancillary effects, including the generation of social inclusion and social capital (Bagnoli and Megali 2011); outcomes also sought under the Australian government’s ‘Closing the Gap’ policy framework¹ (see Council of Australian Governments 2009).

For the purposes of this paper both social and Indigenous entrepreneurship are seen as closely aligned due to their shared focus on social objectives (Brueckner et al. 2010). Indigenous entrepreneurship is about the delivery of benefits to Indigenous communities (Lindsay 2005), yet going beyond important socio-economic improvements for it is also a means of liberation and self-determination and a vehicle for social inclusion and repositioning (Foley 2003; Hindle and Moroz 2010). Social entrepreneurial approaches are increasingly recognised within government, the nonprofit sector, the private sector, academia and the media as effective means of solving problems (Stevens, Moray and Bruneel 2014). The increase of social enterprises is fuelled by the incapacity of the private and public sectors to adequately

¹ Closing the Gap is a policy framework aimed at achieving statistical equality between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in areas such as health, life expectancy, employment and education (Brueckner, Spencer, Wise, and Marika 2014).

address social and environmental issues (Zhang and Swanson 2014; Lui, Eng, and Takeda 2015). While there are many definitions of what a social enterprise constitutes, Austin, Stevenson, and Wei-Skillern (2006) suggest that the literature reveals an explicit focus on the pursuit of opportunities to implement social change and address social needs through entrepreneurial activities of selling goods and/or services (Di Domenico, Haugh and Tracey 2010; Haugh 2007; Nyssens 2006).

An Indigenous Social Enterprise in Remote Northeast Arnhem Land: Nuwul Environmental Services

Nuwul grew from the former Yirrkala Landcare, which closed with the dismantling of the National Landcare Program in 2008. Nuwul is an Indigenous social enterprise owned and run by the Rirratjingu clan in the town of Yirrkala, located 20 km south of the mining town of Nhulunbhuy in northeast Arnhem Land. It aims to cater to the needs of the local environment and its inhabitants. Its mission indicates that Nuwul focuses on the dual goals of environmental stewardship and the social needs of the local Yolŋu community by providing employment and training, improved literacy and numeracy skills, financial management and restoring personal and community pride.

Nuwul seeks to support a large number of Yolŋu employees and to provide job readiness and life skills to an even greater number. The business plan clearly states “we will create a balance between traditional and western cultures in our approaches” (Nuwul Environmental Services 2010, 2) alluding to the flexibility that allows Yolŋu people to work *and* attend to cultural obligations. The business plan also claims “to recognise the needs of flexibility in [Nuwul’s] employment activities to accommodate traditional work ethics and social obligations, and this provides the opportunity for job sharing as well as part-time and casual employment” (Nuwul Environmental Services 2010, 2). Nuwul is both a provider of the government Remote Jobs and Community Program (RJCP) activities for the currently unemployed and provides placement for those under a court community work order where they can carry out their obligations amongst their peers with positive community support. RJCP is a federal government program that started in 2013 to support unemployed people in building skills to become ‘work ready’ or to participate in activities that contribute to the strength and sustainability of their community (Australian Government 2015b).² Importantly, these activities allow Nuwul to maximise community input into the environmental management of the northeast Arnhem Land region both directly through activities and indirectly through the influence and gained understanding from teaching other life skills. “A recognition of the importance of traditional knowledge is paramount to what we are doing. Recording and passing on of this knowledge to future generations is a vital component of Nuwul activities. Rather than having Yolŋu people feeling lost between two cultures, we intend to demonstrate to them that they have a distinct advantage in having a hand in each” (Nuwul Environmental Services 2010, 2). The nursery provides a hub for local Yolŋu men and women to participate in semi-formal economic activities that serve social, cultural, environmental and economic goals (Brueckner et al. 2014).

Nuwul is engaged in a variety of activities including contractual, commercial, community services, and training. Commercial activities include Saturday morning

² At the time of writing it is unknown how the changes to RJCP in July 2015 will affect Nuwul operations in future.

plant sales at the nursery to the local Yirrkala and Nhulunbuy communities, landscaping, lawn mowing and yard clearance, and irrigation and reticulation services. Over time, Nuwul has been growing its contractual services with local organisations including weed management and grounds keeping contracts with the East Arnhem Shire Council in Yirrkala and the Arnhem Club in Nhulunbuy, and contractual agreements have previously existed with the Yirrkala School for grounds maintenance. Nuwul is contracted by Miwatj Employment Services (MEP) to provide RJCP placements for local Yolŋu and contracted by the Northern Territory Department of Correctional Services to provide work placements for offenders on community work orders. As part of their operations as a social enterprise, Nuwul has a mandate for environmental stewardship and restoring community pride. In doing so, they regularly clear rubbish and mow grass at the local cemetery and beach as an ongoing community service. Training is also an integral part of Nuwul operations with staff having completed a Certificate II in Small Engine Operations and Maintenance (certified through Charles Darwin University), money management (via Laynhapuy), and studying for a Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management (CLM - certified through Batchelor College).

Yolŋu youth who are out-of-school and under 24 years of age are currently being engaged as part of the government's Remote Youth Leadership and Development Corps Program (referred to as Youth Corp). The twelve month program aims at providing a pathway into employment by building skills necessary for sustainable employment in a locally-relevant industry, and as such at Nuwul the participants are being trained in CLM and apply their knowledge through Nuwul activities; they are then required to continue on RJCP after the intensive ten-week training until the end of the twelve month period. Nuwul has a history of teaching gardening programs at Yirrkala School with grades four, five and six drawing on the Northern Territory primary school curriculum and since 2013, senior secondary students are enrolled in a pilot Learning on Country program in association with Dhimurru.³ This involves field trips 'on country' for Yolŋu students to learn from Yolŋu traditional owners about local cultural and environmental knowledge. Nuwul's General Manager (GM), an ethno-botanist, teaches the Certificate content as part of the Learning on Country program.

