



IPART Independent
Pricing and Regulatory
Tribunal | NSW

Aboriginal Outcomes & Impact Strategy

Strategy & Engagement

Artwork: Empowered Communities by Caitlin Trindall

This artwork tells the story of IPART's responsibility in working with Aboriginal peoples to support and strengthen outcomes across NSW. At its centre is a large meeting place, representing IPART itself – a gathering point where voices are heard, relationships are formed, and decisions are made. Around it, are symbols for our core principles: Aboriginal rights and self-determination, Country, culture and community, and reciprocity and sustained relationships. These principles ground our work and guide the way we seek to create a meaningful impact – by empowering voices, enabling Aboriginal-led outcomes, and building IPART's internal capabilities and understanding.

Scattered throughout the artwork are cultural elements that tell the story of ongoing connection and care for Country. Coolamons and weaving nod to men's and women's business and the importance of creating real job and development opportunities for Aboriginal people. Footprints and waterways show the journeys we take together and Aboriginal ties to land and water. People represent the communities we work with every day. Natural elements – gum leaves, wattle, waterholes and the sun – represent connection to Country and sustainability through the services we regulate. The mix of blues and oranges reflects the coastal and bush landscapes of NSW, grounding the artwork across the landscape of NSW, where Aboriginal culture, community and IPART's work all come together.



Caitlin Trindall Bio

Caitlin Trindall is a proud Gomeroi woman with family ties to Narrabri, NSW and born and raised on Dharawal Country. Caitlin is an artist and founder of Mirii Art, creating works that celebrate connection to Country, culture, and community.

Her practice uses colour, symbolism, and storytelling to explore themes of identity, relationships, and self-determination, while supporting meaningful engagement with Aboriginal perspectives.

Through her work, Caitlin aims to create spaces for learning, reflection, and connection.



Acknowledgment of Country

IPART acknowledges the Traditional Owners and custodians of the lands where we live and work. Our office is located on Gadigal land and our work touches on Aboriginal lands and waterways across NSW.

We pay respect to their Elders both past and present, and recognise Aboriginal people's unique and continuing cultural connections, rights and relationships to land, water and Country.



The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal

IPART's independence is underpinned by an Act of Parliament. Further information on IPART can be obtained from IPART's website.

Tribunal Members

The Tribunal members are:



Carmel Donnelly
PSM, Chair



Dr Darryl Biggar



Jonathan Coppel



Sharon Henrick

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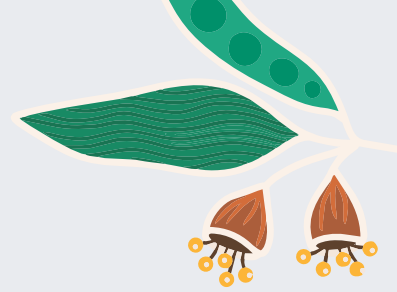
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Chair's foreword

At IPART, we act in the public interest by helping people get safe reliable services at a fair price. We know our decisions and approach to regulation affect Aboriginal peoples, communities and Country across NSW, and we are committed to making sure those impacts are properly understood and considered in our work.

This Aboriginal Outcomes & Impact Strategy sets out how IPART will strengthen the way it listens to and builds relationships with Aboriginal peoples, and brings Aboriginal perspectives into decision-making.

It recognises Aboriginal peoples as rights-holders, not simply another stakeholder group, and it reflects the importance of self-determination, Country, culture and community, and reciprocity in how we operate.

The Tribunal is committed to this strategy and to its ongoing implementation.

We will champion its intent, ensure Aboriginal outcomes are considered, and monitor progress so that our approach continues to improve over time.

This work is central to being an effective, contemporary regulator and to enabling fair and informed outcomes for the people of NSW.



CEO message

This strategy matters because the work we do – pricing, licensing, compliance and advice – can shape real outcomes for Aboriginal peoples and organisations across NSW.

