



Black Coffee - Hosting Guide & FAQs



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What is Black Coffee?

Black Coffee is a grassroots Indigenous business networking event held in regions around Australia each month. Originating in Queensland, our goal is to provide a platform to connect micro- and small business owners around Australia. On the last Thursday of each month, Indigenous business owners and professionals, along with their supporters, get together and yarn (ie. network and build relationships).

Some regions are one-off events, bi-monthly, while others are held monthly. We also have occasional industry events such as the Big Sound Music industry event.

We invite you to join the movement.

Objectives

Black Coffee aims to:

- To build opportunities for Indigenous business owners to get together and build networks and relationships and local Indigenous business communities. .
- To encourage Indigenous organisations, and non-Indigenous businesses and governments to learn about how to procure from Indigenous businesses.
- To use digital technologies to build connections between Indigenous business owners.

When

- Most regions, though not all, will host their events on the last Thursday of each month (7.30am - 9.00am).
- All months except December and public holidays

How it started

- In 2014 Leesa Watego, volunteer SEQICC board member started hosting regular [Indigenous Business Networking](#) Coffee Mornings as a way to have a regular free event. These were held on each Friday around the South East Queensland.
- A few years later, TRIBN started coffee mornings. The name “Black Coffee” was coined by Thomas Holden.
- Keith Williams of TRIBN but living in South East Queensland suggested we join together. In 2017 we held our first co-event digitally using Zoom.
- Currently, officially Black Coffee is auspiced by SEQICC and TRIBN jointly
- No funding is received.
- Iscariot Media powers the administration of the Black Coffee nationally.

From the outset, my vision has been that wherever you are on this continent, on the last Thursday of the month you can connect with other Indigenous business owners. People who understand the journey you're on.

Leesa Watego

Who to contact for information:

Registering an event	Lisa-Marie Tandy Communications Assistant, Iscariot Media admin@blackcoffee.net.au (Note: Lisa-Marie is a part-time worker)	
Yarn about how to start an event, what's involved	Leesa Watego (Brisbane-based) Co-founder and National Coordinator leesa@iscariotmedia.com	
	Thomas Holden, (Townsville-based) Co-founder ceo@activateone.com.au	
	Keith Williams (Brisbane-based) Co-founder keith@willcogroup.com.au	
Links	Website	www.blackcoffee.net.au
	Facebook	www.facebook.com/blackcoffeeindig
	Twitter	twitter.com/BlackCoffee_AU
	Instagram	www.instagram.com/blackcoffeeau/
	Newsletter subscription form	http://eepurl.com/dzRbHv
	LinkedIn Page	www.linkedin.com/company/black-coffee-indigenous-business-network/

Please note:

- Black Coffee is a volunteer activity so may take time to get back to queries and questions. Please read this document for clarification.

Current Regions (as at 2 March 2020)

Note: Not all regions are held every month

1. South East Queensland - Brisbane (Central)
2. South East Queensland - Brisbane (South) Eight Mile Plains
3. South East Queensland - Logan
4. South East Queensland - Moreton Shire
5. South East Queensland - Gold Coast
6. South East Queensland - Ipswich
7. South East Queensland - Sunshine Coast (North) - Eumundi
8. South East Queensland - Sunshine Coast (Sth) - Caloundra
9. Far North Queensland - Weipa
10. Far North Queensland - Yarrabah
11. Far North Queensland - Cairns
12. North Queensland - Mt Isa
13. North Queensland - Townsville
14. North Queensland - Thuringowa
15. North Queensland - Whitsunday
16. North Queensland - Bowen
17. North Queensland - Mackay
18. Central Queensland - Fraser Coast
19. Central Queensland - Bundaberg
20. South West Queensland - Toowoomba
21. South Australia - Adelaide
22. Victoria - Ballarat
23. ACT - Canberra
24. Northern Territory - Darwin
25. Northern Territory - Nhulunbuy
26. New South Wales - Dubbo/Wellington
27. New South Wales - Hunter/Central Coast
28. Western Australia - Midland Perth
29. Western Australia - Perth
30. New South Wales - Sydney
31. New South Wales - Sydney (Eastern Suburbs)
32. New South Wales - Tamworth
33. New South Wales - Wagga Wagga

How to start a Black Coffee in your region

- We ask that you take on the coordinating role in your region.
- This is a volunteer role.
- It means you're responsible for finding a venue and to help attract interest.
- You will become known as the face of Black Coffee in your region.
- Find a local cafe, preferably with good parking, let us know, and we'll post your event.
- The cafe doesn't need to be an Indigenous owned cafe.