Method

This study was invited by, and jointly developed with, Nuwul Environmental Services. The Board of the Rirratjingu Aboriginal Corporation, which oversees Nuwul operations, supported the research and ethics approval from Murdoch University's Human Research Ethics Committee was received prior to the commencement of research. Research participants were selected from a small sample using purposive-convenience sampling (Watters and Biernacki 1989). Nuwul management and staff formed the main pool of participants followed by key local stakeholders in the community. Small sample sizes are not unusual in the research field of Indigenous entrepreneurship (see for example Dana 1990; Peredo *et al.* 2004; Dana and Dana 2005) because qualitative research does not require a large sample and the researcher may only require a very small sample of entrepreneurs (Dana and Dana 2005: 84). In this study, volunteer sampling was used, enabling staff to self-nominate for the study. This study involved a total of 24 qualitative interviews with 15 Nuwul participants (five

³ Dhimurru is an Aboriginal incorporated organisation established by Yolŋu landowners in northeast Arnhem Land to address the natural and cultural management of the area.

female staff, five male staff, two managers, three board members) and eight external Nuwul stakeholders (Laynha, MEP, Northern Territory Department of Correctional Services, Art Gallery, Department of Families and Children, East Arnhem Shire Council, Dhimurru, Rio Tinto Alcan, a registered training organisation).

As detailed by Dana and Dana (2005: 82), the qualitative methodology used in this study employs “personal observation of situations, events, individuals, interactions and transactions, as well as document analysis (including quantitative records) and open-ended interviews yielding in-depth and oral testimonies”. Over several visits to Yirrkala between 2013 and 2015 the researchers observed, and participated in Nuwul activities such as fencing, light construction as well as tree planting, seed collection and irrigation work, weeding, clearing rubbish from important cultural sites, and unpacking and sorting of plant stock at the nursery. Participation in these activities provided an opportunity for forming working relationships with local Aboriginal staff members and for building rapport. “The technique of being a participating observant, as is often encouraged in the field of anthropology, is an ideal means of grasping an understanding of entrepreneurship and its social context (Dana and Dana 2005: 85).

It is in this context that participants were invited for a ‘yarn’ about their work and associated experiences. A form of interviewing and legitimate method in Indigenous research, yarning is an informal conversational approach through which the researcher and participant address topics of interest relevant to the research (Bessarab and Ng’andu 2010). Yarning requires the researcher to develop and build a relationship that is accountable to Indigenous people participating in the research. During the yarns, with the informed consent of research participants, field notes were taken and where appropriate conversations were recorded. The format was open-ended, encouraging participants to share their views on, and experiences of working at Nuwul. Yarning is akin to what Dana and Dana talk of when they say understanding phenomena based on field research requires the formulation of new questions because researchers, often inspired by observations, are constantly seeking more answers. (2005: 82-83). Field notes were collated and compiled and interview recordings were transcribed verbatim. The researchers employed thematic analysis (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006); the encoding of qualitative data in search for patterns and themes, which help explain social phenomena. Themes were developed through the careful iterative and reflexive examination and re-examination of the raw interview data.

Results: Application of the Integrated Framework

Lee and Nowell’s (2015) seven core perspectives of nonprofit performance are applied below to the work of Nuwul to develop an understanding of how it is fairing as an Indigenous social enterprise. In negotiation with elders from the Rirratjingu clan, the voices of the Yirrkala people (Yolŋu and white fellas) are used to ‘measure’ the enterprise’s performance.

Inputs

Two key approaches listed under the inputs core perspective include 1) resource acquisition and utilisation and 2) expenditure. The first approach focuses on how successfully resources (both financial and nonfinancial) are acquired in order to generate value, growth and sustainability (Lee and Nowell 2015). Resources include

funding, staffing and training, facilities, and equipment (Berman 2006; Median-Borja and Triantis 2007). The increase in revenue from year to year is an important resource performance metric for Nuwul and for a non-profit, the diversity of revenue streams is vital.

Currently, Nuwul's core operations are completely self-funded, meaning waged staff expenses are fully covered by contract work, supplemented with RJCP-funded positions to complete additional contracts with a view to expanding Nuwul's capacity. As Nuwul grows its business through contracts rather than one-off services, it has been able to increase the number of staff on paid wages. Currently, Nuwul employs 14 staff on paid wages who have transitioned from RJCP funding. Miwatj Employment Program (MEP) has a government contract to provide RJCP until 2018, allowing Nuwul to be a host organisation for employing local Yolŋu.

Earnings from nursery sales, environmental and civil contracts, and community works projects have all been increasing steadily. With regard to diversifying revenue streams, Nuwul is doing this by securing private and commercial landscaping and maintenance contracts and through the training of its staff, thereby building staff qualifications and Nuwul's capacity to take on more contractual work and diversifying its revenue stream. Nuwul is involved in training of both senior secondary students and Nuwul staff in Certificate II Conservation and Land Management. Nuwul staff also receive training in the day-to-day operations of the nursery, contractual environmental services, and in the use and maintenance of equipment.

Resource performance metrics in this social audit include the ability to acquire and manage human resources. For example, the number of staff on paid wages, the increase in RJCP staff, the increase in Youth Corp participants, the number of Northern Territory Department of Correctional Services placements and the appointment of middle management. While Nuwul has two facilitators and two supervisors, the GM is stretched across all activities of the organisation: managing staff, contracts, training, nursery purchases and sales, and sourcing new business, as he builds the capacity of his staff. The number of RJCP staff is gradually increasing, as is the Youth Corp program.