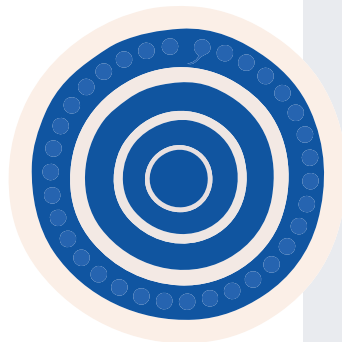
If we want to deliver on our purpose in the public interest, we need to understand those impacts properly and act on what we hear.

The Aboriginal Outcomes & Impact Strategy gives us a practical way forward.

It focuses on three connected priorities: empowering Aboriginal voices in our processes, enabling Aboriginal-led outcomes in the areas we regulate or influence, and building the capability and culture of our own workforce.

I'm personally committed to making sure this doesn't sit on a shelf. It will take leadership, accountability and effort across IPART – not just from one team.

I also want to acknowledge the Aboriginal people and organisations who have shared their perspectives with us, and the staff who helped shape this strategy. We'll keep listening, learning and improving as we put it into action.



Our strategy on a page

Vision

Enabling Aboriginal-led outcomes and positive impact in markets and services we regulate or influence.

The strategy priorities and actions are not a hierarchy but rather interconnected pieces that support and influence each other, with each dependent on the other to drive impact.

Supporting internal frameworks and resources

- Aboriginal engagement framework
- Aboriginal respectful terminology guide
- Aboriginal cultural capability hub
- Acknowledgment and welcome to Country cultural protocol guidelines.

Enabling Aboriginal-led outcomes

- **Regulatory inclusion and impact:** identify and prioritise Aboriginal-led outcome areas and how these intersect with our core regulatory and pricing functions.
- **Regulatory influence:** review regulatory frameworks, education and compliance to influence and support best practice Aboriginal engagement.
- **Ethical data practice:** develop an approach to how IPART handles and uses data regarding Aboriginal peoples, guided by Indigenous Data Sovereignty principles.

Empowering voices

- **Embedding engagement:** embed and implement IPART's Aboriginal Engagement Framework (AEF) across all business areas.
- **Centring perspectives:** develop procedures to elevate and centre Aboriginal engagement outcomes and perspectives.
- **Enhanced decision-making:** create and implement processes for Aboriginal outcomes and perspectives to be considered across IPART decision-making.

- **Reciprocity: relationships and sustained connections**
- **Aboriginal rights and self-determination**
- **Country, culture and community**

Building capabilities and workforce

- **Knowledge and capability:** on-going Aboriginal cultural capability development, training and resources for staff based on evidence-based frameworks across IPART decision-making.
- **Employment and development:** develop Aboriginal recruitment, employment and development strategy/plan.
- **Supportive and safe workplaces:** review and enhance workplace policies and practices to support a culturally safe workplace.



Chapter 1

Why do we need a strategy?

This strategy operates in our regulatory context

IPART provides the people of NSW and government with confidence that important services, markets and systems are functioning efficiently and effectively, in the public interest.

We protect consumers by implementing safeguards (e.g., price limits or licence conditions) to prevent unfair and unsafe behaviour. We also provide the expertise to help government align market operations with the public interest.

IPART supports the public interest by:

- Managing regulatory regimes and making determinations (e.g., licensing, compliance and pricing) to ensure appropriate controls are in place to monitor and enforce compliance.

- Administering market development schemes to support effective markets to deliver outcomes (e.g., Energy Sustainability Schemes).
- Reviewing and advising on market and system arrangements to identify problems and recommend solutions.
- Monitoring and reporting on performance to maintain visibility, accountability and to inform citizens.

Across our regulatory system and advisory work, Aboriginal peoples are important stakeholders and rights-holders, who are impacted by our decisions in several different contexts. This can be both directly and indirectly.

These stakeholders include:

Traditional Owners and custodians

Aboriginal regional alliances and Aboriginal peak organisations

NSW Aboriginal Land Council (NSWALC) and Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs)

NSW Coalition of Peak Aboriginal Organisations (NSW CAPO)

Aboriginal community-controlled organisations (ACCOS)

Aboriginal owned businesses and social enterprises

NTS Corp and Native Title prescribed bodies corporates (PBCs)

Aboriginal consumers and community members

This strategy is designed to drive outcomes

This strategy builds on IPART's long standing work, enabling us to remain an effective modern economic regulator, supporting the public interest.

