

### THIS WEEK YOU WILL...

- Explore different types of nature-based businesses.
- Choose one type of business, then brainstorm ideas for specific products.
- Draw a list with your team's top 5 business ideas and get ready to test them with customers.

## INTRODUCTION

As you know from the previous session, this year's ATSIAP Challenge will have you build a toolbox (a public repository of ideas and resources) to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entrepreneurs.

Have you wondered: "The internet is already full of resources for entrepreneurs, how could we possibly top that?". To which I reply: have you considered how much time and effort it would cost an entrepreneur to read through thousands of online resources? And then to summarise and organise the findings? Most entrepreneurs start on their own, perhaps as part of a small team, or as a family. They have very little time to juggle many tasks, and some might not have sufficient access to computers or internet. Chances are, they'll end up cutting their research short, possibly missing out on crucial information. On the other hand, it seems to me like a pack of super smart, high-school students would have a field day helping out with those tasks, don't you think? ATSIAP students eat research for breakfast. So, let's be the Research Team Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entrepreneurs around Australia need. Our toolbox will absolutely top the internet because it will:

- Talk specifically to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entrepreneurs
- Focus on businesses that can be run from regional/remote communities
- Care for the sustainability of our communities and natural environment
- Save endless hours and effort, with a top-notch quality output!

This week, we'll narrow our scope down to one type of nature-based business (for example, eco-tourism) and a few product options (e.g. outback survival skills student excursions). Ready?

## BEFORE WE START

- ☐ **Pick a facilitator.** This person will be responsible for keeping everyone running on schedule. **If you are the facilitator:** don't be shy to prompt others to get started or stop doing an activity, you're just doing what is best for the team; also, find a timer or stopwatch and have some practice setting 1- and 2-minute timers. **Other team members:** support your team by following the facilitator's cues to start and stop the various activities, and by respecting other members' turn to speak. Our facilitator will be: \_\_\_\_\_.
- ☐ **Be kind.** The ideation process works best if we hold back any judgement of others' ideas, or even our own! So, give yourself and others permission to be silly. You might find the more ideas you let out, the better they get!
- ☐ **Be present.** Some people feel uncomfortable coming up with ideas on the spot and sharing them with others. Some have too many ideas and won't stop talking. That's all ok. The main rule for this exercise, however, is to **be present**. That is: **speak** when it's your turn to speak, and **listen intently** to others when it's theirs.
- ☐ **Pen, paper, tape.** You'll need 4 or 5 blank sheets of papers each, something to write/draw, and something to stick paper to the walls (blue tack or masking tape). It's a good idea to watch Graham Shaw's video about sketching ideas first; it is available from the Challenge's website, under 'Week 2 - Additional Resources'.

Is the facilitator ready with that timer? Off you go!

# ACTIVITY 1 - THE NATURE OF THE BUSINESS

This ATSIAP Challenge focuses on a special kind of enterprise: nature-based businesses.

What is a nature-based business? Nature-based businesses are defined as “socioeconomic initiatives that make profit by marketing, promoting and enhancing biodiversity and ecosystem services”<sup>1</sup>. ‘Ecosystem services’ is a fancy term to refer to any benefits humans receive from nature. Take deserts, for example. Some of the ecosystem services derived from deserts include archeological features (e.g. fossils), places of cultural significance, unique landscapes and species, and unpolluted night skies, among others. A nature-based entrepreneur is someone who finds a way to make money from such services, while protecting or even enhancing the resource. In the desert example, a nature-based entrepreneur could earn money by setting up an astronomy tower in the middle of the desert to sell visitors an unforgettable star-gazing experience. This entrepreneur could *protect* the desert by building only low-impact visitor infrastructure, and even *enhance* it by mixing in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and stories about the stars. There are many different types of nature-based businesses:

## Raw or primary products:

- Sustainably grown food
- Sustainable or recycled materials

## Manufactured goods:

- Technology (water- or energy-saving, clean)
- Wild or native plant products (e.g. food, perfumes, medicine)
- Hand-made or eco-friendly items (fashion, homewares, office, etc.)
- Arts and crafts

## Services:

- Nature restoration/protection
- Nature- or experience-based tourism
- Equipment hire
- Blogging, content production
- etc.

