

BRIDGEMAN

Where social conscious is synonymous with success

Social conscious is synonymous with success for Queensland metal manufacturing and construction company, Bridgeman. An Indigenous owned, operated and Supply Nation certified company, Bridgeman prides itself on its commitment to the community, as well as its highly experienced staff and leading-edge capability. The company works with Traditional Owners to engage with the community, and with Australian Government agencies, to improve employment and training outcomes for Indigenous People across Australia.

Bridgeman has been delivering end-to-end solutions in Queensland and across Australia for more than 25 years. Originally founded in 1997 as a metal manufacturing company, Bridgeman has transitioned into one of Australia's most trusted and respected multi-faceted solutions providers. With a presence in Brisbane, Townsville and Cairns, Bridgeman boasts an advanced manufacturing facility of over 2,700m², which is equipped with the latest machinery.

Having been an Executive Director of Bridgeman for over five years, Adam Sarota became an Owner and Managing Director of Bridgeman in April 2021. Adam is a former Socceroo, and a proud Traditional Owner and Yidinji man. Subsequently, Jade North joined Bridgeman as an Owner and Managing Partner. Jade is also a former Socceroo, Olympian, NAIDOC Sportsperson of the year, current Co-Chair of Football Australia's National Indigenous Advisory Group and a proud Indigenous man from Biripi Country.

Since the new ownership of the company commenced, Bridgeman has increased its staff numbers from 40 to 90 employees, including 20 apprentices and 11 Indigenous employees. The company has

also expanded into new areas of operation, with its entities now encompassing Bridgeman Manufacturing, Bridgeman Building Group, and Bridgeman Defence, Government and Infrastructure. In addition, sustainability, governance and environmental planning have been paramount through the creation of an executive team with significant and diverse experience that continues to drive Bridgeman's evolution.

According to Managing Director, Adam Sarota, "The last couple of years with COVID-19 have been difficult for everyone and, like many other manufacturing businesses, we've had to face a lot of new challenges. We've had to adapt and diversify into other areas, and we are really proud of the fact that we've managed to diversify our business into different sectors and doubled the business whilst attaining several ISO accreditations, and creating new social and Indigenous life changing initiatives."

"Our company operates across the primary areas of metal manufacturing solutions and construction. We are compliant with all relevant accreditations and ISO certified and have the ability to provide a multi-faceted range of solutions which deliver quality, cost effective, and



Adam Sarota and Jade North.

timely results to our clients, across sites of all sizes and scopes through a single point of contact."

"Bridgeman's expertise is unrivalled, whether it's manufacturing, engineering, drafting or fully customised design and manufacturing, including galvanising, powder-coating, anodising, and state-of-the-art laser cutting," said Adam.

"We work across all metals including, stainless steel, mild steel, aluminium, brass and copper. Bridgeman has in-house welding operators qualified to AS/NZS 1554.6 and AS/NZS 1554.1. Our team include Weld Australia qualified welding supervisors (AS1796 Cert 10), and an International Welding Specialist (IWS)."

"One of our key strengths is our capability to adapt and diversify when and where needed. From minor refurbishments to major construction projects, we pride ourselves on our capability and capacity to provide flexible solutions, over and above the scope requirements. Our priority is the health and safety of our people, our clients, contractors, and our community," said Adam.

INDIGENOUS OWNED AND OPERATED

As an Indigenous owned, operated and Supply Nation certified company, Bridgeman is committed to ensuring that they provide leadership, support, opportunity, and encouragement to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the broader community.

"We aim to demonstrate an increased Indigenous participation beyond traditional levels and provide more advanced roles for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through various initiatives," said Managing Partner, Jade North.

"Our goal is to set the benchmark for Indigenous participation and inspire the Indigenous business community in helping to break down stereotypes and unconscious bias. Bridgeman continuously liaises and works with Traditional Owners on a range of community engagement matters, including cultural protocols and to seek advice on recognition and acknowledgment of Traditional Owners within specific regions."

"We also work alongside other Australian Government Agencies, such as the Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DATSIP), to facilitate the alignment of businesses and employment and training outcomes for Indigenous Peoples. Bridgeman proudly has Indigenous Employment and Procurement First Policies to encourage greater social and economic benefits within the communities in which we work."

They have created the Bridgeman Yarning Circle, a unique Indigenous supply chain network that provides companies with genuine, pre-qualified, accredited and compliant Indigenous companies. Bridgeman's 'Multiplier' goal—designed to create meaningful change through tangible outcomes—is to convert every \$1 contracted to Bridgeman into \$3 within the Indigenous business community.

