

## Indigenous Advisory Committee Bulletin Meeting 41

The Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC) held its 41<sup>st</sup> meeting on 20 April 2021 with some members attending in person with departmental staff in Canberra and others via videoconference.

### Independent Review of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act)

The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) provided an update on the progress of early reforms committed to by government aligned with findings in the Final Report of the Independent Review of the EPBC Act. The IAC acknowledged the good work of the author, Professor Samuel and the review team, that highlighted the need for improved and meaningful Indigenous participation and leadership in the implementation of the recommendations.

### National Environmental Science Program (NESP)

The IAC met with the NESP team to discuss the implementation of the second phase of the program. This included Indigenous engagement and Indigenous research governance and planning, which are intended to be framed at a high level, ensuring that the first year of NESP would focus on establishing and exploring opportunities for Indigenous participation and collaboration, co-design and Indigenous-led projects.

### State of the Environment 2021

The IAC received an update from the State of the Environment Report team on progress in developing the 2021 report, in particular the development of the Indigenous content in the report. The IAC was invited to review the draft chapters, which will be socialised with key policy partners in the coming months.

### DAWE Science Strategy Action Plan (SSAP)

A key action of the DAWE SSAP is to engender early and genuine Indigenous engagement into practices for science development and application. Good progress is being made in this space, with regular meetings of the Science Council and its sub-group tasked with implementing this action. Key focus areas include:

- consider the establishment of an Indigenous-led Community of Practice to promote best practice Indigenous engagement
- how to embed Indigenous knowledge and science into DAWE science and ensure that it is also useful to Indigenous natural and cultural resource practitioners and scientists, and the communities involved
- incorporation and/or acknowledgement of Indigenous knowledge, culture and country into DAWE publications processes
- efforts to showcase Indigenous knowledge and science within DAWE and its portfolio agencies.

The IAC will continue work with the department on the implementation of the SSAP and other internal guidance documents such as the Reconciliation Action Plan.

### Threatened Species Action Plan

The IAC discussed the development of an Action Plan to support the implementation of the next iteration of the Threatened Species Strategy (2021-2031) and provided advice on approaches for identifying priority species and place of cultural significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

### Australian Heritage Strategy Review

The Heritage Branch provided an update on the review of the Australian Heritage Strategy including feedback from the online survey about the current strategy and next steps for the review.

## Reef 2050

The IAC noted an update on DAWE's review of the Reef 2050 Plan and discussed two recommendations from the *Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef: The Next Generation of Reef 2050 Actions* report regarding development of a Great Barrier Reef Sea Country Alliance and negotiation of a Great Barrier Reef-wide tripartite agreement.

Members encouraged DAWE to ensure the geographical scope what constitutes the Great Barrier Reef is clarified and to look to Indigenous-led alliances which includes peoples of the Torres Strait and Papua New Guinea.

## Bushfire recovery

The IAC was pleased to hear 13 projects were approved under the Indigenous Fire and land Management Workshops Program. These projects will deliver workshops across Australia to strengthen traditional fire and land management knowledge and will support knowledge sharing across conventional and traditional fire and land management.

## Convention on Biological Diversity and Australia's Strategy for Nature

DAWE officials provided an update on negotiations under the Convention on Biological Diversity and agreed continue to engage with members on issues relating to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities under the Convention.

DAWE officials provided an update on implementation priorities under *Australia's Strategy for Nature 2019–2030* and sought advice from the Committee regarding the incorporation of Objective 4: Respect and maintain traditional ecological knowledge and stewardship of nature.

## Marine Parks

Parks Australia provided an update on their work with Traditional Owners and Indigenous rangers to protect cultural values in Australian Marine Parks. An Indigenous engagement and cultural heritage strategy is under development to improve understanding of cultural heritage, link management of Australian Marine Parks with sea country plans and maximise employment and enterprise opportunities for Traditional Owners.

## About the IAC

The IAC is a statutory committee 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 are not appointed to represent particular regions or organisations.

## Members:

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

Further information can be found at <http://www.awe.gov.au/indigenous/committees/iac.html>