Lee and Nowell (2015) identify the acquisition of facilities and equipment as nonprofit performance measures (see also Berman 2006; Median-Borja and Triantis 2007). In the case of Nuwul, quantifying the acquisition of facilities and equipment as an indicator of performance would not tell the entire story. Having developed strong relationships with other local organisations, Nuwul often borrows facilities and equipment; effectively building its capacity despite not investing in the acquisition of all the facilities and equipment utilised. For example, other Indigenous run organisations have lent facilities, equipment and vehicles to Nuwul to carry out its operations and services in Yirrkala, Nhulunbuy and the homelands. This is perhaps a better indicator of another performance measure – the strength of Nuwul's relationship with funders, staff and local partners. It is worth noting that there are risks attached to this strategy, too; the equipment, for example, might not be available when it is required. Strong relationships with other community stakeholders addresses Nuwul's constraints of budget and resources (Moxham 2009b) that it experiences as a nonprofit in a remote location. The strength of Nuwul's relationship with staff is a strong indicator of performance particularly in the context of Australian Aboriginal culture and when considering its

mission to provide employment for local Yolŋu. Yarning with staff and observing the rapport the GM has with his staff highlight the strength of the relationship. One male staff member expresses this:

I respect him for what he's been doing here. He's been through a lot of hard yakka to get this where it is today. Being with him and working with him is good. I respect him for that and what he's been doing.

The second input approach focuses on nonprofit expenditure. The literature highlights that expenditure is a common method for examining nonprofit performance at the end of a program or funding tranche where nonprofits are required to report on expenditure against outputs (Cutt and Murray 2000; Moxham 2009b; Newcomer 1997). Typically when a nonprofit has secured external funding, it will put in place a monitoring and evaluation system for the purpose of reporting back to the funding body about how it spent the funds. The GM reports to the Board and it reports to its partners such as the Northern Territory Department of Correctional Services and Miwatj Employment Program regarding the attendance of staff. However, its financial reporting is a performance metric that requires improvement. Due to the lack of administrative capacity, it is clear that Nuwul needs to develop improved systems and processes for financial record keeping. Kaplan (2001) signals that expenditure is not the emphasis of nonprofit organisations that instead elevate “the role of the mission and customer to the top of the hierarchy of perspectives, recognising that nonprofits should be accountable for how well they meet a need in society rather than how well they raise funds or control expenses”(369). This relational ethos segues into the next core perspective, that of organisational capacity.

Organisational Capacity

According to Lee and Nowell (2015, 4), organisational capacity “consists of human and structural features that facilitate an organisation’s ability to offer programs and services” and it correlates strongly with input. Its focus, however, is more directed at developing the capacity to successfully generate outcomes and outputs. As the authors suggest (Lee and Nowell 2015, 7):

... this perspective is about evaluating how well a nonprofit has constructed effective internal processes and structures to use the resources efficiently and effectively toward the advancement of the organisation’s mission. It also includes developing the requisite capacity to deliver the services, adopt necessary innovations, and expand/alter programs and operations to meet changing needs (Kaplan 2001).

With this in mind, a close reading of Nuwul’s mission statement sheds light on what it sees as its fundamental mandate; to preserve the land and culture of local Yolŋu while providing them with skills and employment. An analysis can therefore begin of the internal processes and structures to gauge how effectively resources are utilised:

We provide employment for the local Yolŋu population, reinforcing a sense of personal and community pride, which have undergone many challenges over the previous decades. We see ourselves as a skills provider, which will enhance the employment potentials for Yolŋu people, so that they can participate more broadly in the wider community (Nuwul Mission Statement).

Talking to the GM reveals the importance of Nuwul's capacity to work between two cultures.

Our capacity is to work between two cultures. We could have one set of measurements for working with Yolŋu business, but as soon as we're dealing with Napaki [white] there are different parameters. At the same time we have to make sure we remain a Yolŋu business.

Lee and Nowell (2015) found that performance metrics for organisational capacity typically include aspects such as staff motivation, satisfaction, education, staff and executive perspectives on the operational capacities, and capacity of the nonprofit to innovate. When female staff spoke about their motivation for working at Nuwul they talked about their feelings of personal enjoyment: *at work we're feeling good. When we knock off from work and go home, we feel different, feeling better.* They enthusiastically describe Nuwul as a *happy workplace*. Yarning to the men about what motivates them to work at Nuwul one said *It's all about encouraging our little ones, so they can look forward; it's not about just sitting down. So they can look up to us and they can think of how can they work for a living instead of just sitting down and doing nothing.* For the men, recognition is also a motivation for working at Nuwul: *some just want to be like us; want to work here. Also young kids will do that when they grow up here [Yirrkala]. They want to be working here. Homeland people look up to us too.* From these comments it can be seen that people are motivated by a desire to shift from *sitting down and doing nothing* to role modelling, particularly for their children and receiving respect and recognition from other Yolŋu for being employed.

Community pride emerged as a theme during the yarns. This speaks to staff satisfaction as a performance metric. Staff talks about the satisfaction of working in their community: *it's good work... sometimes we go out and we are in the community cleaning up* (female staff member). One of the male staff members explains, *we have a big nursery that has been part of life since we were young. This area, this nursery it's not about us, it's about community and helping our community.* A fellow worker responds to this, *and it's a Yolŋu business; it's a family business.* The women also speak about family in relation to Nuwul, *we are having our buddies with us, our friends, sisters and brothers; working here we are a family.* Overall, satisfaction among the staff is a strong indicator of organisational capacity and is expressed across many domains including staff relationship with the GM, working alongside their peers, working for their community, role modelling to their children and being more independent financially. Some spoke of *sitting at home, doing nothing* before working at Nuwul and *relying on mum and dad or the family for money.* The increase of staff over time and

the return of those who may have left briefly is an indicator that staff are satisfied with their roles in the organisation given they are not obliged to participate (with the exception of those on work orders from the Department of Correctional Services, who at the time of writing was three staff members). Certainly the data from the focus groups with staff indicate high levels of satisfaction: *for all of us it's a happy workplace ... we've got a nice boss working here.*

Staff and executive viewpoints on operational capacities vary between those on the ground doing the work, those managing, and those on the Board. One Board member would like to see faster transitions from RJCP to paid wages: *I am tired of RJCP and CDEP programs. There should be money found to employ people properly and with that employment comes training on site.* But for the GM, who takes a cautious and steady approach to building Nuwul's workforce, transitioning people from RJCP arrangements takes time to introduce new staff to the workplace in terms of expectations, responsibilities, processes and systems, he explains he *can't have a fixed timeframe because it is really dependent on how much we're actually earning and our financial capabilities. That's what determines timeframes ... it is really determined by the market more than anything else.* This might be viewed as a sustainable approach to building the organisational capacity in terms of staffing.