"We are working to create as many opportunities for Indigenous businesses within our supply chain as possible and working with our non-Indigenous supply chain partners to create more opportunities for Indigenous people and businesses within their supply chains. This process is creating real opportunities and genuine outcomes which is really pleasing but only the start for us," said Adam.

SOCIAL INITIATIVES ENHANCING THE LIVES OF QUEENSLANDERS

Bridgeman was recently awarded the 2022 Dickson Small Business of the Year Award by Hon Peter Dutton MP, in recognition of their Outstanding Service and Leadership for the Indigenous Community.' Some examples of Bridgeman's social initiatives that enhance the lives of Queenslanders are outlined below.

Futures Program

"Our Futures Program focuses on training and retaining Australian apprentices and trainees for the long term. It enables Bridgeman to create and develop our future workforce. Apprentices and trainees work alongside our qualified tradespeople who assist with on-the-job training and allows them the opportunity to build new skills in a hands-on learning environment. Working with our Bridgeman experts in their trades helps develop invaluable skills and experience in a varied environment," said Jade. As a result, Bridgeman currently employs 20 full-time apprentices across their operations.

One Mob Initiative

Bridgeman's One Mob Initiative (OMI) was developed to engage and provide positive educational and work experiences for Aboriginal and



Torres Strait Islander Peoples. OMI builds a pathway for those seeking to pursue tertiary education and employment, particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged Indigenous.

"We proudly support the recipients of this initiative with vocational and financial support to assist with this journey. We see the significance and draw on the skills, capability and unique life experiences that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Peoples can bring. We want the forefront of our business to drive inclusiveness and diversity. We currently employ 11 Indigenous full-time employees through our One Mob Initiative," said Jade.

Bridgeman also partners with companies on selected projects allowing them to share the journey and help improve the livelihood and future for Indigenous and underprivileged people.

Career Transition Program

"Bridgeman created our Career Transition Program to assist former professional athletes, service men and women and people with disabilities who are struggling to

transition into the mainstream workforce. We understand the unique challenges and hardships people face when transitioning from one career to another. The goal of the program is to build confidence and enhance skills and knowledge through practical experience, mentorship and support," said Jade.

Bridgeman currently employs three full-time employees via this program.

Bridging the Gap

This program targets Indigenous and Non-Indigenous high school students, providing real-life learning opportunities for students by mentoring and supporting them through the transition from high school to work life. "Bridging the Gap offers pathways post school and most importantly, provides kids with the inspiration and drive to transition from school to the real world. We assist in closing the gap of intergenerational welfare and long-term unemployment by providing support and mentoring by key people and senior members within our business to help students gain confidence, reach their full potential and achieve success in their chosen field," said Jade.

Women in Construction Pathway

Bridgeman is dedicated to providing and creating career opportunities to boost female participation within the construction industry.

"Our Women in Construction Pathway Program assists women in their professional growth and ongoing success in our company where we appreciate the distinctive qualities they can bring to Bridgeman and the construction industry. The pathway has been designed to provide more opportunities for females in front-line delivery roles where the program offers apprenticeships, tertiary education, and internal promotion opportunities along with trade-specific courses such as project management," said Jade.

Bridgeman employs three women via this pathway, with one studying project management.

Bridgeman also supports the following initiatives:

- Kickin' with a Cuz: created by Jade North, to teach young Indigenous and under privileged children a viable pathway to make better life choices
- Givit Foundation: Jade North is an active Indigenous Ambassador for Givit which provides support to Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander Peoples who are experiencing hardship
- Prime Minister's Veteran's Employment Program: providing employment opportunities to Veterans leaving the Australian Defence Force
- Cairns Safer Streets: Adam Sarota is an active Indigenous Ambassador encouraging young people and their families to take part in activities together



Bunk Beds Boost for Jobs, Safety and Offender Rehabilitation

Bridgeman has successfully manufactured and installed over 2,700 bunk beds and cell furniture in the last five years alone in live Correctional Centres including Lotus Glen, Townsville, Brisbane, Maryborough and Wolston Correctional Centres. Projects include Bridgeman's current 827 bunk bed and cell furniture rollout program for QBuild.

Working with Correctional Centres is deeply personal for Bridgeman's Owners Adam Sarota and Jade North. They are passionate about providing opportunities for those who are going through or facing hardship, particularly past offenders.

As a result, Bridgeman has developed a four step system that sees the company involved in prevention and rehabilitation of both past and current offenders.

Bridgeman's recent bunk bed and cell furniture project created 17 new full time employment positions of which 23.5% were Indigenous, 17.6% were past offenders and 23.5% were newly created apprenticeships.

Further Information

For further information about Bridgeman and their programs visit: bridgeman.com.au