Since European colonisation in Australia, government laws, policies, and practices have significantly impacted Aboriginal peoples and communities. As a result of dispossession, assimilation policies, and other discriminatory practices, Aboriginal peoples continue to face significant inequities today¹. For First Nations communities, this is also a story of strength, resistance, cultural persistence, protest and resilience.²

Aboriginal rights and cultural integrity

As First Peoples, Traditional Owners and Aboriginal peoples have inherent rights and interests, some of which are represented in legislative and statutory mechanisms (i.e. NSW Land Rights and Native Title), or international frameworks (i.e., United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples).³ These rights and interests are connected to Aboriginal cultural contexts, knowledges and practices across a diversity of Nation, community and language groups.

As an economic regulator, we typically operate in areas where there is market failure. For instance, we protect consumers from monopoly power through pricing determinations and recommending operating licence conditions for state-owned utility corporations. We also have a role in other government owned services or market schemes.

Given the unique rights, interests and experiences of Aboriginal peoples in NSW, there may be market externalities that specifically impact First Nations communities and their related cultural contexts or rights.

These impacts may be missed, or be less visible, when analysing population-wide (or broad consumer) economic models. Likewise, typical market failure and economic frameworks may encounter challenges or limitations when considering Aboriginal cultural contexts, rights or worldviews. For instance, cultural and community values and obligations and related externalities, or non-market values are not typically captured or considered in economic models for pricing. An example of this is in considering water use and access, economic models may not sufficiently capture the cultural connection and identity benefits for Aboriginal peoples in having reasonable access to those water resources,

To be able to engage with these issues, a strategic approach, which explores how we can support outcomes with Aboriginal peoples across our regulatory system and operations, is required.

Economic and social inequity

In recent years in Australia, institutions – the “rules of the game in a society”^a – have shaped Aboriginal economic life in ways that has entrenched inequality and exclusion. For example, legislation enacted across most colonies, and then States, placed Aboriginal peoples under statutory control of the government.⁴

Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development. (Article 3, UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples)

^a “Institutions are the rules of the game in a society or, more formally, are the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction.” North, D 1990, ‘An introduction to institutions and institutional change’, in *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

In NSW, this 'Protection' legislation led to the forced removal of many Aboriginal people from their homelands to missions and reserves. It also enabled restrictions and state control over what property Aboriginal people could have and under what conditions they could work⁵. Many Aboriginal workers had their wages directly stolen through collecting payments to a government trust.⁶ There was strict regulation of Aboriginal movement and marriage. The law also empowered the NSW Government to remove Aboriginal children from their families for any reason.⁷ This 'Protection' regime in NSW was not repealed until 1969.

Coupled with dispossession of their lands, without agreement, recognition or compensation, these racially discriminatory regimes and other factors have intergenerational impacts on Aboriginal families and communities. Today, Aboriginal families and communities continue to experience disproportionate impacts

from state systems such as justice and child protection. This also manifests in economic, social and health inequities between Aboriginal peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.

Despite these systemic challenges, Aboriginal peoples have consistently demonstrated strength, resilience and leadership. Community-led and community-owned responses, grounded in cultural knowledges and the right to self-determination, are driving transformative change. Aboriginal communities centre cultural identity, collective wellbeing and connection to Country in approaches to healing, advocacy and reform.

This context is essential to understanding how Aboriginal peoples may access, engage with, or are impacted by the services and markets we regulate or influence. It highlights the importance of culturally safe, responsive and strengths-based approaches that uphold the principles of equity and justice.



This strategy is based on good practice

Our approach is strategic, rights-based and outcomes-focused. The strategy aligns with, and aims to support the delivery of, the National Closing the Gap priority reforms and is guided by rights as outlined by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). This best practice approach enables us to ground our work with Aboriginal-centred perspectives and interests as they apply to our regulatory context.

The National Closing the Gap Agreement was signed by all governments (state and federal) and in 2020. The NSW Premier signed the new National Agreement on Closing the Gap on behalf of NSW Government. The Agreement applies to all areas of NSW Government including statutory agencies (such as IPART) and Local Government.