One board member felt that operational capacities are good due to the number of staff but felt that administrative capacity was wanting and that this impacted the management of Nuwul activities. For example, while yarning in Nhulunbuy this Board member said *he's [GM] got enough people working there to help him do what he needs to do. They need an administrator that will take the paperwork load off him. He needs one or two people to help him with that.* Another Board member believes training would be beneficial for all members of the Board to be trained in order to help with the leadership and governance of Nuwul to improve its capacity: *I think we need for the Board to have the capacity and skills to know how to run Board meetings and to run the Board.* These comments reflect what could be considered the weakest aspect of Nuwul's organisational capacity. There currently is no succession planning and if the GM was to leave, Nuwul would struggle.

Another indicator of organisational capacity is innovation. Perhaps the most significant innovation at Nuwul is the way it is being managed in culturally appropriate ways. Workforce flexibility is an innovative way to achieve the strategic objectives of Nuwul in its daily operations. This means that Nuwul staff are funded via alternative means: core staff on paid wages supplemented by those funded temporarily via RJCP, Youth Corp, and NT Department of Correctional Services (community work orders) who may go on to be waged staff. By growing the workforce Nuwul is able to secure more contracts. What is important to note here is that not all of the people on the books turn up to work every day. However, there is a core number who are there any one day, and this means there are always enough people to carry out the jobs, while at the same time, allowing Yolŋu staff to attend to cultural obligations. While some may need to be away

from work for 'sorry business'⁴, others can be called upon to come to work to get specific tasks and jobs completed:

people attend to things of cultural importance ... requiring a larger, more flexible labour core, because you don't know when someone might pass away or there will be something that will call away some or most of your workforce. At other times you will be over employed and that actually means you can knock over your contracts that much faster ... it's giving me a real flexibility and sometimes when you do have a variable workforce, it allows you to achieve things that you normally can't ... and then we have the capacity to do more community oriented things.
(GM)

Likewise with those on community work orders from the court, the GM reveals, *most of the people that have come through on those end up staying on at Nuwul on RJCP... my role is to work with them towards maintaining their work after they are finished. Some have kept working and others have dropped off. Some will come back.*

There are three related concepts within this core perspective (Lee and Nowell 2015): internal processes; capacity for learning, innovation, and growth; management and program capacity. The GM is responsible for overseeing all operations, sourcing new business, training, technical maintenance for example. Without management support, it is difficult for internal processes to be improved, management capacity to be developed, and the adoption of innovations to take place. Making quality improvements to organisational systems is very difficult when it all relies on one person. However, making quality improvements to the staff has been a strong focus of both the GM and the Board.

In the case of an Indigenous social enterprise, external pressures and cultural obligations can undermine retention of staff. Peer group pressure from outside Nuwul has on occasion impacted staff retention in terms of staff being pulled into old behaviours by errant peers. One young male who took part in a Youth Corp program, for example, was engaging well with the program but returned to heavy drinking and sitting around. This can be attributed to a combination of factors including the completion of the intensive 10-week program coinciding with the Christmas holiday break and the return to Yirrkala of a young male from one of the homelands that instigated a spate of petrol sniffing in the community. But despite peer pressures or cultural obligations, staff retention remains strong. Since Nuwul was incorporated it has had approximately 50 RJCP referrals, 25 of who have been consistent and 15 being placed on wages. Of the 15 staff on wages, three have left because of pregnancy, caring for a sick relative in Darwin, and one on a court allocated Alcohol Prohibition Order (upon expiration of the order the staff member immediately began drinking again and hence stopped coming to work).

⁴ Sorry business refers to mainland Aboriginal cultural practices and protocols for death, grief, or loss. Most often, sorry business ceremonies are conducted around the bereavement and funerals of deceased persons but sometimes sorry business might be to mourn the loss of connection to land, such as where an application for recognition of Native Title is lost.

Nuwul staff are developing their capacities and learning new skills. One female staff member describes learning new skills as *good for the brain and good for the head*. When yarning with female staff, they spoke about the nature of their job *mowing in the community, planting, weeding, watering the gardens*. The GM arrived and on overhearing the conversation, stated emphatically *they designed it themselves* referring to the gardens around the Arnhem Club in Nhulunbuy. He proudly explained, *I asked the ladies 'how do you want to make the gardens'? and then I just made sure that the cold water kept coming!* The women explained they have been learning new mechanical skills for maintaining the buggy and other gardening equipment, *we know how to like pop the tyre, change the tyre, we know how to fix lawnmowers and we know how to fix the whipper snipper*. Yarning also revealed they can do maintenance on the blower and chainsaw, and they had been learning new propagation skills, using sprays and chemicals, spraying, weeding, gardening, and wearing the correct safety gear to work each day. Over the duration of each field visit staff could be seen participating in these daily activities.

In terms of alignment as a performance measurement for organisational capacity, the activities and the development of capabilities discussed here align well with Nuwul's mission statement. It states that Nuwul sees itself as a "skills provider, which will enhance the employment potentials for Yolŋu people". The kinds of activities and business staff undertake involve maintaining and protecting the local environment and areas of cultural significance. In these ways, the business activities align with its mission statement: "... to maintain and protect the local area...". Nuwul employs local Yolŋu, training them and developing their skills that involve learning about both 'balanda' (white fella) and Yolŋu plants and ways of working with the environment. This too aligns directly with its mission: "We provide employment for the local Yolŋu population, reinforcing a sense of personal and community pride". The business activities undertaken by Nuwul and the training and skills development of staff fit with its core mission and strategy that focuses on the key constituent group: local unemployed Yolŋu.

