

## Power to the (first) people: Indigenous communities and miners

Indigenous populations are increasing at a greater rate than the general population in Australia, New Zealand, United States and Canada.

Global Indigenous communities are increasingly economically independent. Miners and communities regard one another as equity partners rather than merely either side of a transaction or regulatory obligation.

### Canada

Canadian mining companies have identified that the quality of their relationship with Indigenous communities dictates their success in working with and on the land. This has led to a shift towards positive partnerships and greater engagement in mining projects. The strength of Canada's First Nations is reflected in the more than 250 Aboriginal Economic Development Corporations in Canada, which collectively hold several billions of dollars in assets.

### United States

Under the federal U.S. system, Native American people enjoy considerable local sovereignty and rights regarding mineral development on their land and often enter into lease and mineral agreements with mining companies. It is estimated that more than 600 000 Native Americans live within 10km of an abandoned hard-rock mine site, which has led to high exposures to metal contaminants such as arsenic, mercury, lead and uranium.

Australia still has considerable room for improvement in empowering Indigenous businesses when compared to Canada.

### New Zealand

New Zealand's Māori people have generally benefited from an empowered position in their relationship with the mining industry. Given renewed interest in the undersea mining opportunities off the coastlines of New Zealand, Māoris are looking to clarify their rights regarding marine resources.

### Australia

Australia's wealth and income has overwhelmingly been a product of mining its land, 36.5% of which is Aboriginal-owned<sup>4</sup>. In recent years, with the benefit of growing wealth in trusts, Land Use Agreements between mining companies and Indigenous communities have broadened substantively to involve compensation, protection of cultural sites, employment and training and infrastructure development.

### Latin America

Growing demand for Latin America's raw minerals has been accompanied by concern for mining in or near protected indigenous territories. 22.2 million acres have been set aside by Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela as protected areas in favour of voluntary isolation or initial contact<sup>5</sup>, however enforcement remains a concern.

Country (% Total, 2016)	Indigenous Population	Indigenous Business Contribution to GDP (%)
Canada	4.9%	1.5%
NZ	15.3%	2.7%
Australia	3.3%	0.1-0.4%

(Sources: Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business, NZ Treasury, PWC)

<sup>4</sup> Native title tribunal

<sup>5</sup> Inter-American Commission on Human Rights