Closing the Gap Agreement – priority reforms

- 1 Formal partnerships and shared decision-making
- 2 Building the community-controlled sector
- 3 Transforming government organisations
- 4 Shared access to data and information at a regional level
- 5 Employment, business growth and economic prosperity (NSW specific)

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), endorsed by Australia in 2009, is a best practice international framework on Indigenous rights.

These rights can be summarised across 4 core areas:⁸



Self-determination



Participation in decision-making



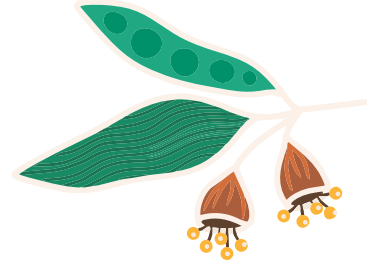
Respect and protection of culture



Equality and non-discrimination

Central to UNDRIP is self-determination and consideration of free, prior and informed consent. Our Strategy aims to understand and support these rights as they apply to our work.

How we developed our strategy



The Aboriginal Outcomes & Impact Strategy is the progression of several Aboriginal-specific initiatives IPART has undertaken across:

- knowledge and capabilities
- strategy and governance
- relationships and networks
- best practice engagement.

These initiatives include establishing ongoing cultural capability training for all staff, outreach and engagement for targeted reviews, and development of IPART's Aboriginal Engagement Framework. This strategy takes lessons from this work and builds on it to outline how IPART will continue to evolve to support Aboriginal-led outcomes.

Building on this foundational work, Romlie Mokak, former Productivity Commissioner and Djugun man and a member of the Yawuru people, presented to all IPART staff on how governments need to go "beyond business as usual." This presentation emphasised

the strategic transformation of government organisations that is required to achieve the goals of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and drive positive outcomes for Aboriginal peoples.

Romlie then facilitated a workshop with IPART's Tribunal members, the Executive Leadership Team and Aboriginal staff. This informed the foundations of the Strategy.

A draft strategy was developed, drawing further insights from submissions and perspectives from Aboriginal peoples and organisations across IPART's work.

We also met with other regulators and NSW Government organisations to consider how our strategy can effectively support self-determination in the context of NSW Government commitments, such as that outlined in the NSW Aboriginal Water Strategy.⁹



A close-up photograph of a person's torso and arms, covered in intricate traditional body paint. The person is holding a long, dark spear. The background is a blurred natural setting with green foliage. The overall color palette is dominated by earthy tones and the vibrant colors of the body paint.

Chapter 2

IPART'S regulatory role and context

Aboriginal outcomes, self-determination and regulatory approaches

Maximum prices for monopoly businesses

IPART regularly reviews and makes determinations and recommendations on maximum prices for monopoly utility and public transport services in NSW.

There are not any specific legislative requirements for IPART to consider Aboriginal rights or impact in our determinations. However, we must have regard to the social impact of our determinations and recommendations when conducting a pricing review under section 11 or section 12 of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal Act 1992 (IPART Act). This is set out in section 15, which includes other factors we consider such as the cost of providing a service, standards of quality, reliability and safety, the need to maintain ecologically sustainable development, and an appropriate rate of return on public sector assets.^b

The IPART Act does not specify how we weigh or consider these factors. There is also no legislative guidance on which factors to elevate if the issues compete. These judgements are assessed by the Tribunal.

Typically, considerations of social impact include areas such as affordability, health and wellbeing, and impacts on different segments of the community. Social impact also has specific meaning from an Aboriginal perspective, particularly in how our pricing decisions intersect with Aboriginal rights, cultural contexts and aspirations. This can

include consideration of how these decisions support or conflict with self-determination or other legislative mechanisms. For instance, IPART may need to give regard to:

- Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 (NSW)
- Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)
- National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 (NSW).^c

There is also government policy that may influence how Aboriginal peoples participate in the markets and sectors we regulate, such as policies to increase Aboriginal water rights and ownership, or other relevant policy commitments driven by the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.¹⁰

Pricing proposals

IPART's Water Regulatory Handbook emphasises a customer-centric approach to pricing proposals. IPART is not prescriptive on who the regulated entities need to engage. However, there is an expectation for engagement with the "broader community, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people".

