

**GREAT
walk their
talk with a \$30m
(self funded)
balance sheet
and no debt**



G R E A T

**Gulf Regional Economic
Aboriginal Trust**
Empowerment Through Business

‘Progress appears to be happening outside government, led by private and community initiatives. Assisting or enabling those private and community initiatives should be the focus of policy, along with establishing some basic prerequisite conditions for development.’ - QPC Report

Gulf Regional Economic Aboriginal Trust (GREAT) is one of Australia’s largest Aboriginal based social enterprises – working for purpose, not profit. It is one of a few delving into these communities and making a difference on the ground through economic development and independence with results that would leave even the most pessimistic person with a glimmer of hope.

Their main “purpose” within *profit for purpose* is to establish an enterprise culture. They have been achieving that by providing a complete loan service including business mentoring, advice, loans and coordination. The board of GREAT and Aboriginal Development Benefit Trust (ADBT) believe without a happy community and young people they are unlikely to grow many entrepreneurs, so they provide a range of grants for youth sport, leadership and education.

True to their word, to maintain their ability to help communities grow through economic development and participation; GREAT seeks innovative and entrepreneurial ways to generate revenue. They have made and will continue to make more business investments to maintain sustainability and its status as a true social enterprise, one which is independent of any financial contributions.

**How does GREAT know
this is the best approach?**

Because they walk their talk . . .

Chairperson Fred Pascoe, who is a proud Kurtijar man, Traditional Owner and a respected member of the Normanton community serving as Mayor of Carpentaria from 2009 to 2016, said nothing else has worked.

“If you want political independence, you need economic independence”, Fred said.

“A lot of the issues in the communities are a consequence of poor economic conditions and a lack of independence”

“Over the years we have learnt that this brings life changing results on the ground and at all levels.

“We have 30 years’ experience in the Gulf to know this does work”, Fred said.

The following information highlights more groundbreaking (*and working!*) examples from GREAT:

GREAT is currently involved in supermarkets, roadhouses, a major tourist attraction and an art gallery in Cairns, they own the Doomadgee Roadhouse which is for a community of 1,500 people providing them with groceries and fuel, they are in partnership with another community social enterprise BYNOE and collectively own Normanton Foodworks - the largest supermarket in the lower Gulf, and have also funded approximately 50 private businesses with Indigenous people from the Gulf, covering a range of things from earth moving, water truck, concreting, car hire and labour hire and etc.

Normanton Traders, Warehouse and Distribution Centre - No profit (share and care). Food security, pricing and supply.



Normanton Traders before it was decommissioned as a grocery store and the new Foodworks opened. The former Normanton Traders is now a storage and distribution hub.

The former Normanton Traders Grocery Store located at 29 Woodward St is now closed. The existing Normanton Traders site has been re-purposed as a retail warehouse / distribution hub for the entire Lower Gulf including the communities of Doomadgee, Mornington Island, Burketown, and Karumba - catering to numerous cattle properties.

Normanton Foodworks - Profit for purpose, leverage further development, small business, indigenous employment.

The Normanton Foodworks complex employs more than 90% indigenous people from the community. The assistant and two duty managers are all indigenous. Profits will be reinvested to develop other aspects of the store, i.e., bakery. Indigenous people will be encouraged to leverage small business opportunities, i.e., freight and deliveries. Profits will once again be applied to their purpose and growing their assets.



New Foodworks complex in Normanton. Opened in November 2022.

**Chairman
Fred Pascoe
opening the
new Foodworks
complex in
Normanton**



Ancient Journeys Art Gallery - Premise for good.

Ancient Journeys is a venue to assist in the development of Lower Gulf artists by using designs / artwork for prints, clothes, jewelry, and any other printable surfaces. While not profit driven, many artists derive a consistent income over a 12-month period. In the past it might have only been over a tourist season (4-5 months).



Located at 53- 57 Esplanade in Cairns City, GREAT invested more than \$1.2 million purchasing and re-fitting a shop and office. The premises fronts the Cairns Esplanade and is unusually large for an esplanade location at 172 square metres, plus there is a 32 square metre courtyard that backs onto the old Courthouse Hotel which the Cairns Regional Council has redeveloping into a gallery and as part of the arts precinct.

