

Indigenous Innovation Showcase

Salty Monkeys

Dennis Fay, a proud Torres Strait Islander man, is the founder of Salty Monkeys. He is a talented entrepreneur dedicated to preserving nature while empowering his community. What started as a group of friends documenting their boating and spearfishing adventures, has evolved into a First Nations-owned and operated business committed to ethical manufacturing and cultural preservation.

Salty Monkeys is an example of an innovative business idea based upon a circular economy model that strives to deliver social, economic and environmental impacts across the Torres Strait.

Off the back of the success and popularity of their social media content Salty Monkeys collaborated with local Indigenous artists to put their art onto shirts, hats and towels and accessories, ensuring that the artists were fairly paid and recognised for their work. They created a global adventure apparel that is high quality, made ethically, sourced from recycled materials and that is not contributing to debris in oceans.

As the demand grew, Salty Monkeys wanted to look at innovative ways to further help their community and environment by developing an innovative and ethical business model. While they started small, many opportunities presented themselves.



Dennis Fay with Eco Finz



Salty Monkeys shirts

“There is a combination of things that led to these opportunities. Some are driven from a moral or ethical stance, some are socially driven, others from a business and economic drive looking at the long term and embracing a circular economy.”
Dennis Fay, founder of Salty Monkeys

Business Model

1

Create

Salty Monkeys builds our audience through fun engaging content showcased through our online platform.

2

Product

We provide high quality, sustainable apparel and dive products with affordable and accessible prices that showcase the culture of the Torres Strait Islands.

3

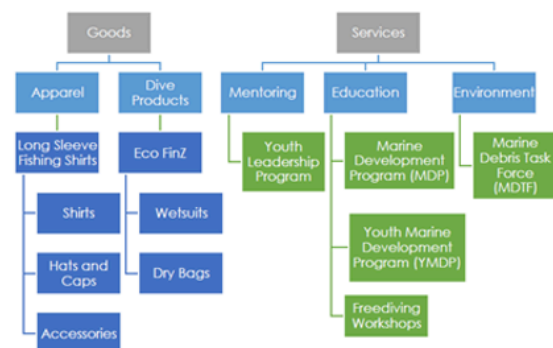
Innovate

Pioneering in sustainability, we continually innovate, embracing a circular economy approach to develop new products that echo responsibility and care.

4

Community

At our core lies a deep commitment to community upliftment. Our actions are woven with purpose, fostering mentorship, education and environmental stewardship within the Torres Strait Island communities.



Salty Monkeys’ is a solution driven business. They identify problems and look to find solutions by developing opportunities, activities and training that give back to the remote Torres Strait community.






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This philosophy has led them to innovate and to develop products and goods. Apart from their adventure apparel, they have developed the Eco FinZ that repurposes plastics in an innovative manufacturing process that reduces waste and supports the environment.

To further support First Nations artists and to generate local employment, they are developing dry bags and wet suits that are a blend of functionality and culture. Product affordability and value is highly important to Salty Monkey's, and they ensure their products are at a competitive price point.

Their business model includes mentoring, education, and the environment. Examples of key services they undertake include:

- Marine Debris Taskforce (MDTF). Salty Monkeys have visited 29 populated and unpopulated Islands/islets covering 12,000 km², and facilitated community beach clean ups on remote islands, removed ghost nets around Coconut Island and conducting a plastic bottle collection and sorting on Masig.
- Future Leaders Workshop made its debut in 2023 on Badu Island. Over a span of three days, youth were mentored, providing them with an opportunity to delve into the essentials of effective leadership. Attendees left with enhanced confidence to emerge as stronger leaders in the real world. In essence, the workshop embodied the principle of 'monkey see, monkey do.'
- Freediving Workshops held in the Torres Strait enabled Salty Monkey's to partner with experts in the field to ensure that participants receive the highest quality training with the objective to learn critical in-water rescue drills as well as learning basic freediving techniques while having fun.

	Economic Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global business development • increased economic development and capacity
	Environmental Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable production systems • Ethical standards and measures • Facilitates recycling • Removes plastics from the environment
	Community Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating employment • Supports First Nations local artists • Promotes leadership
	Cultural Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports local community • Supports and strengthens culture • Provides cultural education • Promotes Torres Strait art
	Social and Governance Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists community capacity building • Demonstrates solutions driven and ethical business practices

This Innovation Showcase was created by the Sustainable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Enterprise Program team, Destiny Dewis & Jen Mchugh in collaboration with Dennis Fay

Find out more: www.saltymonkeys.com.au