When considering impacts on customers, regulated businesses can be supported to include specific engagement with Traditional Owners and relevant Aboriginal representative groups to ensure they suitably understand and incorporate the rights and interests of Aboriginal peoples to help drive positive practices.

^b See also Passenger Transport Act 2014, section 124(3).

^c Aboriginal cultural heritage in NSW is currently protected and managed under the provisions of the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974. There is an ongoing reform process that seeks to improve the way NSW Government manages, protects and celebrates Aboriginal cultural heritage – see NSW Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Reforms.

Licensing and compliance

IPART has regulatory functions as required by legislation, including making recommendations, providing advice and monitoring regulated entities' compliance with their operating licence (or authorisation conditions) in relation to water, as well as electricity distribution and transmission.

This includes administering operating licences and monitoring and auditing compliance with licence obligations for public and private water utilities in NSW. We issue licences and audit both public and private water utilities. These licences can include specific provisions, such as reasonable efforts to have customer engagement with Aboriginal community representatives and cultural water users.

Effective instruments need to balance regulatory burden, desired outcomes and the effectiveness of actions. Consideration of Aboriginal specific outcomes and engagement with Traditional Owners and representative groups can help IPART assess if the most effective settings are in place, or what other levers may be available to drive outcomes for Aboriginal communities.

Advising NSW Government

IPART advises government on matters of pricing, costs, industry and competition. This can occur through section 9 and 12A of the IPART Act or other enabling legislation. When we are asked to conduct a review, provide market monitoring or other investigations, the factors IPART are required to consider are outlined in terms of reference (as set out by the Premier, relevant Minister or legislation).

These terms of reference may have specific regard to Aboriginal peoples, communities, organisations or cultural matters. The industry or sector(s) that we conduct reviews or investigations in may also have relevant legislation that gives specific rights or regard to Aboriginal peoples. The presence of such requirements is likely dependent on specific industry, the policy context and broader sector dynamics.

For instance, IPART may be asked to consider costs for Aboriginal community-controlled and culturally responsive services. Such tasks may require new methodologies or approaches which are culturally appropriate, align to Aboriginal cultural contexts and support self-determination.

This highlights the importance of IPART continuing to build capability, including through workforce, that can support culturally informed reviews, investigations and projects that we are asked to conduct.







Chapter 3

Our Strategy



Aboriginal outcomes and impact Principles

Our work to deliver outcomes, impact and engagement with Aboriginal peoples is driven by our 3 Aboriginal Outcomes and Impact Principles. These Principles are the foundations for this Strategy and IPART's Aboriginal Engagement Framework.



Aboriginal rights and self-determination



Country, culture and community



Reciprocity: sustained relationships and connections

These core principles should inform IPART's decision-making and actions regarding Aboriginal outcomes, engagement and cultural capability.



Aboriginal rights and self-determination



Country, culture and community



Reciprocity: sustained relationships and connections

Aboriginal peoples in NSW operate within a unique historical, political and cultural landscape and context. As First Peoples, Aboriginal peoples and communities are not simply a stakeholder group or population demographic.

Instead, First Nations peoples are collective rights-holders with ongoing connections to their lands and waterways for at least 60,000 years, tied together through language, song, culture and law.

A fundamental right of Indigenous peoples is the right to self-determination.

In NSW, IPART's work may intersect with NSW Aboriginal Land Rights, Native Title, and cultural heritage protection that is specific to Aboriginal peoples or Traditional Owners.

For Aboriginal peoples, personal and family identities are intertwined and linked to culture, community and Country. These interconnected concepts highlight the importance of place and the rich diversity of Aboriginal peoples and communities.

These are the foundations of Aboriginal ways of knowing, being and doing, often driving Aboriginal community priorities and decision-making.

Shaping IPART's approaches around this principle enables us to ground our initiatives in culturally informed ways, be place-based when possible, and respect cultural or community authority.

