

Indigenous Advisory Committee Bulletin

No.9 Meeting 33

27 - 28 July 2017, Canberra, ACT

The Indigenous Advisory Committee held its 33rd meeting on Ngunnawal Country in Canberra on 27-28 July 2017. The Chair, Mr Robbie Dalton, was pleased to confirm recent appointments to the Committee, including the reappointment of himself (Chair), Teagan Goolmeer (Deputy Chair) and Wayne See Kee, as well as the appointment of new member Ms Sandy Marty.

The Committee's 33rd meeting focused on setting the Committee's overarching strategic direction and key priorities. The Committee also noted and discussed a number of issues including the National Landcare Program and Indigenous Protected Areas, the National Biodiversity Strategy, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Climate Change Review and adaptation initiatives and Australian Marine Park management.

Discussion with the Department's Executive

The Committee met with members of the Department's Executive and Minister Frydenberg's Senior Adviser for Environment to discuss its strategic direction and key focus areas, and alignment of those with the priorities of the Minister and the Department.

The Executive was supportive of the Committee's strategic approach (see below) and noted the benefit of prioritising the work program to ensure alignment with the Committee's scope and timeframes.

The Committee will continue to work with the Department to improve its visibility of current and upcoming consultations, reviews, program and policy development. This will ensure the Committee has an opportunity to provide early and meaningful advice and guidance that will maximise government spending, environmental outcomes and Indigenous engagement.

IAC Strategic plan and key priorities

The Committee held some valuable members' only sessions to discuss and agree on its strategic direction and key focus areas. Three key overarching themes were agreed, each with a set of objectives and activities sitting underneath. The strategic themes will help the Committee to prioritise the forward work program and align with the priorities of the Minister and Department.

- 1. Build the size and scale of the managed 'Indigenous estate' in Australia** – including Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs), co-managed parks and reserves and any other areas where Indigenous rights and interests exist.
- 2. Enhance capacity of Indigenous land and sea management** – focusing on building a skilled and capable workforce on country, ensuring acquisition of resources at a 'natural' and material level, and connecting groups with opportunities to manage land and sea.

- 3. Drive partnerships, advocacy and promotion** – ensuring the work of Indigenous people is valued and recognised, communicate Indigenous perspectives on major issues, promote Indigenous research priorities and protect heritage and knowledge.

National Landcare Program update

The Committee received a briefing on the key findings of the National Landcare Program review and next steps for the second phase of the program following recent budget announcements. Indigenous participation will continue to be a priority for the next phase of the program and the Committee discussed ways in which the program can allow communities to determine and address their local needs.

The Committee will continue to advise on the best ways to ensure Indigenous priorities are incorporated in the design of the next phase of the program, including through the public consultation phase expected to occur in September 2017.

Indigenous Protected Areas and Indigenous Rangers

The Committee discussed a range of potential delivery options for the \$15 million funding for new Indigenous Protected Areas. The Committee will continue to consider this matter in more detail out-of-session with a view to ensuring the new program design achieves the greatest environmental and community outcomes and provides long-term funding security.

National Biodiversity Strategy

The Committee received a briefing on the findings of the *Report on the Review of the first five years of Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy*. Consultation on a revised National Biodiversity Strategy is expected to be held in late 2017 by the Commonwealth and the States and Territories.

The Committee discussed options for ensuring sufficient Indigenous engagement on the new Strategy, including through the use of upcoming meetings such as Ranger forums and other planned meetings. A national Indigenous workshop was also recommended as an effective way for Indigenous people to come together to provide feedback on their concerns and what they want included in the new Strategy.

Convention on Biological Diversity

The Department, together with Ms Chrissy Grant, provided a briefing on the outcomes of the most recent Convention on Biological Diversity meeting, held in Cancun Mexico in December 2016. The Committee discussed the need for sufficient ongoing resourcing and support for succession planning for Indigenous interests and representation at key Convention meetings.

National Environmental Science Program

The Department provided an update on the National Environmental Science Program (NESP) review and discussed available opportunities for the Committee to provide input. The Committee provided some valuable insights and feedback on current program delivery, including ensuring greater transparency in how research priorities are set to ensure local priorities are considered, and the need to identify best practice approaches and seek more consistency across the Hubs. The Committee will continue to engage in the outcomes of the review, including through influencing how its recommendations may be best implemented from an Indigenous participation and engagement perspective.

Water, a national picture

The Committee heard from Indigenous hydrogeologist, Mr Brad Moggridge. Brad is currently working on his PhD at the University of Canberra. His research is focussed on exploring Indigenous peoples' traditional approaches to water management and integrating them into formalised Western science. He provided the Committee with an overview of the history of water planning and management in Australia.

The Committee discussed the challenges and gaps in the current Australian Indigenous water policy space, including the need for a national picture and approach that creates opportunities for Indigenous people to become involved in water management.

Climate Change Review and adaptation initiatives

The Department gave the Committee an update on the 2017 review of climate change policies, the climate change adaptation partnership and Indigenous engagement with the Emissions Reduction Fund.

Submissions to the 2017 Review of Climate Change Policies highlighted the challenges Indigenous people will face with climate change, advocated for greater government investment in Indigenous carbon projects, and called for increased recognition of the co-benefits of carbon projects.

The Committee discussed the establishment and ongoing role of the new Indigenous Carbon Industry Network to enhance Indigenous engagement in the carbon market through the Emissions Reduction Fund. Members also welcomed the development of new methods to credit savanna fire management activities under the Fund and discussed proposed amendments to the Emissions Reduction Fund legislation in relation to issues of legal right and native title.

Australian Marine Park management

The Committee noted the release of five draft marine park management plans and the current public consultation process. The Committee discussed opportunities for feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples during and following the current public consultation process to be considered and accommodated before the management plans are finalised in early 2018.

The future of Jabiru Township

The Committee discussed the future of the Jabiru Township and the development of a plan for a sustainable future for Jabiru and the Kakadu National Park more broadly. The Northern Territory Government is leading consultation on the future of Jabiru and will be working closely with the Northern Land Council and Traditional Owners to develop an agreed program to identify opportunities for Traditional Owners and relevant Aboriginal people in Jabiru and Kakadu into the future.

About the Committee

The Indigenous Advisory Committee is a statutory committee established in 2000 under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

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.

Members:

- Mr Robert (Robbie) Dalton (Chair)
- Ms Teagan Goolmeier (Deputy Chair)
- Mr Ronald (Ricky) Archer
- Ms Cecilia (Cissy) Gore-Birch
- Dr Leah Talbot
- Mr Duane Fraser
- Ms Chrissy Grant
- Mr Wayne See Kee
- Dr Stephen van Leeuwen
- Ms Sandy Marty

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