

Supporting the Indigenous circular economy



Procurement is one way Cleanaway is able to pursue its vision of full inclusion and participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in its operations. Supporting Indigenous businesses helps us to achieve this vision, outlined in our 'Innovate' Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2018–2020 and aligns with our priority Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of Reduced Inequalities.

For seven years, Cleanaway has been using the services of Indigenous waste-to-resource business Eather Group, which provides environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable solutions in the transport, waste and bulk materials industries, and is a leader in the development of a 'circular economy' in NSW large construction projects. The company, started by Peter and Sally-ann Eather in 2010, transports treated drilling mud for Cleanaway to be used in road and land projects, and also sources recycled soil for use in various processes at Cleanaway facilities.

"We have always valued our relationship with Cleanaway, as it fits with our purpose of achieving a circular economy," says Marketing Manager, Divinia Eather.

Eather Group's passion is supporting the local community, with the income it receives from providing local jobs for local people, sponsoring local events and clubs, offering free disaster relief, and engaging with other Indigenous businesses. Cleanaway spends more than \$500,000 a year with Eather Group, which has developed an 'incubation system' with up to 12 NSW-based Indigenous businesses and social enterprises supplying it with products and services from soil testing, transport, and labour hire, to plants, office furniture and uniforms.

Eather Group becomes involved in the early stages of projects, using decades of experience in selective mining to excavate, manage, and transport materials without contamination to be reused. For instance, it salvaged 200,000 tonnes of premium shale from a North Sydney construction project, redirecting it from landfill to a brickmaking facility, which will provide bricks to the project.

"With the support of Cleanaway as one of our key waste partners, we have worked together to treat and repurpose materials on private and government projects," Divinia says.

Eather Group's support for other local and Indigenous businesses and its pursuit of a circular economy are also consistent with our priority SDGs of Sustainable Cities and Communities, and Responsible Consumption and Production.

Eather Group works with the Cleanaway's Windsor branch, which is part of the Bulk Liquids Waste business unit and provides a range of services such as collection and treatment of industrial wash water, oily water, drilling muds and oil and bunker waste.

"Eather Group doesn't let us down. If they say they will get a truck here, they will get a truck here rain, hail or shine. I have been dealing with them for more than five years and their service doesn't fail," Windsor Branch Manager Ravi Maharaj says.

"We are proud to play our role in supporting indigenous businesses, which in turn helps to achieve our vision of full inclusion and participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our current and future operations and partnerships."

Ravi Maharaj
Windsor Branch Manager