Outputs

In the case of Nuwul four types of outputs can be considered: nursery sales, environmental and landscaping services, educational and training services, and government partnerships. Nursery sales are indicative of customers served. The number of organisations and individuals purchasing plants from Nuwul has steadily increased by 40 per cent in the first half of the 2014-15 financial year (a projected increase from \$50,000 in 2013-2014 to \$70,000 for the next financial year) (French 2014). This is despite the nursery only being open to the public on Saturday mornings, the mothballing of the local Rio Tinto alumina refinery in late 2013, and the subsequent loss of residents in neighbouring Nhulunbuy throughout 2014. As such, the increase in nursery sales indicates strong growth during a period of overall economic downturn. Typically customers are drawn from Nhulunbuy, but more recently local Yirrkala residents are purchasing plants from the nursery to support their family members who work at the nursery. Customers benefit from access to a large selection of plants and inexpensive stock compared with competitors in Nhulunbuy (20 km away) and Gunyangara (referred to locally as Ski Beach 29 km away). Exotic plants regularly imported by cargo vessel from Darwin (approximately 500 nautical miles/1000 kilometres), incur a

more expensive price tag, while Nuwul produces a similar variety of plants at a much-reduced cost. An extensive range of native plants for ongoing remediation and re-vegetation work of public and mining sites is also propagated. Since 2009, Nuwul has developed a seed bank for conservation purposes, seed sales, and nursery production. This allows Nuwul to propagate, maintain variety and manage the quality and quantity of its plant stock to some degree.

Over a number of fieldtrips to Yirrkala between 2013 and 2015 the number of corporate clients Nuwul had secured for landscaping and garden maintenance steadily increased. The nature of the landscaping business also shifted from one-off landscaping jobs to more long-term contracts, indicating that staff were building capacity to deliver services that respond to market demands such as quality and competitive pricing while at the same time providing more regular income and work experience for staff. As part of its environmental service, the nursery also produces plants with local geno-types and chemo-types suitable for native re-vegetation and land management for the two large Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) located near Yirrkala (French 2014) and remediation of local public sites like Shady Beach. The diversity of the client base for environmental and landscaping services indicates that this part of the business has developed and is supporting the capacity of Nuwul. The current client profile for the landscaping and environmental contract services consists of three government agencies (NT Department of Housing, NT Department of Education, East Arnhem Regional Council) and one under negotiation (Australian Quarantine and Inspection Services); four nonprofit corporations (Nhulunbuy Corporation Limited, Dhimurru Land Management Aboriginal Corporation, Bunuwal Investments' Malpi Village, Laynhapuy Homelands Aboriginal Corporation); two private sector businesses (Rio Tinto and Arnhem Club); and four homelands currently establishing cooperative farming ventures that will require horticultural advice and plant stock. Nuwul's expanding government and corporate client base speak to the growing recognition that Yolŋu people are well placed in the delivery of environmental services in northeast Arnhem Land.

Another output relating to government partnerships is the number of participants in RJCP and Youth Corp activities as well as the number of placements from NT Department of Correctional Services that Nuwul has established. Currently, Nuwul supervises 40 RJCP participants generating around A\$17,000⁵ per month. The government funded RJCP contract is scheduled not to expire before June 2018, indicating a stable income stream for Nuwul for several years. According to the GM there have been approximately 50 placements by NT Department of Correctional Services since 2009 with only 4 cases of recidivism. The Corrections Officer interviewed in 2014 said of all the placements this is the best success rate across the "Top End" (the whole Northern Territory) and indicated they are very happy with the supervision and support the clients receive from being placed in Nuwul.

The final output by which Nuwul can measure its performance is by the educational and training services that Nuwul delivers for staff and senior secondary students. Staff are trained in seed collection and storage techniques thereby responding to the mission: "plant propagation and production services are founded on technical and traditional

⁵ All figures cited are shown in Australian dollars

knowledge” (French 2014, 6). Training in these skill areas also aligns with the business strategy, which aims to “develop culturally appropriate plant species for the regional market using a local nursery to generate locally grown products” (French 2014, 6). The strategy fosters local interest and ownership as staff learn about traditional botanical knowledge. Thus far, two groups of Youth Corp have completed training in a Certificate II CLM. This qualifies local youth to seek work in the environmental and horticulture services industry and to continue on with Nuwul if they choose. Along with CLM training, Nuwul also trains staff in Small Engine Operations and Maintenance.

Staff receive regular mentoring in money management and life skills. For example, various organisations have hosted barbecues at the nursery coupled with community development messaging such as hygiene and health, good eating and wellbeing, and money management workshops. Local Aboriginal corporations based in Yirrkala have partnered with Nuwul to deliver training and capacity building in a social and informal manner, where other Yolŋu workers come and support Nuwul staff. For example, one barbecue was co-hosted with local Aboriginal health provider Miwatj Health who provided health checks for staff. East Arnhem Shire also provided a barbecue where Nuwul staff cooked and this was aimed at building the relationship between the two organisations.

Outcome: Behavioural and Environmental Changes

Outcomes differ from outputs in that the focus is on impacts. For example, the social enterprise may be successful in the number of services provided or clients served, but the impacts and changes that these services have on the environment or a target community is a different measure (Lee and Nowell 2015, 8). Outcomes focusing on behavioural and environmental changes are conceptualised as internal (Bagnoli and Megali 2011, 157). In the case of Nuwul, ‘internal outcomes’ can be measured against changes in the target group in terms of increased skills and knowledge; improved economic conditions; and perhaps even modified attitudes and behaviours that might for instance be demonstrated through reduced incidence of criminal activity in Yirrkala and the positive role models for family and community members.