Do we need a permanent venue?

- Some regions (eg. Townsville and Sunshine Coast) have a regular venue to host their events, while others rotate events in different cafes.
- You might build a relationship with a particular cafe or venue who might like to become a regular venue.
- **We DO NOT encourage individual business owners to host events in their own business premises.**
- Black Coffee will always be free to attend - with attendees being able to purchase (from the local cafe) a coffee or a full-breakfast.

Building a Black Coffee team

- Like most volunteer activities, organising can take time away from your business and personal life.
- We encourage Region Coordinators to build a team of helpers to manage the load.

Is Black Coffee free?

- All Black Coffee events are free of cost to attend. Participants are to purchase their own coffee and meals.
- Finding a cafe where attendees can just buy themselves a coffee makes it affordable.
- Permanent venues may wish to establish a Black Coffee breakfast price.

The work of the Region Coordinator

Before the event:

- Locate and confirm with venue (assume a minimum of 10 seats in a single table formation to be reserved)
- Ensure the correct physical address is sent to admin@blackcoffee.net.au so the event can be published on the Facebook Page.
- Your event will be published as a Facebook event which you can share with all your networks.

During the event:

- Greet all your attendees.
- Be fabulous.
- Take photos of If possible, take images of the event (smart phone images are appropriate) and make these available to share across media networks afterwards.
- If you send us a group of images, we will create an album on the Facebook page for your region.

After the event:

- Send admin@blackcoffee.net.au an email with your attendance numbers
- Start planning for the next month.

An annual signature event

As your region grows, you may wish to hold an annual Signature Event. Signature Events take resources to organise therefore we encourage regions to plan for only 1 or 2 per year (maximum). Different states have business support opportunities. For example, Queensland has Queensland Small Business Month funding which could help fund an event in May. We do not support signature events which will charge an entry fee to attendees.



Gold Coast Black Coffee celebrating Indigenous Business Month 2019

Toowoomba Black Coffee hosting a trip to a excursion to a traditional rock formation and cultural knowledge presentation by local Indigenous-run knowledge centre. 2019.

Reminder: Black Coffee is about networking and connection. If you want to have a major event that you need to charge for attendance, don't make it a Black Coffee, but rather make it an event that is an initiative of your own business. You can advertise your personal business events in the Black Coffee newsletter.

Hosting a joint/combined event

Some regions are physically located close to each other so occasional joint/combined events can be worthwhile. These can be held a couple of times each year. You may like to host signature events as combined events.

The admin team are happy to assist you to coordinate events, but again, we are volunteers as well so our assistance is limited. Just be sure to get your dates and venues in before the cut-off dates.

Communications Calendar (Updated March 2020)

In 2020, we are trialling a more structured communications schedule. As Black Coffee national coordination is fully self-funded by Iscariot Media, streamlining this will help us to continue to deliver and grow.

Approximate time of the month	Activity	Who
1st Monday of the month	Reminder email to all Region Coordinators to ' Get Your Dates In '	Black Coffee Admin
1st Wednesday	Black Coffee Admin Team sends a general " How Deadly was last month " newsletter to everyone with previous month's round-up and updated statistics for the month and year.	Black Coffee Admin
1st Friday	Deadline for monthly events if they're to be included in the newsletter.	Region Coordinators
2nd Monday	Automated email to co-ordinators with a reminder for dates.	Black Coffee Admin
3rd Monday	General newsletter promoting the upcoming Black Coffees across Australia.	Black Coffee Admin
3rd Friday	BC Admin send to Conversation Starters Tip Sheet to all Region Coordinators	
4th Monday	Social media posts to be shared through our networks	Everyone
4th Thursday	Black Coffee!!	Black Coffee Admin
4th Friday	Send attendance numbers to admin@blackcoffee.net.au	Regional Coordinators

Social media features -

- regular posts about Black Coffee events from around Australia
- New monthly business tips posts
- Our events

Future communication ideas

- The most read Black Coffee newsletters are the ones where we can share a story about a Black Coffee.
- If you would like a story about one of your businesses, business activities in your region, your Black Coffee, please send an image and 200 words to admin@blackcoffee.net.au.
- These stories will go on the Black Coffee website when it's ready to go live.