The shop works closely with BYNOE Arts, the Doomadgee Art Box and the Aboriginal and Mirndiyan Art Centre on Gununa or Mornington Island.



The Daintree Discovery Centre tourist attraction

- Profit for purpose.

The Daintree Discovery Centre generates more than half a million dollars per year which is applied to our purpose outlined in the Gulf Communities agreement.

The Daintree Discovery Centre is a multi-faceted venue featuring:

- Hologram Theatre opened May 2023, featuring Juan Walker, an Indigenous expert on flora and fauna in the Daintree region
- The Famous 23m Daintree Canopy Tower
- The 10m High Aerial Walkway
- Over 900m of Elevated Rainforest Boardwalks
- Interpretive Display Centre
- Beautiful Native Reptile and Fish Displays
- Audio Visual Theatres
- Self-Guided Audio Tours Included
- Take Home Colour Guide Book Included
- Optional Guided Group Tours
- Coffee Shop & Souvenir Shop

**Chairman Fred
Pascoe opening
the Daintree
Discovery Centre**



**The Doomadgee Roadhouse -
Profit for purpose, further
development, indigenous employment.**



The Doomadgee Roadhouse facilities include:

Since the roadhouse inception close to 15 years ago, ADBT / GREAT has used profits to continually improve facilities and added a number of business services including, but not limited to, a 30kwh solar system, 300sq m storage shed including a 30 sq metre walk-in freezer, expanded the managers accommodation from 3 rooms to 6 rooms, established a security control room, 12 high standard accommodation units, laundry facility, 60KVA generator, two staff accommodation units, 4 x 4WD hire vehicles, several freezer shipping containers, tyre repair facilities, bitumen the carpark and establishment of the Doomadgee Art Box for community use.

This investment in the roadhouse was more than \$2.5 million.

Indigenous employment:

The Roadhouse employs 70% indigenous people from the Doomadgee community.

Innovative ways to generate more profit for purpose.



Another entrepreneurial example to accelerate communities' investment in economic development, GREAT has taken an extensive look at the casino system in place with the Indians in America and their growth.

A successful format - For more than 25 years, the American Indian casino system has increased Tribal independence, created businesses and economic stability (separate to the casinos), reduced smoking and alcohol dependency, boosted school attendance, increased tourism, the list goes on.

Regulating the online gambling industry with a license would help to curb online illegal gambling websites and build communities with economic independence.

economic independence

To a point (like in America) where relying on gambling profit is no longer needed in a lot of cases. And, as shown in America where the system is utilised, the rate of gambling has decreased in the process.

**Watch ADBT
and RSL
Online
Proposal**



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FNbN28IsoCg>

It is envisaged that GREATs proposed / or any gaming license would be limited to social enterprises / charitable organisations within Australia and exclude commercial gaming companies. It would also keep leakage of more than \$2b lost to the Australian economy to illegal online casino sites in lawless parts of the world, primarily Asia. Profits from a license would help to create backbone community enriching projects - the mum & dad businesses, offering the sovereignty and self-respect that is needed as a foundation for any thriving community.

While this can be a hard concept to grasp, sometimes it takes out-of-the-box thinking to create real solutions, rather than continuing to hit a brick wall with unsuccessful tactics. This is exactly an example of solution driven thinking the Government seems to lack.

GREAT to date has pushed this concept to various federal ministers in meetings, including a meeting with the Treasurer. However, it has not been met with serious consideration.

Profit for Purpose

While GREAT is having huge economic development success and will continue to as a social enterprise (for purpose, not profit).

To make a larger impact on a national scale the government needs to take responsibility for their part, skin in the game, not *‘fund and run’*.

The issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are largely a consequence of government actions / inactions.

They need to discontinue the current narrative on a national scale that perpetuates the stereotype of the “free ride”, “we gave indigenous people millions of dollars” etc . . .

“Insinuating that it’s Aboriginal people’s fault when government funded what the government wanted and dictated how money was spent”

“For a Voice to be effective, the government needs to have ears.” - GREAT



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