



Katie Wood - Australia

Mission statement and relevance to SDGs

Unfortunately in today's society economic progress is largely seen as separate from and in opposition to social, cultural and environmental prosperity. And under our current dominant models of economic growth characterised by neo-liberalism and trickle-down economics this is true.

Under the current dominant paradigm of single-minded economic growth for growth's sake, wealth creation often remains stuck in the hands of few and is most commonly delivered through western-centric and environmentally degrading methods. This misses why we seek to grow our economies in the first place. That is, to improve the standard of living of all human beings across the globe.

Note: I believe in capitalism and the efficiency of the market, I just don't believe in trickle-down economics or entirely unregulated markets which fail to internalise key externalities that reduce our standard of living.

In my opinion, this is preventing us from achieving SDG 8 of inclusive, sustainable economic growth.

What we need is a shift from the paradigm of economic growth to economic progress, where economic development is necessarily socially equitable, culturally diverse and environmentally nourishing.

Australia's Indigenous people have always pursued economic development in this way. Indigenous environmental philosophy recognises the interrelatedness of the economy, society, culture and the environment. Within this philosophy, the nourishment of one of these realms, including the economy, concurrently nurtures each of the others and becomes stronger by doing so.

My solution aims to bring non-Indigenous and Indigenous economic and business leaders together with Indigenous community leaders to discuss ways we can reshape our dominant economic and business models such that they deliver economic progress that is necessarily socially equitable, culturally diverse and environmentally nourishing. Ultimately the aim is to develop and deliver projects that will concurrently deliver value for all four pillars of sustainability, rather than focusing on any one of these pillars at any given time.

The continued implementation and spread of such projects will hopefully serve to gradually shift our economic and business models away from pure economic growth and towards inclusive, sustainable economic progress. That is, these projects will work towards achieving SDG 8.

Core objectives

Five key objectives:

1. To develop a set of projects to be carried out by the private sector in partnership with Indigenous individuals and communities that embody the paradigm of economic progress
2. To build understanding, trust and reciprocity between stakeholders and contribute to repairing the relationship between Australia's Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples
3. To open up further employment and partnership opportunities for Indigenous Peoples
4. To empower Indigenous Peoples in the process of economic development, and eliminate the association of economic development with the destruction of traditional culture
5. To shift the dominant paradigm of economic development from growth to progress through the mainstreaming of such projects.

Theory of change/steps for implementation

Firstly the solution necessitates engaging Indigenous community members and leaders in a process of consultation to ensure their support and determine culturally appropriate processes moving forward.

If/when this is achieved the necessary stakeholders can be engaged:

- Indigenous community members and leaders, consultants and cultural liaisons
- As well as Indigenous and Non-Indigenous leaders and members of the business community.

Before meetings begin, non-Indigenous participants must undertake cultural awareness training, to ensure culturally appropriate protocols are followed.

The first meeting should determine:

- What are Indigenous environmental perspectives and how can they help shift the paradigm of economic growth to economic progress so that everyone is on the same page
- How the meetings will run to ensure a mutually beneficial and respectful process
- What are everyone's aims from the process
- A monitoring and evaluation process for meetings and projects going forward.

Further meetings will establish

- What do projects that embody the interrelatedness of the economy, society, culture and the environment look like
- Will determine which projects will be undertaken
- What resources are required to deliver the projects
- How to communicate these projects to the broader society so that we can engage more and more stakeholders, spread these projects and contribute to a wider shift in the paradigm of economic growth.

In the final stages

- The first round of projects will have been delivered
- Monitoring and evaluation reports will be delivered
- Learnings will be discussed to improve future processes and project performance for a potential second round of projects.

Operating systems

Five operating systems required to achieve initiative

1. System of consultation with Indigenous community members and leaders both before and during the development and delivery of the projects
2. Formalised system for meetings to ensure they are appropriately frequent, productive, efficient, respectful, culturally sensitive and allow all stakeholders to make a meaningful contribution
3. Formalised system for project development, planning, resource allocation and delivery
4. Monitoring, evaluation and feedback system to enable continued performance assessment throughout project delivery and at their completion
5. A system of broader societal engagement to ensure that the projects are widely known, encourage other stakeholder to be involved, spread the practice of such projects so that eventually this way of delivering economic development becomes entirely mainstream.

Barriers

Three key barriers to delivering this solution

1. Disinterest from the private sector

- To overcome this barrier the benefits to the private sector should be stressed
- This includes the fact that Indigenous Peoples are a key stakeholder group for a number of companies in Australia, therefore their involvement with this solution will help them maintain social licence to operate
- Also the creativity, innovation and high performance that comes from diverse and inclusive initiatives has been well documented and should be stressed to stakeholder from the private sector.

2. Disinterest from Indigenous community leaders

- Again, to overcome this barrier the benefits for community members and leaders should be stressed
- This is an opportunity to be at the heart of core decision making processes that affect the future of Australia, decision making processes that unfortunately our Indigenous peoples are often excluded from
- This is an opportunity to open up pathways for employment and economic independence of Indigenous peoples

- This is an opportunity to shift the development process of Australia away from methods that often ignore if not damage Traditional Indigenous culture

3. Mistrust from Indigenous community leaders

- A process of continued and iterative community consultation will help to build trust
- Cultural awareness training for the non-Indigenous stakeholders will also be crucial.

Regarding the next, immediate steps

Here I focus on my ability to facilitate the first three steps of this project

So firstly, to develop and deliver an Indigenous community consultation process and engage Indigenous stakeholders, I will leverage relationships I have built working with a number of Indigenous communities and individuals

- *Undergraduate degree in sustainability and Australian Indigenous studies*
- *Girringun Aboriginal Corporation, an Indigenous environmental resource manager organisation*
- *Engineers Without Borders and the Monash Sustainability Institute*
- *SEED, Australia's first Indigenous youth climate change network*

Secondly, to engage non-Indigenous stakeholders from the business community I will hopefully be able to leverage the relationships I have built working with Ernst & Young. For those of you who may not know, Ernst & Young is one of the world's leading consulting firms and has strong influence in the private sector.

Thirdly, I will leverage relationships I have built working with Ernst & Young's Indigenous sector practice to engage Indigenous cultural liaisons and consultants to deliver cultural awareness training.

I am reluctant to go into detail about the exact implementation of the stages beyond these first three steps. This is because the whole point of this solution is that it is developed in partnership with Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders, and can thus truly work towards achieving SDG 8 of inclusive, sustainable economic progress.