Monthly themes and Conversation starters

In 2020 we are going to trial creating Conversation Starters for all regions. These Conversation Starters will be developed around monthly themes, and are designed to provide basic information about a range of topics that businesses face. BC Admin will send the monthly Conversation Starter to each Region Coordinator. Region Coordinators are free to use these tools if they choose to.

Our themes for each month are:

March	Marketing
April	Social Media
May	Web Accessibility
June	Finance
July	Procurement
August	Legal
September	Digital Readiness
October	Indigenous Business Month
November	Community Engagement
December	Tips for coping with the holidays

Sponsorship

Black Coffee is free for people to attend, but it's not free to run. Iscariot Media incurs a range of costs in the monthly administration of this event. If you would like to support Black Coffee to grow, we'd love to hear from you.

We have a number of potential sponsorship places, including

- Monthly newsletter
- Monthly Conversation starters
- Regular Social Media channels.

If you're interested, email us at admin@blackcoffee.net.au

Frequently Asked Questions

How will the Black Coffee organisers help promote your event?

- It can be disheartening when only 1 or 2 people turn up to your much anticipated event, but it does happen.
- We are only a small team but we will promote your event by posting on all our social media pages, and adding new contacts to our mailing lists, and talking-up Black Coffee wherever possible.
- In some regions it will take time for your Black Coffee to 'take off'. Patience and resilience are required in these instances.
- We can only promote Black Coffee events which are listed on the Black Coffee Facebook page and have followed the proper registration process.

How can I help promote Black Coffee on social media?

- Everyone can help promote Black Coffee on social media by having professional social media accounts and by using the right hashtag.
- We currently use **#BlackCoffeeAU**.
- We can also help to promote other regions by promoting those Twitter accounts on ours. Use **#BlackCoffeeAU** and **#IndigenousBusiness** on Twitter and Instagram.

But I'm not on Facebook, how do I find out about Black Coffee?

- We are gradually building the non-Facebook communications via a newsletter.
- We aim to send out the list of upcoming events during the second week of each month. Hopefully all month events will be listed.
- Region Coordinators who get information to us quickly at the start of the month will have their events included.
- People can subscribe to this list: <http://eepurl.com/dzRbHv>

When will we connect via Zoom?

- One of the original goals of having a Black Coffee event in multiple locations was to video conference together. This is still a goal that is occasionally hampered by technology limitations. To prepare for this, you should aim to have a laptop, mobile internet, video camera ready.
- **Note:** Unfortunately this initiative hasn't been as successful as we'd like, due to internet difficulties. We will continue to pursue this feature over time.

Can we live-stream off the Facebook page?

- Yes.
- If you would like to Livestream from your Black Coffee, we can coordinate times to do this. It might look like: 7.30am - 7.45 Townsville and 7.45am - 8.00am SEQ: Moreton
- You will need to already have access to the Facebook page and have a smartphone that can handle Facebook Live.
- Contact BC Admin so we can work out the logistics.

Does it have to be the last Thursday of the month from 7.30 - 9.00am?

- The original idea of holding Black Coffee on the same day was so that we could all Zoom together.
- The time (7.30 - 9.00am) is designed to allow those workers and business owners to do their networking before the work day starts.
- That said, if your region feels it more appropriate to host another day or another time, that's perfectly fine.
- Just let us know so that we can properly prepare and promote your event.

I'm the Region Coordinator and I can't make it in the morning because of a family emergency. What should I do?

There's two ways to approach this:

1. If we can train our community to use Twitter or Facebook, and have them used to checking Twitter and Facebook for updates) then we can notify them that you won't be able to make it.
 2. If possible, appoint a Region Coordinator and Assistant Region Coordinators to help. Many hands make light work.
- You also may not be able to make an event because you're out of town, having a few helpers will free you up to build your business.