Increasing skills is key to employment of local Yolŋu in Yirrkala. The Northern Territory Government (NTG) conducted an employment profile of Yirrkala and published the results in 2011. This is instructive because it reveals the status of Indigenous employment. At that time, Indigenous people held 46 per cent of jobs in Yirrkala (NTG 2011). Of the total 311 jobs in the community, 109 were public sector jobs with 38 per cent filled by Yolŋu and 180 were private sector jobs with 49 per cent filled by Yolŋu (NTG 2011). The NT Government has established the East Arnhem Development Corporation with the express purpose to build local economic capacity and support development of Indigenous social enterprises in order for local contracts and tenders to benefit local people (French 2014). Nuwul’s business model focuses on employment of Yolŋu to deliver environmental, economic and social benefits. In doing so, Nuwul integrates applied education to the daily activities to increase the knowledge and skills of local Yolŋu (both Nuwul staff and Yirrkala school students). *By being hands on, the kids really lap that up ... they have the opportunity to actually cook things from the garden ... they recently made a fantastic rosella jam [a type of hibiscus]* (GM). In recent years, Nuwul has delivered educational projects with the Yirrkala School

called the EduGrow Community Garden project. Once a week, Nuwul staff teach gardening with years 4, to 6:

there is a lot of curriculum in gardening, English, math, science, music, multimedia, geography. There are a couple of weeks on soil, growing healthy food; the hands-on learning is very successful.

For those on Community Work Orders skills inculcated include the *discipline of turning up to work and staying at work and not just taking off at lunch time to go to town and those sorts of things* (GM). Nuwul staff are also actively creating processes that build capacity and training into their work, *the crew is helping build their own checklists for things so our machines aren't breaking down ... A lot of these things are coming from them. They want to make training videos so everyone knows what to do; staff are already thinking that way* (Yolŋu civic works supervisor). One of the strategies for building skills is around leadership training of two facilitators and two supervisors. The GM tells us *I think we've developed some good supervisors. I think that we need to pay more attention to developing their skills. The Board recognises that and that is something that we need to build on.*

Much of the training being undertaken at Nuwul is funded by MEP who has the funding to certify training. The training is more than just about carrying out tasks; it is embedded in Yolŋu cultural knowledge. The GM – informed by his Board – says *I've found it really important to tie in their own culture and kinship and stories and things like that, so it becomes part of their lore. It's not a separate entity from that point of view. It's totally cohesive with everything else that's a part of their life.* Nuwul has been a stepping-stone for some Yolŋu into other jobs by preparing them to be work ready, *we've definitely been a stepping stone for people to find employment* (Board member). This speaks to the organisational mission and provides evidence that Nuwul is achieving its goal.

A rigorous performance measurement of Nuwul could measure whether the economic condition of staff has improved. Based on the number of employees, some initial observations can be made. Currently, Nuwul has developed training and employment for 40 local Yolŋu people. Thus there has been an injection of labour and associated wages into the local Yirrkala community. In the financial year 2013-2014, \$47,000 was paid in wages. Projections for the current financial year based on current contracts and work undertaken are that wages will increase to \$425,900 with the volunteers being paid because there will be an increase in long-term contracts secured in landscaping and environmental services and an increase in small civil contracts such as garden maintenance and tree lopping. The recent Business Overview (French 2014, 22) states that “a major organisational achievement for Nuwul in the first half of 2014-2015 has been to generate sufficient income and future contracts to ensure all staff will be paid full wages by the 30th June 2015”. The sustainability of the business of Nuwul depends on its ability to generate income that not only covers essential expenses but also the wages of Nuwul staff. These figures suggest that the economic conditions have improved for Nuwul as a business, and importantly, for the families of Nuwul staff.

Further research would allow a longitudinal audit to measure this kind of impact at the household level over time.

Measuring modified attitudes and behaviours as an indicator of performance is an indicator for which there is initial evidence. Nuwul has a core group who attend work on a daily basis, and it can be surmised that this evidences a change in attitudes and behaviour regarding work among local Yolŋu where the mentality of ‘sit down money’ is a consequence of half a century of welfare. Many of the people in Yirrkala talked about the issue of ‘sit down money’; both Yolŋu and Balanda alike identify it as a serious social issue. The GM talks about shaping attitudes around sit down money:

We’re starting to put shame on that sort of mentality ... they’re telling other people ‘you should come to work’. So their sense of pride and their financial abilities and things like that having some social change.

One female staff member explains that she came to work at Nuwul because her sister and cousin work there, demonstrating there might be a flow-on effect when people see their relatives working and enjoying the work and earning a wage. It is clearly appealing to work within one’s own community amongst friends and relatives and perhaps this contributes to a culturally safe work environment. *I’m working here because my husband is working here. He asked me to work here.* And there is a long tradition of family members working at Landcare before it became Nuwul, *there are plants here from our grandmothers and grandfathers; they were working here.* Another female staff member explains how work makes her feel better, indicating a change in attitude towards work, *I come to work with my friends; my life and what I think and feelings change. At work we’re feeling different.* One of the male staff tells us about his life having changed since working at Nuwul, *what is better is we can be somebody else, you are a normal person to be out working.* A young male staff member whose grandmother worked at the nursery and encouraged him to work there too explains the importance of incorporating Yolŋu and Balanda ways of living where work and school are considered Balanda. *Us mob, northeast Arnhem Land, we keep our culture strong by living the Yolŋu way. We don’t want to end up like the others. We want to be strong and we want to live both ways. We want to live our lives like Yolŋu and like Balanda. Like learning the Balanda way.*

Other stakeholders in the community see Nuwul as an opportunity for local Yolŋu to develop *strong work ethic and work awareness* (MEP). The GM says that changing behaviours towards work takes time, *it really does take time to get people to a level of regularity and punctuality and things like that. That is one of the goals of RJCP, work readiness, and we are a workplace, so obviously we want people to be ready at a certain time to get tasks done.* One stakeholder from Laynhapuy believes that there is a wider community impact from the engagement of a core group of staff at Nuwul *it flows on. People can see it. As I say, other people want to join the team.*

