



NATIONAL INDIGENOUS  
LAND AND SEA STRATEGY

# Bushfoods Factsheet

*This factsheet was drawn from the Bushfoods Discussion Paper which was informed by facilitated discussions with Joe Clarke (a local Arrernte man of Central Australia, from CentreFarm, Aboriginal Land Economic Development Agency, Alice Springs), in combination with a written contribution from Professor Henrietta Marie, AM (an Elder of the Gimuy Walubara clan of the Yidinji people).*

Interest in and demand for Indigenous bushfoods has been steadily growing over the last 20 years. Demand is outstripping supply. But in today's bushfoods market, Indigenous suppliers make up only a tiny percentage of growers, farm managers and exporters. They generate only a small proportion of Australia's bushfood products and therefore benefit from little of the available revenue.

Traditionally Australia's Indigenous people used an estimated 10,000 native species for food, fiber, shelter and for ceremonial purposes. Bushfoods are an integral part of cultural identity and connection to country. Every bushfood has its own creation story, its own song and dance and cultural knowledge that has been handed down by ancestors for thousands of years. Species with totemic significance are spiritual emblems for the person or clan for whom the species is a totem. They must be carefully and respectfully managed.

Today only a fraction of these species is being used by Indigenous people and the wider Australian food industry. So how do we bring ancient foods to market while respecting and maintaining cultural identity and connections? How do we support greater Indigenous influence and involvement in the bushfoods industry?

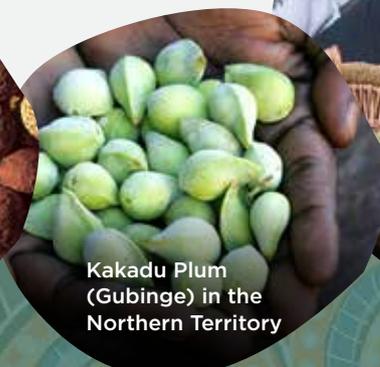
For Indigenous people, it's not just about money, it's about bushfood being an integral part of their cultural identity and connection to country.

## Challenges

- Land, finance, assets and/or business management capabilities may be lacking or difficult to access.
- Market knowledge and marketing skills to match the product to the purchaser may be lacking and/or difficult to access.
- Bushfood enterprises may not produce enough product to meet demand, attract investment and/or generate enough revenue to run the business.
- Significant distances between products and markets can affect product quality and therefore pricing.
- Various industry regulations and standards can create additional legal complexity for the business for example in food, nutraceutical, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals etc.
- Business models need to be developed that align with culture and in a way that protects traditional knowledge, access to land and sustainability.
- The bushfoods industry needs to be protected from misleading conduct by non-Indigenous companies.
- Cultural values, community obligations and family considerations need to be integrated into different business systems in culturally appropriate ways for the benefit of custodians.



Bush foods and seeds on display at Ayers Rock Resort cultural tour, NT.



Kakadu Plum (Gubinge) in the Northern Territory



Kakadu Plum Yoghurt launch, SA

## Opportunities

- There is significant unmet global demand for Indigenous-produced bushfoods.
- Investors and regulators are seeking more Indigenous leadership in the bushfoods industry.
- Increasingly, business cases may be supplemented by other income-generating opportunities e.g. carbon or biodiversity credits.
- Providing better protection for Indigenous ownership and rights through legal frameworks governing the industry e.g. Geographic Indications in Free Trade Agreements.
- There are unexplored opportunities to produce bushfoods for the high value cosmetic and nutraceutical markets.
- There is potential for Indigenous groups to collaborate throughout the bushfood value chain e.g. one group harvests, one group processes, one group sells.
- Technology is making it easier for remote growers to connect directly to markets and for buyers to have better knowledge of where their product is coming from.

## Tell Us What You Need

### How can the ILSC best support your participation in the bushfoods industry? Should we:

1. Provide information on where bushfoods opportunities exist and how to take advantage of those opportunities?
2. Help to build your business planning and capabilities? e.g. feasibility studies, capacity building, links to technical advisors and networks
3. Link you with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and groups to learn from each other? e.g. sharing ideas, lessons and business models that work, supporting conferences etc.
4. Actively support Indigenous-led organisations, networks, alliances and initiatives to have a greater voice in industry development and government?
5. Provide funding support for projects?
6. Other suggestions?

## Projects supported by the ILSC

Since 2016 the ILSC has provided \$1.2 million to support the establishment of the Northern Australia Aboriginal Kakadu Plum Alliance – a consortium of eight Aboriginal corporations based in the NT and WA – and its related activities to build the Kakadu Plum industry.

### The ILSC has also supported:

- the 2019 National Indigenous Bushfoods Symposium;
- Indigenous groups on a Kakadu Plum trade mission to Tokyo to progress Kakadu Plum yoghurt trade opportunities;
- the development of a bush-based health care products enterprise and cultural experiences enterprise to be established, managed and operated by Yiriman women, Kimberley, WA; and,
- capacity and capability development of the First Nations Bushfood and Botanical Alliances Australia representing Indigenous producers in the bushfoods industry.

To find out more about what we do please go to [www.ilsc.gov.au](http://www.ilsc.gov.au) and check out our Project Profiles.



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## Join The Conversation



**Come along** to one of our face-to-face sessions or join an online session. Visit our website to book in.



**Complete the on line survey.**



**Phone us on** 1800 818 490 for a confidential chat.



**Email** your submissions to [NILSS@ilsc.gov.au](mailto:NILSS@ilsc.gov.au) to share your thoughts.



**Get your full Information Pack:** visit [www.ilsc.gov.au](http://www.ilsc.gov.au), or email [NILSS@ilsc.gov.au](mailto:NILSS@ilsc.gov.au).



A feedback report summarising what we have heard from you and how we will use this important information will be available on the website.



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