

Indigenous Advisory Committee Bulletin Meeting 43

The Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC) held its 43rd meeting on 23 March 2022 via videoconference.

Regional Planning Framework

The Australian Government has recently announced \$62.3 million to deliver up to 10 regional plans in priority development regions. The department (Priority Reform Delivery Section) updated the IAC about the development of the regional planning framework. Thinkplace consultants have held workshops with government, industry, community groups and technical experts to support the development of the framework. The IAC will provide advice on the framework.

Marine Parks

The department (Marine and Island Parks Branch) updated the IAC on the progress toward delivering the Indigenous engagement program in Australia's marine parks, including the announcement of two new parks situated in the Indian Ocean (Christmas Island Marine Park and Cocos (Keeling) Marine Park). In addition, foundation work is underway to build Traditional Owner relationships and Indigenous marine science capability, especially in Marine Parks and adjacent areas, with four partnerships in place.

Parks Australia has also established a partnership with the Australian Institute of Marine Science. It is pursuing through this partnership projects to engage Indigenous rangers and Traditional Owners in marine science. Several projects being delivered through this partnership have supported Indigenous rangers and Traditional Owners to engage as partners, through co-design, in marine science projects that enable Indigenous rangers to participate in marine science.

Through the Our Marine Parks Grants program, Parks Australia also supports Indigenous Corporations to engage in marine science collaborations and develop Sea Country Plans.

Modernisation of Indigenous Heritage

The department (Environment Protection Reform Division) provided an update on the Modernisation of Indigenous Heritage. In November 2021, Minister Ley signed a partnership agreement with the First Nations Heritage Protection Alliance to partner in a national engagement process and provide options for the government to consider. Tranche 1 of the national engagement process started on 16 March 2022. The engagement process will seek views on the current state of Indigenous heritage protections under Commonwealth and state legislation; Dhawura Ngilan and the Best Practice Standards; and views on a standard for Indigenous engagement and participation in decision making. The IAC will shortly attend workshop with the department on the engagement process.

State of the Environment

The department (State of the Environment (SoE) section) provided an update on the progress in delivering the 2021 report. Dr Terri Janke led the development of the Indigenous chapter and co-authored the overview report, drawing on input from all the SoE Indigenous co-authors.

Indigenous consultants, Murawin, were engaged as the Indigenous facilitator and worked with authors to develop a facilitation and engagement approach for Indigenous participation and contribution to the report. Murawin's report was used to inform the Indigenous and overview report and was shared with the IAC. It is included in the supplementary materials of the SoE.

Following tabling, an evaluation will be undertaken, focusing on the Indigenous co-authorship and engagement process. Three phases of the evaluation will focus on authorship, user experience and process. IAC's participation will assist in the evaluation process to improve for the following SoE report and as general input to departmental models of engagement more broadly.

National Environmental Science Program

The department (National Environmental Science Program (NESP) section) met the IAC to discuss the program's second phase. This included an update on Indigenous partnerships within the NESP, which continue to be a core focus of the program. The NESP Indigenous Facilitation Network is made up of at least one experienced Indigenous Facilitator from each of the four hubs to drive Indigenous inclusion at the program level.

Sea Country Indigenous Protected Areas Program

The department (Protected Areas Policy section) provided an update on the recent grant opportunity to implement the Sea Country Indigenous Protected Areas Program. The grants aim to increase the area of sea Country in Indigenous Protected Areas to strengthen the conservation and protection of the marine environment while creating employment and economic opportunities for Indigenous Australians.

The program opened on 18 October 2021 to Indigenous organisations only and closed on 29 November 2021. There were 36 applications received. The successful organisations will receive \$9.7 million (GST exclusive) in grant funding. These projects are expected to generate up to 37 full-time equivalent Indigenous jobs. Applicants were assessed from December 2021 to January 2022 and the successful projects will be announced shortly.

Expression of Interest – Indigenous Advisory Committee members

The Committee was advised that the expression of interest for all IAC members (including the Chair) would open on Thursday, 24 March 2022. Applications would close on 15 May 2022. Members were encouraged to reapply and share with their networks.

About the IAC

The IAC is a statutory body established in 2000 under the EPBC Act.

All members of the IAC are Indigenous Australians and are ministerially appointed based on expertise in Indigenous land and sea management, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and cultural heritage management.

Members:

- Mr Duane Fraser (Chair)
- Ms Teagan Goolmeer (Deputy Chair)
- Dr Leah Talbot
- Ms Chrissy Grant
- Dr Stephen van Leeuwen
- Mr Stan Lui
- Dr Donna Odegaard