

# Indigenous Advisory Committee Bulletin

## No.7 Meeting 31

**1-2 December 2015, Canberra, ACT**

The Indigenous Advisory Committee (the Committee) held its 31<sup>st</sup> meeting on 1–2 December 2015 in Canberra. The meeting, chaired by Ms Melissa George, focused on programme design and implementation, and policy input.

Specific areas of focus included collaboration with the Australian Heritage Council (AHC), the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984* (ATSIHPA) reform, policy directions for Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) and the National Reserve System (NRS), Indigenous engagement and participation under the Reef 2050 Plan, the Emissions Reduction Fund and National Environmental Science Programme (NESP), development of a National Land and Sea Managers Network, and the traditional owner species management framework.

The Department provided an update on the Dugong and Turtle Protection Plan, Green Army Programme, One Stop Shop reforms, and the review of Australia’s Biodiversity Conservation Strategy.

### Heritage

The Committee met with the Australian Heritage Council (the Council) and re-signed a Protocol for Formal Engagement. The protocol outlines how the Committee and Council will work together to protect and conserve Australia’s environment and heritage.

The Committee and the Council considered a scoping paper on future reforms of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984* (ATSIHPA). The paper prioritised key areas of reform to address timing and efficiency of processes, establishment of appropriate best practice standards, key requirements of an accreditation system, and coverage for broader consultation.

The Committee and the Council formed a joint working group to review future reform options.

### Future policy directions – Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) and the National Reserve System (NRS)

The Committee met with Department of the Environment and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) representatives to discuss the Government’s current examination of future policy directions for IPAs, linkages to, and consistency with broader Australian Government policy agenda, particularly the National Reserve System. The Committee welcomed this important work, and reiterated the importance of IPAs and concerns around the long-term viability of IPAs beyond the current funding commitment to 2017–18.

The future IPA policy will focus on leveraging private and philanthropic funding, and supporting future employment opportunities. The Committee will continue to engage in this process by providing PM&C with assistance in developing the policy objectives, particularly around engagement.

## Proposal for a Traditional Owner Species Conservation Agreement

The Committee met with representatives from the Department of the Environment and the Australian Government Solicitor to discuss opportunities for traditional owners to govern traditional resource use in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

### Outgoing Members

Ms Denise Lovett and Mr Ricky Archer were thanked for their significant and spirited contributions of Indigenous knowledge in land management and the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Melissa George was especially thanked for her hard work and dedication to the Committee for over ten years, many of those as Chair. Her tireless efforts have contributed to the achievement of many of the Department's Indigenous outcomes; particularly in Indigenous land and sea management and we wish her well in her future endeavours.

### About the Committee

The Indigenous Advisory Committee is a statutory committee established in 2000 under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the Act). The Committee's role is to advise the Minister for the Environment on the operation of the Act, taking into account the significance of Indigenous peoples' knowledge of land management and the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

#### *Members*

All members of the Committee 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.

Current members are:

- Mr Bruce Martin (A/g Chair)
- Ms Josie Douglas
- Mr Wayne See Kee
- Mr Ricky Archer
- Ms Teagan Goolmeer
- Mr Joseph Elu
- Mr Robbie Dalton.

Further information can be found at

<http://www.environment.gov.au/indigenous/committees/iac.html>