## Time to work:

- ☐ Gather your team and ask each person to identify one or two business categories they like (e.g. sustainably grown food). **Facilitator: Allow 1 minute.**
- ☐ Considering their preferences, assign ONE category to each member.
- ☐ Team members will now work individually to complete the following activity. **Allow 8 to 10 minutes.**
- ☐ Ask team members to share their findings with the group. **1 minute per person.**

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from ‘Are Nature-Based Businesses Really Innovative? An Assessment of European Entrepreneurial Activities’, a report published in 2017 by Ecostar Natural Talents with funding from the European Commission. The report is available from the ATSIAP Challenge website and <https://www.ecostarhub.com/>

# Exploring business opportunities in

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(your assigned business category)

Three examples of **sustainable** business products in this category include: (Search online for examples of specific products, include those you like best)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

From what the websites say, the customers willing to pay for these products/services are mostly: (This may not be explicitly stated in the websites. If required, use your intellect to deduct or infer from the information that is available)

1. Individuals or Businesses?
2. Male, female, couples, families...?
3. Younger, older...?
4. People who live locally? Visitors? People who live overseas?

I believe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entrepreneurs could make products/services in this category even more innovative or unique by... (use your personal knowledge and imagination)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## ACTIVITY 2 - STAND-UP AND STORM

The following activity has been loosely adapted from the 'Design Sprint' method<sup>2</sup>.

### Prepare

- Each team member should:
  - Grab a blank piece of paper and something to write/draw (e.g. pen, marker). Now it's your turn to imagine potential nature-based products or services.
  - If possible, pick a place nearby where you'll feel comfortable engaging your creative brain. For some of us, creative thinking may involve talking aloud to ourselves, making faces, moving around, lying down... so find yourself a suitable thinking space.
- The goal is to write down as many ideas as you can, filling both sides of the paper if possible. Everything goes, and should be written down: good, bad, boring, crazy, original, unoriginal, simple, ambitious, even variations of the same idea, or variations to ideas you've heard earlier. Keep the ideas flowing, don't stop to judge them.
- Having said that, be specific. "Nature tourism" doesn't say much. Instead, try something like "night wildlife spotting for families". You get the idea.

### Storm

- It's time to brainstorm! **Facilitator: Allow 8 minutes.**

### Regroup

- At the end of the brainstorming, each person takes some time to review their ideas and pick their best 2. Circle or highlight them. **2 minutes.**
- Draw a 1-page sketch per idea. Check the example in the next page. **3 minutes.**

### Share

- Team members take turns to share their ideas, using their sketches and 1 sentence per idea. **Allow about 30 seconds per person.**
- Put up all posters on the wall using blue tack or masking tape. Wow together at your awesome gallery of ideas ;)