Reciprocity is an important concept in Aboriginal cultures and communities. It guides mutual rights and obligations. It can apply to and strengthen social relationships and kinship or describe obligations to Country.

At its core, it is about mutual respect and relational exchange, nurturing relationships which lead to longer-term benefits for all parties.

This principle informs how IPART could approach actions, initiatives and engagement based on respectful relationships and mutual benefit.

Aboriginal outcomes and impact strategy vision



Enabling Aboriginal-led outcomes and positive impact in markets and services we regulate or influence.

Our vision is to influence positive impact and to deliver outcomes alongside Aboriginal peoples, informed by community priorities and solutions. IPART aims to do this as an economic regulator that understands the levers of change available to us in the sectors we work and regulate. We will seek to establish mechanisms for Aboriginal voices to shape decisions and build our understanding of the impacts of our work.

As an independent agency, we will continue to undertake our regulatory role in a way that delivers value and outcomes with Aboriginal peoples of NSW. IPART is committed to be champions of Aboriginal aspirations, self-determination and nurture a culturally safe and inclusive workplace.



Strategic priorities

The strategy is structured by 3 Strategic Priorities and 9 Focus Areas. These outline the direction and focus for IPART over the next 5 years. The strategy takes a multi-horizon approach. The first Action Plan specifies actions for 2025-27.



Priority 1:

Empowering voices

Supporting Closing the Gap PR1 | PR3

Objective: Aboriginal peoples have a meaningful say and influence in decisions that impact them, these voices are centred and elevated through our processes.

What this looks like

We support outcomes through enabling Aboriginal peoples, communities and organisations to have a meaningful influence and say over decisions that impact them, their communities and waterways. This is central to Aboriginal rights, self-determination and respect. We have effective and culturally appropriate means for Aboriginal input and have robust decision-making processes that value and empower Aboriginal voices and perspectives on matters that affect them. This includes establishing formal partnerships when required.

Performance metrics

- Participation of Aboriginal peoples in IPART's engagement processes (# engaged)
- Satisfaction of Aboriginal peoples with IPART's engagement process (% satisfied)
- Consideration of Aboriginal perspectives as a part of decision-making processes (# decisions where Aboriginal perspectives were considered)

We will achieve this by: embedding engagement, centring perspectives and enhancing decision-making.

Action Areas

1.1 Embedding engagement: embed and implement IPART's Aboriginal Engagement Framework across IPART, including through project planning, implementation and evaluation

1.2 Centring perspectives: develop procedures to elevate and centre Aboriginal engagement outcomes and perspectives of Aboriginal peoples, communities, and organisations within review and regulatory processes.

1.3 Enhanced decision-making: create and implement a process for Aboriginal outcomes and Aboriginal perspectives to be considered across Tribunal and Executive Leadership Team decisions.



Priority 2:

Enabling Aboriginal-led outcomes

Supporting Closing the Gap PR3 | PR4

Objective: Markets, programs and services that IPART influences positively impact the lives of Aboriginal peoples, communities and organisations, aligned with their needs, interests and aspirations.

What this looks like

We understand the impacts of our work from an Aboriginal perspective and continually develop this understanding. We empower Aboriginal voices (Priority 1) and can articulate our levers for change and areas of influence as they relate to Aboriginal priorities and aspirations. We understand what self-determination means in our regulatory context, evaluate equity considerations, and enhance Aboriginal regulatory inclusion.

We seek opportunities to enable outcomes through Aboriginal partnerships and Indigenous data strategy. We include Aboriginal impact and outcomes considerations through project planning, implementation and evaluation across all our work.

Performance metrics

- Improved Aboriginal outcomes and impact focus in priority areas (# regulatory approaches which had an Aboriginal outcomes impact assessment)
- Review and update of regulatory frameworks with specific Aboriginal outcomes focus (reviews undertaken, # updates regarding Aboriginal outcomes)

We will achieve this by: improving regulatory inclusion and impact, as well as regulatory influence, and ethical data practice.

Action Areas

2.1 Regulatory inclusion and impact: Identify and prioritise Aboriginal-led outcome areas by analysing impacts of our work from an Aboriginal perspective, understanding how these intersect with our core regulatory and pricing functions.

