

Advisory Board Meeting Communique

02 June 2022

The ninth meeting of the ACE Hub Advisory Board saw members updated on ACE Hub program activities including developments for the Circularity 2022 conference and an upcoming visit to Australia by Dutch circular economy expert Professor Jacqueline Cramer. Board member Craig North also invited two first nations leaders to help lead an engaging opening discussion on indigenous participation in the circular economy.

Updates on ACE Hub program activities for the Circularity 2022 conference included developments among the Organising, Steering and Award Conference Committees who are helping to shape various elements of the program. It was noted that overall progress for the conference is on track and that a few themes the Advisory Board has touched on in previous meetings will aim to be threaded into the program based on submissions. These include topics such as indigenous participation, education and procurement.

Professor Jacqueline Cramer's visit to Australia was mentioned to begin on June 25th with a range of stakeholder meetings being scheduled including RMIT, CSIRO, Hume City Council, and other government departments and industry groups. It was noted that the ACE Hub is playing a key role in developing the program and facilitating these meetings, and the Advisory Board agreed to provide further suggestions that would help maximise reach and impact.

The discussion on Indigenous Participation in the Circular Economy was kicked off by Advisory Board member Craig North, a descendent of the Bidjara people, who introduced two colleagues, Suzanne Thompson of [YACHATDAC](#) and Derek Walker of [Ngopalmudi](#). The two first nations leaders both presented their organisation's work and how they incorporate circular economy elements through indigenous knowledge and practices.

Notable highlights of the presentations included:

YACHATDAC

(Yumbangku Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and Tourism Development Aboriginal Corporation)

- An informative video shared on YACHATDAC's work in [Caring for Country](#).
- Through learning and sharing of indigenous culture, ceremonies and practices, we can start to understand the circular economy through an indigenous lens in Australia.
- YACHATDAC tries to ensure and share simple nature-based solutions to climate change that naturally involve circularity elements. It was noted that Craig North works with groups like YACHATDAC through his organisation Indigenous Impact to help create financial sustainability in such practices, which include:
 - Caring for Country Practices
 - Re-acquiring land
 - Carbon farming
 - Human induced regenerative farming practices
 - Fire burning

- Harvesting of Country Practices
 - Revegetation projects
 - Harvesting of seeds
 - Bush Foods Project
 - Medicinal purposes
- Guesting on Country (Tourism)

Ngopalmudi Aboriginal Corporation

- Ngopalmudi Aboriginal Corporation was formed in 2004 and aims to deliver environmental services and cultural activities to the community.
- From an early stage, the organisation understood that cultural character is connected to ecological character, and the decline in both has been greater than ever in the last 30 years. This started their thinking on how to care for country through a wider, more holistic lens, and in what ways this can be applied to reach broader communities across Australia.
- Ngopalmudi operates a number of business enterprises that offer environmental and social services including:
 - Selling water back into the environment (as part of the Murray Darling River Basin).
 - Growing and selling native species.
 - Managing a nursery and enhancing plant growth, including the use of aquaponics.
 - Wild harvesting Kippers to build a sustainable native foods enterprise.
 - Partnering with local 'YCA Recycling' to recycle hard and soft plastics.
 - Providing employment and development opportunities for the community.

Advisory Board members thanked Craig North and the two first nations leaders for their informative and impactful presentations and noted the following points among the discussion.

- There is a distinct and unique power in both the choice of words used and the storytelling they are used in that helps fill a gap in current engagement on circular economy and sustainability. It makes you feel connected, optimistic and understanding of where we are and where we need to go on our pathway to a circular and regenerative economy.
- There may be potential collaboration with Craig, Suzanne and Derek as part of the Circularity 2022 conference in both presentation and display of current indigenous practices.
- The systems thinking and holistic benefits of the two first nations leader's work were great examples of how a circular economy has been practiced for countless generations in Australia.

All members agreed that further discussion on the topic would be welcome in future meetings.

Find information on the [ACE Hub Advisory Board members and meeting summaries here.](#)