Outcome: Client / Customer Satisfaction

Outcomes can also be measured according to the satisfaction of clients and customers – referred to as external outcomes in the literature (Lee and Nowell 2015). Bagnoli and Megali (2011) refer to this performance measurement as the real impact of the social enterprise's activities as they relate to its mission statement. In the case of Nuwul, the documented increase in nursery sales, in environmental and landscaping contracts (more than doubling in environmental and civil works contracts), and the increase in participants in RJCP, Youth Corp and NT Department of Correctional Services placements are strong indicators of not only customer and client satisfaction but also of partnership satisfaction with key stakeholders that support Nuwul activities such as MEP and NT Department of Correctional Services.

Public Value Accomplishment

This perspective focuses on what public value Nuwul produces for its Yirrkala community and identifies whether there are broader benefits to society. For the purposes of this social audit, we looked at Nuwul's mission statement to gain an overview of the public value accomplishment and chose the most appropriate dimensions concerning Nuwul's community-based goals. These dimensions include wellbeing and happiness; social capital and social inclusion; and tackling deprivation and social exclusion (Hills and Sullivan 2006). Much of the public value accomplishment sits firmly around the organisation's mission to employ local Yolŋu and to provide sustainable community and environmental services to maintain and protect the local area.

The nursery acts as a hub for the inculcation of civic activities that support community life in Yirrkala. Nuwul has developed work and training activities in a mentoring environment to support a successful work culture where staff work in supervised teams in the nursery and in the delivery of small civil works contracts. For example, Nuwul undertakes sustainable management and remediation of important local areas such as the local cemetery and Shady Beach. In considering public value accomplishment as a performance measure, Nuwul incorporates technical and social strengths with environmental and social values in order to deliver economic outcomes. In the Business Overview, it states that Nuwul's approach "creates local interest and ownership; it ensures the benefits are retained in the community; it builds social capital; and delivers a sustainable business legacy for the future" (French 2014, 6).

There are clear benefits for the community from the activities undertaken by Nuwul. Enhancing the employment potential of Yolŋu people in Yirrkala speaks to the 'tackling deprivation' and 'social exclusion' dimensions of public value as a performance measurement. Education and training in the local community for staff and students also speaks to these dimensions. The dimensions 'wellbeing and happiness' and 'social capital and social inclusion' can be inferred from a range of factors such as instilling a sense of pride in the local community through the land management and remediation work and monitoring of sacred sites; creation and maintenance of community organic food gardens, development of strong relations with local community-based stakeholders (MEP, Laynhapuy, East Arnhem Shire Council, NTG, DPI, Rio Tinto Alcan); and the promotion of cultural maintenance. When asked about the wider community impact he thought Nuwul was having on Yirrkala, the GM explained:

Well, I like to think that people are seeing a larger Yolŋu presence in terms of workers in the community and not just white people coming in doing something -- Yolŋu doing things for themselves and actually making the community look better. When Yolŋu are so disenfranchised, it gives them a sense that Yolŋu are taking care of themselves and that is really important.

Network and Institutional Legitimacy

The final core perspective of Lee and Nowell's integrated framework adopts an ecological view of nonprofits, conceptualising them as "embedded in a complex array of stakeholder relationships" (2014, 11). The accomplishment of this dimension can thus be gauged by evaluating the success of Nuwul's partnerships with stakeholders, but also through Nuwul's capacity to borrow resources from other local stakeholders.

Nuwul has a number of existing contracts attesting to its capacity for collaboration, for example, partnerships with East Arnhem Shire Council for weed management and Yirrkala oval maintenance, and Nhulunbuy Corporation for garden maintenance. The MEP partnership is primarily focused on the delivery of RJCP activities. Nuwul collaborates with NT Department of Correctional Services to provide supervised work for prisoners on community service duties. In these ways, Nuwul has developed social capital and even relies on strong community relationships for free local advertising of its nursery sales and environmental services from local media providers such as the Nhulunbuy radio stations Gove FM and Yolŋu Radio and the local newspaper Arafura Times.

New partnerships are currently being negotiated with Dhimurru to assist in the land management and environmental services of the IPAs. Negotiations are also underway with Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service for services relating to coastal management and Rio Tinto Alcan to assist with administration. The partnership with MEP has been so successful that Nuwul is proposing to adopt the model to expand RJCP services through MEP to Homelands based on a co-operative farming venture between Nuwul and Homelands East Arnhem.

Local organisations such as East Arnhem Shire Council, Laynhapuy, MEP assist Nuwul with the loan of resources when sometimes required. For example, Laynhapuy and MEP have lent vehicles when Nuwul's vehicle has been out of use or there has been a need for an extra one to help get contracts completed. East Arnhem Shire Council provides storage for Nuwul's vehicles and equipment and a utility van was donated to Nuwul by a local Nhulunbuy resident. For MEP providing support to Nuwul in this way means they do *not try and recreate a wheel but strengthen a wheel that is already there and [assisting Nuwul] strengthened it to a point where it could create jobs that never existed twelve months ago* (MEP).

The increase in nursery sales and long-term contracts for landscaping and environmental services indicate that Nuwul has established legitimacy among the general public for its role as both an employer of Yolŋu and a horticultural business. Nuwul has established successful relations with government departments and continues

to build relations with other agencies such as Northern Territories Department of Housing and Australian Quarantine and Inspection Services. Another dimension that speaks to Nuwul's legitimacy is its reputation in the media. Nuwul has enjoyed nationwide coverage from the Remote Indigenous Gardening Network, ABC radio programs and Gardening Australia television program each interested in the model Nuwul employs as an Indigenous social enterprise in a very remote part of Australia.