2.2 Regulatory influence: Review and update regulatory frameworks, education and compliance measures to influence and support best practice Aboriginal engagement and initiatives with regulated entities.

2.3 Ethical data practice: Develop an approach to how IPART handles and uses data regarding Aboriginal peoples, guided by Indigenous Data Sovereignty principles.



Priority 3:

Building capabilities and workforce

Supporting Closing the Gap PR3

Objective: IPART staff have strong awareness and knowledge of Aboriginal histories, cultures and contemporary contexts to inform how we engage and work alongside Aboriginal peoples. Our workforce reflects the communities we serve, and the skills required, supported by intentional employment approaches.

What this looks like

We continuously consider, develop and build our organisational toolkit to drive meaningful outcomes. We embed opportunities for on-going cultural capability development for all staff as part of professional development and training.

We work to create a culturally safe and inclusive work environment, with strong Aboriginal employment opportunities and development pathways. We have effective governance and accountability mechanisms to deliver on this strategy.

Performance metrics

- Increase in staff understanding and awareness of Aboriginal cultures, histories and contemporary contexts (% increase in staff self-reported understanding/awareness).
- Increased presence of Aboriginal culture and histories in the workplace (# resources, physical artefacts)
- Increased Aboriginal employment, meeting stated goals (% of Aboriginal employees)

What will achieve this through: building knowledge and capability, employment and development, and supportive and safe workplaces.

Action Areas

3.1 Knowledge and capability: Ongoing Aboriginal cultural capability development, training and resources for staff based on evidence-based frameworks

3.2 Employment and development: Develop Aboriginal recruitment, employment and development strategy/plan(s) (including consideration of graduate opportunities, leadership development, mentoring, and secondment possibilities).

3.3 Supportive and safe workplaces: Review and enhance workplace policies and practices to support a culturally safe workplace, and up-to-date anti-discrimination policy.

How we will drive action

This strategy, in taking a whole-of-organisation approach to Aboriginal outcomes, acknowledges it is everyone's responsibility to drive action and embed practices aligned with the strategy's principles and focus areas.

Governance

The strategy's governance structure works within IPART's existing governance processes. This is because the strategy supports IPART, as an economic regulator in NSW, to achieve its vision. It is not a set of separate or standalone actions and initiatives. This approach aims to embed Aboriginal outcomes within our core strategic and operational decision-making in the long term.

The Tribunal

Role

- Endorses the strategy, its priorities and actions.
- Receives progress updates on strategy implementation or adjustments.
- Considers Aboriginal outcomes in decisions when relevant and seeks additional information from Securitate when needed in this context.

Responsibilities

- Champion the commitment to Aboriginal outcomes across IPART's work.
- Ensure alignment with statutory obligations.

The Executive Leadership (ELT) Team

Role

- Approves the strategy, its priorities and actions.
- Executive sponsor and driver of strategy implementation.
- Makes decisions on strategy resourcing and risk management.

Responsibilities

- Integrate Aboriginal outcomes and initiatives into corporate and business operations and planning.
- Monitor strategy progress and performance against priorities.
- Empower and support directors and action owners.

Strategy & Engagement Team – Manager, Aboriginal Strategy & Engagement

Role

- Custodians of the strategy.
- Central coordination point for strategy implementation.
- Specialist advice and support to Tribunal, ELT, Directors and Action Owners.
- Lead targeted projects, with support from relevant teams.

Responsibilities

- Develop tools and guidance for action owners and provide support.
- Facilitate collaboration and knowledge sharing.
- Produce reports for ELT and Tribunal with support from action owners.
- Facilitate Aboriginal engagement and relationships.



Executive directors and directors

Role

- Support relevant actions and action owners within division or business unit.
- Drive delivery of actions relevant to their division.
- Monitor and support teams' capacity and capability.

Responsibilities

- Include relevant actions in division plans.
- Champion Aboriginal outcomes, cultural safety and Aboriginal perspectives within their teams.
- Report back progress on relevant actions through Action Owners within teams.

