PILBARA SOLAR

POWERING AUSTRALIA

LAND MANAGEMENT & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

First Nations Business Resources

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Acknowledgement of Country

Powering Australia wishes to acknowledge the First Nations peoples of Australia and recognise their enduring connection to Country through culture, people, place and story. We honour the knowledge systems that have sustained these lands and waters for thousands of generations and recognise the vital role of First Nations leadership and self-determination in shaping a just and sustainable future. As Australia undergoes a significant clean energy and industrial transition, we acknowledge the importance of respectful partnership, cultural integrity, and shared purpose to realise the full opportunity of the clean energy transition.

Starting your business journey

First Nations businesses are stepping into one of the biggest economic shifts Australia has seen and the opportunity is real, immediate, and growing rapidly.

As the clean energy transition accelerates, there's a clear window to move early and position your business for sustained success. With the right insight and forward planning, you can secure a leading business role in projects that will shape regions and communities for decades to come.

It starts by pinpointing where you fit across renewable energy projects and the supply chains that support them. From there, it's about understanding what work is coming, what's required and when it's happening. The businesses that achieve sustained success are the ones preparing early, investing in the right equipment, forming strong partnerships and aligning with projects before they hit the ground.

This resource is built to help you do exactly that. It cuts through the noise to highlight real opportunities, break down the work involved, and give you a clear direction in beginning a sustainable business on Country.

> "The businesses that achieve sustained success are the ones preparing early, **investing in the right equipment, and aligning with projects before they hit the ground."**

Your practical guide

This resource cuts through the noise. Real opportunities. The work involved. A clear direction to build a sustainable business on Country.

Business opportunities in renewable energy recycling

What are land management and environmental services?

Land management and environmental services sit at the core of every successful renewable energy project and this is what ensures projects are delivered responsibly and leave a positive environmental legacy.

From early planning through to rehabilitation, these services protect land, water, ecosystems and communities while keeping projects compliant and on track. When grounded in local cultural knowledge by Traditional Owners, these services become even more valuable, bringing deeper insight, stronger outcomes and greater trust.

Opportunities span the full project lifecycle, from environmental surveys, approvals, monitoring, compliance, rehabilitation and restoration at the end of a project's life. Services can include everything from flora and fauna assessments, water and air quality monitoring, to weed and pest control and full site rehabilitation.

For businesses ready to step in, this is consistent, high value work which keeps projects accountable while caring for Country at every stage.

Why it matters

Land management and environmental services are essential to ensuring renewable energy projects have minimal impact on Country. These services help identify environmental risks early and ensure appropriate controls are implemented so projects comply with approval conditions and operate within cultural expectations.

Without effective land management and environmental services, projects can cause long-term damage that may be difficult or impossible to fully restore. Ultimately, these services ensure that disturbance is properly managed, environmental impacts are minimised and the site is restored at the conclusion of the project.

Renewable energy project life cycle

From idea to impact, business opportunities exist across all stages, both direct and indirect:

01

Development
(Years 0-4)
Site selection, planning, approvals, and securing funding

02

Construction
(Years 2-4)
Building and installing infrastructure

03

Operations & maintenance
(Years 4–6 onward)
Generating electricity and ongoing maintenance

04

Decommissioning
(Years 29–30)
Removing equipment and restoring the land

Identifying the opportunity and what's coming next

It is important to build relationships with project developers and Traditional Owners who may require land management and environmental services where renewable energy projects will be located. Both services are required from the beginning and throughout the renewable project lifecycle, so it is imperative to build those relationships as soon as possible.

A wave of renewable new projects across Australia are being developed and with it comes a surge of new business opportunities. In starting your own enterprise, it is essential to start by mapping future and current renewable generation projects across your region and engaging with the proponents (the project developer) to understand the need for your services. Quite often proponents will have information sessions for procurement opportunities or they may have a register on their website for business to lodge and expression of interest. You can find details of new projects with your local council or via web based public registers of renewable energy projects in each state and territory.

Key opportunities across each project phase include:

- Development: environmental desktop studies and site screening, field surveys, environmental studies and assessments, impact assessments, and preparation of approval documentation and reports.
- Construction: on-site environmental supervision, weed, pest and erosion control, site management and compliance monitoring, including progressive rehabilitation works.
- Operations & Maintenance: routine inspections, environmental monitoring, compliance and reporting, and vegetation and land management (including access tracks, easements, and buffer areas).
- Decommissioning & Rehabilitation: site rehabilitation, revegetation and land restoration works, environmental closure reporting, and delivery of land return for future land use. Excellent business opportunities exist for First Nations people, as strong on-Country knowledge, land-care skills, and environmental expertise can be utilised across all phases of renewable energy projects.

Identifying the opportunity and what's coming next

This resource provides a high-level overview of the tasks involved in land management and environmental services. These services are essential roles in renewable energy projects. Environmental and land management services are needed across every phase of a project, creating ongoing opportunities. Your business may provide some of these services or may seek to contract or partner with others to build capability.