How do I approach my local cafe?

- Most events have no more than 10 attendees so are able to be catered for by most cafes.
- However, at the end of this document, we've attached an email that has been successful in approaching cafes. Please feel free to copy, change the names where appropriate and send them to your local cafe.

Do I need to attend meetings to be a Black Coffee Region Coordinator?

- We have occasional meetings using Zoom.
- Most of our communication is through admin@blackcoffee.net.au

Making the most of your hosting experience

Black Coffee provides you with an opportunity to showcase your business and/or organisation. How you use this opportunity is up to you. We have some ideas you might like to try:

- Having your event booked in advance allows us to share it repeatedly in the lead up to your event
- Providing the Black Coffee team with attractive images to showcase the venue
- Retweeting and sharing the Black Coffee invitation through your networks
- Bring some marketing materials, including flyers and business cards
- Work with your venue, can you secure discounts for your guests?
- On the day, "work" the room, get to know everyone - it's your networking experience, take advantage of it.
- After the breakfast, send out an email to everyone who attended (and whose business cards you were given), and tell them more about your business and if they'd like to connect with you via your newsletter, LinkedIn profile, Facebook or Twitter.

We do not support individual Region Coordinators to state on their self-generated collateral "This Black Coffee was sponsored by <your business name>".

Do you need to be an Indigenous business owner to attend?

- Every region is different and the types of people who attend are different.
- While we encourage everyone in the Indigenous business sector to attend, the focus SHOULD be Indigenous business owners.
- Be careful to manage the attendance of "corporates" over individual business owners.
- Black Coffee is an event aimed at Indigenous business owners, Indigenous professionals and those who support Indigenous business.

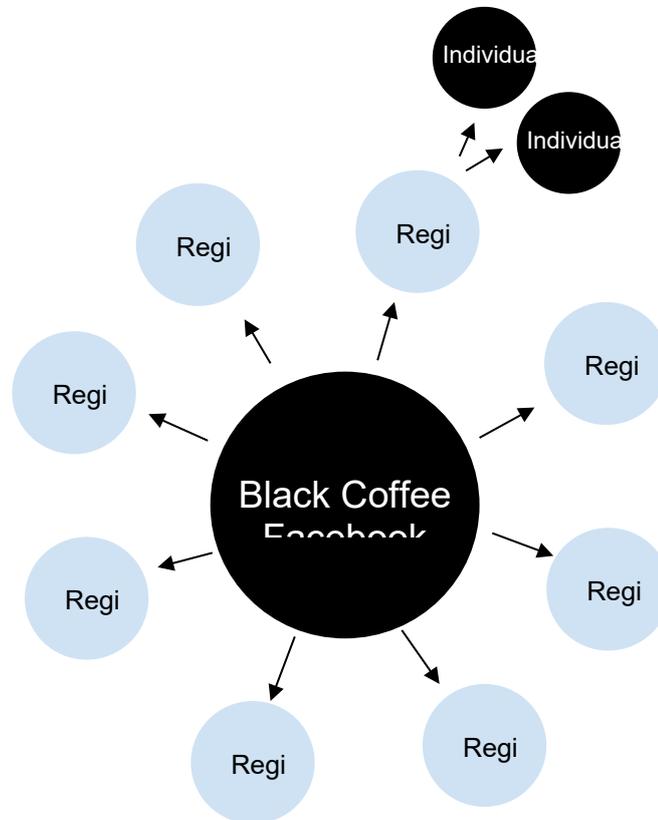
Let us write about you and your peeps

- We would love to write stories about our members and their new products or initiatives.
- Every post we write is shared across all our channels, repeatedly over time.
- Help us to feature your work and business, by providing us with all the information, including images to write an interesting story/feature article.

- We can publish stories on www.seqicc.com.au

Can I make my own Black Coffee Facebook page?

- No.
- At this stage, during this growth phase, we are asking people to use the one channel - the official Black Coffee Facebook page to promote all events.
- You can share the event through your own networks.



All official Black Coffee events are listed under Events on the Black Coffee Facebook page. That event is then shared on personal and organisational pages.

