

## Indigenous Advisory Committee Bulletin Meeting 44

The Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC) held its 44<sup>th</sup> meeting on 24-25 November 2022 in Canberra.

### First Nations cultural heritage protection reform

The department advised the IAC that the First Nations Heritage Protection Alliance and the Australian Government have commenced full and genuine engagement with First Nations Peoples, governments and industry to reform Australian cultural heritage protections. The first round of engagements produced the options paper: First Nations cultural heritage protection reform. This options paper is currently being developed through further engagement. Advice from the IAC was sought as part of this process. The Options Paper discussed is [accessible on the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water website](#).

### National Environmental Science Program

The department updated the IAC on First Nations partnerships in the National Environmental Science Program (NESP) and key proposed First Nations-led and co-designed projects. The department noted that the Three Category Approach toolkit, a guide to meeting best practice for engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in environmental research, is being redeveloped. NESP funding for engagement with First Nations Peoples is trending upwards and is currently at 34%. The department is promoting a consistent approach to First Nations engagement across all hubs, including through the employment of three First Nations Knowledge Brokers.

### Regional Planning Framework

The department updated the IAC on the Australian Government's commitment to regional planning to help restore, protect and manage the environment. A high-level Roundtable was held on 31 August—the fundamental importance of including First Nations Peoples in the development of the Regional Planning was a key outcome. Environmental Ministers agreed on 21 October 2022 to work together to identifying potential locations by the end of 2022. The department will continue to engage with key stakeholders and First Nations groups to develop regional planning.

### Environmental Legislative Reform Update and Establishment of an EPA

The department (Taskforce for Environmental Legislative Reform and Establishment of an EPA) updated the IAC on progress to deliver a full response to the Samuel Review (the Response) before the end of 2022. The Response, which was subsequently released on 8 December 2022, sets out the Australian Government commitments to reforming national environment laws. It includes further detail on development of national environmental standards and the government's election commitments to the establish an Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) and a Data and Information Division. Strong engagement with First Nations Peoples is central to this reform agenda. The Department will continue to work closely with the IAC to inform the design and implementation of reforms. In particular, the Response notes that Co-design of the standard for First Nations engagement and decision making will be led by the IAC.

### Nature Repair Market (previously called Biodiversity Markets)

The department updated the IAC on the progress of developing a Nature Repair Market. Significant investment in conservation and restoration is needed to reverse the decline in Australia's environment. Conservation organisations and businesses are increasingly seeking 'nature positive' investments, but there is no national framework to facilitate this investment. It is vital to have the right settings to ensure the market supports nature positive investment and provides opportunities to First Nations Peoples. The department sought the IAC's views on the proposed approach to First Nations engagement and co-design for a Nature Repair Market.

### State of the Environment

The department updated the IAC on the release and implementation of the 2021 State of the Environment report. A targeted advertising campaign for First Nations Peoples ran from 21 August to 17 September across print, digital and social media platforms, with positive results. Print advertising was included in the Koori Mail, Mulga Mail and Torres News; digital displays included geographical and contextual targeting of First Nations Culture, News and Services; social media advertising included sponsored images and video ads targeting First Nations audiences who had previously engaged with Department of Agriculture content.

### International Engagement: COP27 (Climate Change), COP15 (Biodiversity), COP19 (CITES)

The department updated the IAC on three examples of significant international environment activities and the ways the department has engaged with First Nations Peoples. Full and effective participation of First Nations Peoples in biodiversity conservation and broader environmental matters is essential. The department sought advice from the IAC in on how to better integrate First Nations perspectives into Australia's international engagement activities. The IAC advised a strategic approach is required to properly engage with First Nations Peoples in both the lead up to and participation in international forums.

### Protected Species and Communities

The department updated the IAC on reform to threatened species conservation planning, including development of an approach to better facilitate First Nations Peoples engagement. The proposed approach to improve engagement is based on a tiered system that recognises species with cultural significance, with an appropriate tier applied during each conservation assessment and/or planning process for species/ecological communities. Tailored processes and guidance are being developed for each tier and key work streams of the branch, i.e., nominations, listing assessments, preparation of conservation planning documents.

### About the IAC

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