Business segment	Description
Environmental consultancy (Surveys, assessments, monitoring, compliance auditing & reporting)	Provision of technical environmental advisory services across the full project lifecycle (pre-feasibility, approvals, construction, operations and decommissioning). Services include cultural knowledge assessments in conjunction with: • Flora and fauna surveys • Threatened species assessments • Baseline environmental studies • Impact assessments • Environmental management plans (EMP/CEMP/OEMP) • Regulatory approvals • Compliance monitoring • Environmental incident investigations • Environmental offsets • Preparation of statutory reports (Includes GIS analysis, data interpretation, stakeholder liaison, and coordination with heritage and planning consultants).
Environmental & land site management and rehabilitation	Development and implementation of land management strategies for disturbed or sensitive environments. Services include: • Contaminated land assessment and remediation planning • Soil quality testing • Erosion and sediment control planning • Revegetation design • Topsoil management • Environmental monitoring programs • Contractor oversight and preparation of rehabilitation completion reports These are delivered for renewable energy projects, mining operations, infrastructure corridors and pastoral lands.
Weed, pest & erosion control	Integrated land management services focused on reducing environmental risk and restoring ecological balance. Services Include: • Chemical and mechanical weed eradication • Targeted pest management (in compliance with biosecurity regulations) • Erosion mitigation (e.g. sediment fencing, drainage control • Slope stabilisation) • Monitoring of invasive species and implementation of biosecurity management plans. Services may support construction projects, rehabilitation sites, pastoral properties and conservation areas.
Site rehabilitation & restoration	Planning and delivery of ecological restoration works for post-construction, post-mining or degraded landscapes. Services include: • Landform reshaping • Topsoil redistribution • Native seed collection and propagation • Planting and direct seeding • Soil stabilisation • Drainage remediation • Habitat reconstruction • Long-term vegetation monitoring, and reporting against regulatory closure criteria. May include collaboration with Traditional Owners to incorporate cultural land management practices.
Environmental compliance auditing & reporting	Independent review and verification of environmental compliance against state and Commonwealth approvals, licence conditions, ISO 14001 systems, and ESG commitments. Services include: • Compliance audits • Gap analysis • Environmental risk assessments • Sustainability reporting (including NGER and ESG frameworks) • Internal system reviews • Contractor compliance inspections • Corrective action plans and board-level reporting. Also includes preparation of regulator-ready documentation and support during inspections or investigations.

Table 1: What's involved in Land Management and Environmental Services

Training and skills for success

Building a successful business starts with knowing what is required to deliver on the ground. That means understanding the skills and training required to operate a successful business. Below are examples of some of the qualifications, training and experience needed for land management and environmental services.

Environmental consultancy (surveys, assessments, monitoring, compliance auditing & reporting)

Training/qualifications needed:

- University or TAFE qualifications in environmental science, land in management, ecology, archaeology
- Additional Tickets: 4WD certification, Chainsaw ticket, First Aid, Working in remote areas training

Other helpful tools & knowledge to start the business

- Knowledge of approvals, reporting standards, field survey methods, strong documentation and compliance systems, on-Country knowledge

Environmental & land site management and rehabilitation

Training/qualifications needed:

- Certificate III in Conservation & Ecosystem services, site inductions, safety training, White Card.
- Additional Tickets: 4WD certification, Chainsaw ticket, First Aid, Working in remote areas training

Other helpful tools & knowledge to start the business

- Native seed collection & propagation
- Caring for Country
- Cultural knowledge, understanding approval conditions and construction practices

Weed, pest & erosion control

Training/qualifications needed:

- TAFE land and natural resource management, weed control certification: Chemical Spraying Licence (ACDC – WA)
- Biosecurity compliance training
- Pest management licence (if trapping/baiting services provided)
- Additional Tickets: 4WD certification, Chainsaw ticket, First Aid, Working in remote areas training

Other helpful tools & knowledge to start the business

- Caring for Country
- Cultural knowledge
- Local land knowledge
- Erosion control methods

Environmental compliance auditing & reporting

Training/qualifications needed:

- Qualifications in environmental science
- Land management, ecology, archaeology
- Compliance qualifications (ISO 14001 Lead Auditor certification)

Other helpful tools & knowledge to start the business

- Caring for Country
- Cultural knowledge
- Compliance systems and reporting capability (Council, Police, National Parks Officer)

Environmental compliance auditing & reporting

Training/qualifications needed:

- Qualifications in environmental science
- Land management, ecology, archaeology
- Compliance qualifications (ISO 14001 Lead Auditor certification)

Other helpful tools & knowledge to start the business

- Caring for Country
- Cultural knowledge
- Compliance systems and reporting capability (Council, Police, National Parks Officer)

Major equipment needed

The businesses that get ahead are the ones that prepare early, matching capability to opportunity and setting themselves up to deliver with confidence.

This is an indicative list of equipment you will need to start your business for the relevant “Business Activity”. Equipment costs for clean-technology businesses can vary significantly across Australia due to factors such as transport and freight distances, regional supply availability, import costs, and differences in local labour, installation, and compliance requirements.