Discussion and Concluding Comments

“Profoundly disappointing” is how the Prime Minister (2015) described the report card on Indigenous disadvantage in the seventh Closing the Gap report (Australian Government 2015a) tabled in February 2015. Many of the key indicators, such as improving Indigenous employment and health, are stagnating or getting worse. The statistics reveal there has been no progress in halving the gap in Indigenous employment opportunities. The annual Closing the Gap report presents national averages and therefore does not take into account the localised nature of differences in culture, geography, and history for all Indigenous communities throughout Australia. But while Indigenous employment figures across Australia on average have worsened, Nuwul represents a local example of increased Indigenous economic participation through employment of Yolŋu and Indigenous enterprise development.

This article and the initiative it documents responds to Marcia Langton's (2015, 18) call to record examples of Indigenous success when she writes “the ‘community-controlled’ sector has a role to play ... their success should be noted – this is part of the future of Indigenous Australia”. The paper also responds to Diochon's (2013, 303) lament that there is a lack of systematic research on the effectiveness of social enterprise and therefore “neither outcomes nor the process of SE [social entrepreneurship] is well understood”. The results of this social audit provide compelling insights to an Indigenous social enterprise and measuring its effectiveness.

This study makes a timely contribution to the existing body of literature on social enterprise and performance measurement through its application of an integrated framework to measuring the performance of an Indigenous social enterprise. As Lee and Nowell (2015, 15) claim to “know almost nothing about the substantive value of adopting a more multidimensional approach”, this article provides important insights into the utility of such a framework for a small Indigenous social enterprise in remote northern Australia. It reveals the complexity of measuring effectiveness of the processes and outcomes of an Indigenous owned enterprise when there are so many elements to consider in a sensitive cultural environment. It suggests that an Indigenous social enterprise like Nuwul can indeed offer a solution for how to cut through the persisting pattern of disadvantage in Aboriginal communities. In the face of Andrew Forrest's (2014) *Creating Parity* report that gives the federal government license to implement stringent welfare reforms, Nuwul represents employment opportunities at a local community-based scale that could be key to its success for increasing economic participation on Yolŋu terms rather than the paternalistic measures being proposed in the Forrest report. This social audit demonstrates the measured success thus far of an Indigenous social enterprise to grow slowly and develop the employment and training

opportunities of Yolŋu in Yirrkala in the face of high Indigenous unemployment at the national level.

Zhang and Swanson (2014, 187) argue that social enterprises “must develop their capabilities in resource bricolage ... in order to achieve their goals in the long term”, where bricolage is the innovative application of scarce resources to meet a social mission. Nuwul has been quite effective in mobilizing its resource bricolage by building strong relationships with key local stakeholders that have allowed them to build their own capacity to operate as a successful Indigenous enterprise in the area of horticulture and environmental land care. This paper has demonstrated some clever innovations by the General Manager of Nuwul to successfully harness social capital in the local ecology of networks to be able to mobilise resources, and in the workforce flexibility that allows for staff to meet their cultural obligations. Indeed, it is this leadership that plays a critical role in effective social entrepreneurship (Zhang and Swanson, 2014). The role of leadership in Nuwul falls largely with the General Manager, which can be seen as both a strength and weakness for Nuwul. On the one hand, the GM is well attuned to the social reality of Indigenous poverty in remote Australia and is clearly working towards making a social contribution to Aboriginal employment. However, the reliance on the GM to conduct all administrative and managerial tasks is clearly the most exigent weakness, begging the question of how Nuwul will address succession planning and its long-term sustainability.

Another aspect of sustainability is the degree to which the activities have “contributed to the wellbeing of the intended beneficiaries and also have contributed to community wide goals” (Bagnoli and Megali 2011, 156). After conversations with a range of stakeholders, including local service providers, Nuwul Board members, staff and clients, it has become clear the activities undertaken by Nuwul are valued by the local community and are contributing to the national Closing the Gap goal of increased Indigenous employment. As Nuwul continues to increase employment and training opportunities for Yolŋu in northeast Arnhem Land, it improves the wellbeing of its staff and by extension their families. In this way Nuwul acts as a lever for behavioural change, where people begin to shift from the ‘sit down money’ mentality spoken of in Yirrkala to improved levels of economic participation.

This paper sought to operationalise Lee and Nowell’s multidimensional framework for the purposes of a pilot social audit of Nuwul, demonstrating that Indigenous entrepreneurial activities occurring outside the economic mainstream offer culturally safe and appropriate pathways to economic participation. This is perhaps especially significant in remote parts of Australia where Indigenous poverty persists, where few mainstream employment opportunities exist, and it is expected that Indigenous folk should uproot to find employment. “Social entrepreneurship increasingly is being viewed as a way of combating poverty and marginalization, with the pursuit of an entrepreneurial strategy being conceptually linked to effectiveness” (Diochon 2013, 302). Nuwul provides a convincing example of Indigenous business success in both financial and social terms and offers a potential pathway for socio-economic improvements in Indigenous communities in Australia.

In conclusion, though Nuwul represents a localised example of increased Indigenous economic participation, perhaps one of the greatest challenges it faces is the impact of a changing policy climate around Indigenous affairs. This paper demonstrates that the role of Indigenous social enterprise in remote areas represents an effective means of addressing disadvantage precisely because its emphasis is sustainable development for Indigenous communities (Zhang and Swanson 2014, 178). The measured effectiveness of Nuwul highlights the need for targeted policy support for Aboriginal enterprises and is supported by Zhang and Swanson (2014, 181) who argue that social entrepreneurship is far more likely to be successful in a supportive government policy environment. This study echoes Diochon's (2013, 303) observation of a critical need for government-initiated policies to encourage the formation of Indigenous "social enterprises that are entrepreneurial and innovative in their solutions to poverty and marginalization". Such policies should not only aid the establishment of Indigenous ventures but also facilitate their long-term growth and sustainability.

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