Branding - I want to use Black Coffee to promote my business

- This is a topic that has raised a lot of discussion.
- Black Coffee is not trade-marked as we want to encourage as many people as possible to establish events across the country (the power of numbers).
- However, there is a protocol and we ask that all new regions respect the origins and objectives of this initiative.
- You will note that there are no individual logos on the Black Coffee promotional material (including that of the founders). It is expected that at this point all Region Coordinators are volunteering their time for the betterment of the Indigenous business sector.
- As a result,
 - all promotional materials will be created by the Black Coffee Organisers.
 - all Black Coffee events will be created by the Black Coffee Facebook page.
- **DO NOT create collateral that says “This Black Coffee was sponsored by <your business name>”.**
- If you would like to promote your business through official channels, we ask you to look at the Black Coffee Newsletter and the new Conversation Starters as a sponsorship opportunity.

How can I promote my involvement?

- You can promote Black Coffee on your own business page, using language such as: *“We were honoured to be part of this month’s Black Coffee event in Cairns”*
- Add Black Coffee Region Coordinator (dates) to your LinkedIn profile and follow the Black Coffee LinkedIn Company page.

Can I charge an entrance fee for Black Coffee?

- No.
- **Black Coffee is free. Always.**
- If you want to leverage the networks you have created through Black Coffee to host your own event under your personal business name, then you can charge an entry fee.
- You can also advertise your event via the Black Coffee Newsletter and (the new) Conversation Starters)

I’m travelling this month, can I go to another Black Coffee?

- Yes. Absolutely.
- We actively encourage people to go to as many Black Coffee events around Australia as you can.
- Because they’re (mostly) all held on the last Thursday of the month, wherever you are you can connect with Indigenous business.

How much time do I put in each month as Region Coordinator?

- Great question. The amount of time you will put in will depend on you and your region.
- Some Region Coordinators just find a venue, confirm the date and time and email us. That’s it.
- Other Region Coordinators look for potential partners, invite the local Mayor, plan signature events.
- It’s much easier to go big if your business is of a particular type and if you have managed to build a team around you.

The link between Black Coffee and our Chambers and networks.

There is no formal link between Black Coffee and the chambers (in particular SEQICC and TRIBN) except the founders were board members. There is however a clear link between growing Black Coffee and supporting the growth and development of the Indigenous business sector.

The South East Queensland Indigenous Chamber of Commerce (SEQICC) has been operating for over 10 years, and has four core goals

1. Advocacy of Indigenous business
2. Fostering Trade
3. Building Capability
4. Generating wealth.

TRIBN (Townsville Region Indigenous Business Networks) has similar goals. We're committed to supporting other regions to activate Indigenous businesses to organise. Separately Indigenous businesses will struggle to have their voices heard, whereas as an organised sector we can support our sector together.

Our regional chambers are part of a broader Indigenous Business Sector that is growing.

Overview of the national chamber & network landscape

National



State



Regional

**Sunshine Coast
Indigenous
Chamber of
Commerce**
(chapter of SEQICC)



CRIBN
(to be
incorporated)

**Stradbroke Is
Indigenous
Chamber of
Commerce**
(emerging)

Resources

A sample letter to a cafe

(Please feel free to copy, change the names where appropriate and send to your local cafe)

Dear

I'm writing to you as a <representative/member> of the South East Queensland Indigenous Chamber of Commerce / Townsville Regional Indigenous Network / Black Coffee. I live in <insert suburb/area>, and your cafe is one I frequent.

We are seeking local venues to hold informal coffee mornings for our members across <Brisbane and South East Queensland (SEQ)>. The aim of the events is to provide our members with an opportunity to network with other businesses. The networking events would be non-RSVP'able and there would be no cover charge.

I am wondering if you would be open to us holding one of these mornings at your venue. We have over 100 members, and while most of those people are in SEQ, not all would attend. I envisage that around 10 - 15 members may attend at the outset.

If possible, we ask that a small section be reserved for our group (estimated up to 10 people), but if possible, as well as, if possible a sign (something to indicate that "we are here").

Please let me know if this is okay. I was thinking of organising the first one for Friday <insert date> (7.30 - 10am).

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Kindest regards
<insert name>