The equipment list in this resource represents items typically needed but this may differ depending on region, availability and specific sector needs.

01

Land management and environmental services

Skid steers**

Tractors*

Mulchers*

Land leveller*

Water trucks*

Land roller*

Table 2: Entry-level equipment cost

Wind* Solar**

Key terms	Definitions
Approval Conditions	Requirements set by government regulators that a project must meet before, during and after construction. Environmental and land management businesses help projects remain compliant with these conditions throughout the project lifecycle.
Baseline Environmental Study	A survey carried out before a project begins to establish existing conditions of the environment – including flora, fauna, soil and water. Used as the benchmark to measure any future environmental impact.
Biosecurity	Measures taken to prevent the introduction or spread of invasive pests, weeds and diseases. Renewable energy projects in regional areas must comply with biosecurity regulations to protect local ecosystems and agricultural land.
CEMP (Construction Environmental Management Plan)	A formal document that sets out how environmental risks will be managed during the construction phase of a project. Includes controls for erosion, dust, noise, weed management and protection of sensitive areas.
Decommissioning	The process of safely shutting down and removing a renewable energy facility at the end of its operational life, followed by rehabilitation of the land to an agreed condition.
EMP (Environmental Management Plan)	A document that outlines how environmental impacts will be identified, monitored and managed across the full life of a project – from construction through to decommissioning.
Environmental Compliance Auditing	An independent review to verify that a project is operating within the conditions of its environmental approvals and licences. May be required by regulators or carried out internally as part of an ESG framework.
Environmental Offset	An action taken to compensate for unavoidable environmental damage caused by a project – for example, funding revegetation or habitat restoration in another location. Often a condition of project approval.
ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance)	A framework used by investors and companies to measure a project's environmental responsibility, community impact and organisational practices. Strong ESG performance is increasingly required to secure project finance.
Expression of Interest (EOI)	A formal submission made by a business to signal its interest in providing services for an upcoming project or contract. Often the first step before a full tender is issued by the project proponent.
Flora and Fauna Survey	A field-based assessment to identify plant and animal species present in a project area, including any threatened or protected species. A legal requirement for most renewable energy project approvals.
ISO 14001	An internationally recognised standard for environmental management systems. Businesses certified to ISO 14001 demonstrate that they have structured processes for managing environmental risk and improving performance.
NGER (National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting)	An Australian Government scheme requiring large facilities to report their greenhouse gas emissions and energy use. Environmental consultants assist project operators to meet their NGER reporting obligations.
Proponent	The company or organisation responsible for proposing, funding and delivering a renewable energy project. Also referred to as the project developer or project owner.
Rehabilitation	The process of restoring land disturbed by a project back to a stable, functional and ecologically appropriate condition – including reshaping the landform, replacing topsoil, and replanting native vegetation.
Revegetation	The replanting of native vegetation on disturbed land as part of a rehabilitation program. May involve direct seeding, propagation of local plant species and long-term monitoring of vegetation recovery.
Threatened Species	Plants or animals listed as vulnerable, endangered or critically endangered under state or Commonwealth legislation. Their presence in a project area triggers additional survey requirements and approval conditions.

Table 2: Key terms & definitions

Discover trusted guidance and support to turn your ideas into opportunities on Country

You don't have to start from scratch. A strong network of support is ready to help you turn ideas into real business outcomes.

WHERE TO START

- First Nations business Hubs and Chambers
- First Nations Business Directories
- Industry Networks
- Training Providers
- Government Business Support Programs

FINANCE AND BUSINESS PLANNING

- Indigenous Business Australia – finance and business planning support
- Australian Government Business Portal – online hub for business support and information
- Local Business Development Commission – provides business support (e.g. Small Business Development Corporation in WA)
- Local Investments Funding Grant – local grant investment
- Clean Energy Finance Corporation – clean-tech project investment
- Grant Connect – provides information about Australian grant opportunities
- Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility (NAIF) – supports First Nations communities with finance to build and take part in renewable energy and local infrastructure projects

NETWORKS AND PROCUREMENT

- NIAA Indigenous Procurement Policy – government tender opportunities
- Supply Nation – national procurement networks and business opportunities
- Local Aboriginal Business Directory – connects and promotes Aboriginal-owned businesses across Australia

REGULATION AND INNOVATION

- National and state level Circular Economy hub – recycling innovation and collaboration (e.g. Australian Circular Economy Hub, Circular Economy WA)
- State and National Environmental Regulation – for waste licensing and compliance requirements

PROJECT MAPPING

- RE-Alliance, 2025: 'Retirement age renewables: Delivering for Australian communities' – breakdown of when and where to look for decommissioning opportunities
- Large-scale solar farm map: reneweconomy.com.au/large-scale-solar-farm-map-of-australia/
- Large-scale wind farm map: reneweconomy.com.au/large-scale-wind-farm-map-of-australia/

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