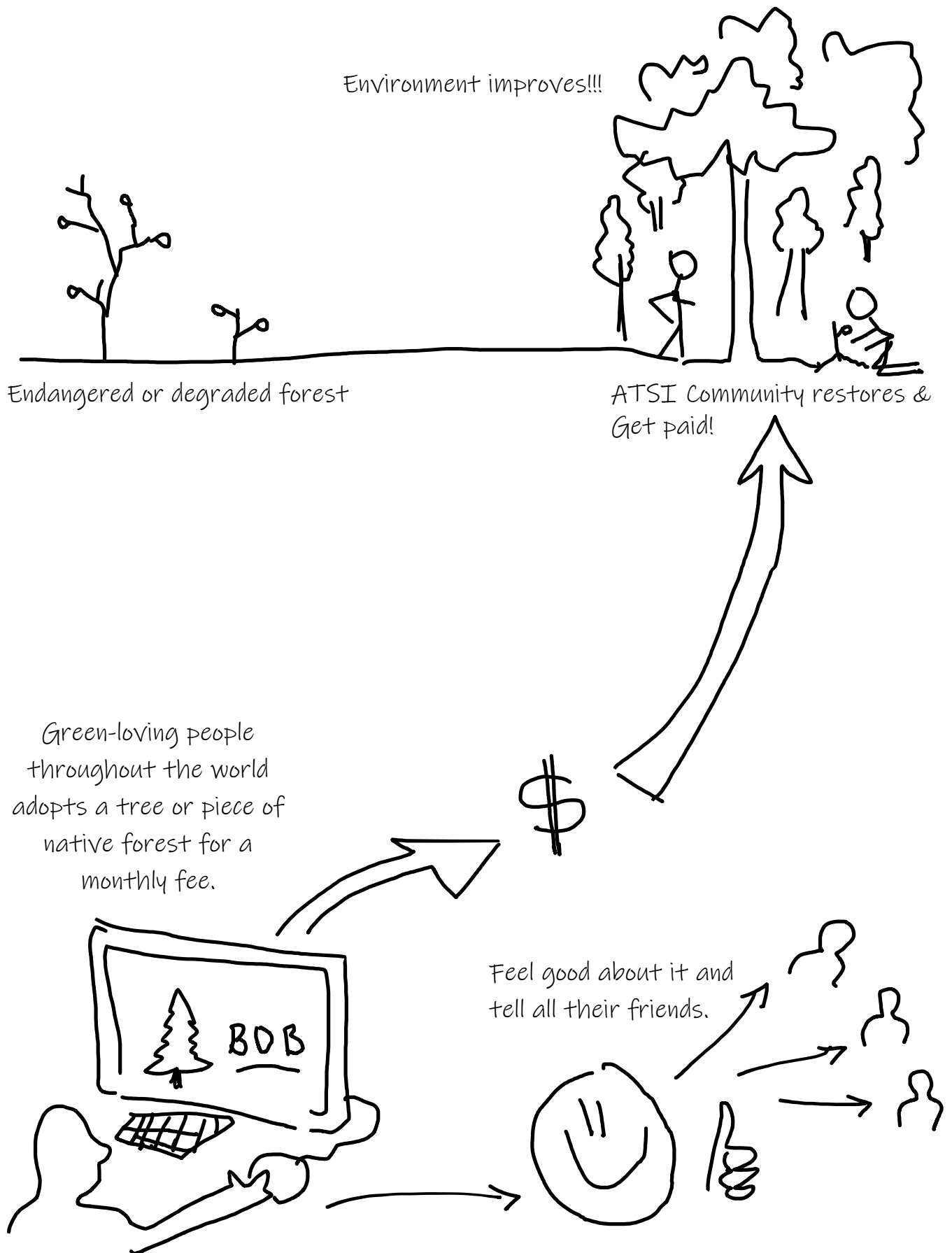
### Vote

- Now each person gets to vote for the ideas she/he liked best out of the lot.
- Each person gets 3 votes. You can put all your votes in a single box, or in different boxes, whatever you want. Also, it's ok to vote for your own idea. Cast a vote by drawing a star or smiley inside the poster. **2 minutes.**
- When the voting has concluded, count the votes to find the 2 or 3 most voted ideas. **1 minute.**

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<sup>2</sup> 'Design Sprint - A Practical Guidebook for Building Great Digital Products' (book) was written by Richard Banfield, Todd Lombardo and Trace Wax and published in 2016.

# Adopt-a-Forest



## ACTIVITY 3 - ALL MEMBERS CONTRIBUTE

The team has voted for their preferred ideas. Congratulations to the individuals who produced them! However, keep in mind these ideas are only a sketch, a starting point, and they will continue to evolve as you explore and learn about nature-based businesses. Also, these ideas are now the teams', and all members should feel free to contribute to them and help give them shape. Before we wrap up, the team gets to talk about the ideas and their own vision for them.

### Around the table

Team members take turns to talk about:

- What they like most about the selected ideas.
- Any suggestions for improvements or interesting variations (say whatever is in your mind, even if it sounds radical or eccentric, you never know where it could lead...). **Facilitator: allow 1 to 2 minutes per person.**
- Choose a volunteer to write brief notes of what team members say about each idea. Here is a suggested format.

Idea 1:
What we like about it:
Suggestions to improve it:

Idea 2:

What we like about it:

Suggestions to improve it:

Idea 3:

What we like about it:

Suggestions to improve it:



Well done! That was all for this session. Now go give that creative brain some rest. As the week progresses, if you have more thoughts for potential improvements or variations to the ideas, jot them down and bring them to share in the next group session.

## A BIT OF HOMEWORK

In preparation for the next session, each team member should get the name and contact details of 5 to 10 people. Ideally, you should select:

- Adults – as they are able to pay for products/services.
- People who match the description of the desired customer for the selected products/services (at least partially)
- Family relatives, friends and teachers are ok; however, you are better off broadening your reach a little. Try to include at least 3 people from outside your usual circles. Think neighbours, work colleagues of your friends/relatives, and so on. Kindly ask friends and family for a referral or introduction.
- Explain the purpose of your request by saying: “I’d like to ask a few questions about a business idea. Whether they think the product or service would be desirable or not, and how much they would pay for it. We’re not selling anything at this point, but simply looking for the opinions of real people to help us shape the product. It should take no longer than 5 minutes”.
- If they are keen to help you, get their full name and preferred method of contact (phone, email, in person).

Name	Age and occupation	Contact method