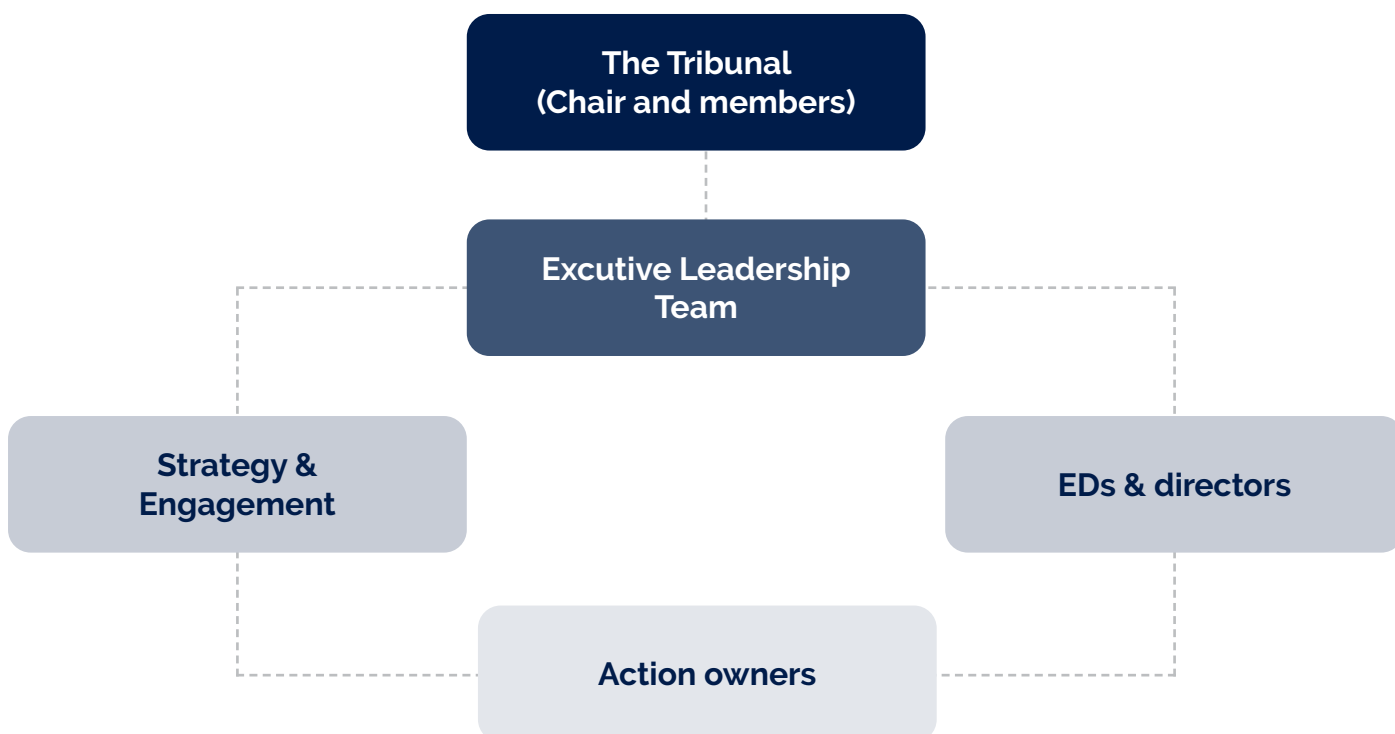
Action Owners

Role

- Lead implementation of specific actions.
- Day-to-day delivery of relevant action item in Horizon Action Plan.

Responsibilities

- Develop project or operational plans.
- Working with Manager Aboriginal Strategy & Engagement.
- Provide updates to ELT, directors or Strategy & Engagement.



Beyond a plan

This strategy aims to build our understanding of these First Nations-specific impacts, and to enable Aboriginal-led outcomes, by supporting self-determination within our regulatory system, functions, authority and context. This requires both an external and internal view.

In this way, our strategy is a whole-of-organisation framework, aiming to embed consideration of Aboriginal rights, interests and impacts across our regulatory and operational systems where relevant. It also sets a direction for how we can continue to evolve as an organisation, through capability development and workplace initiatives.

This approach recognises that consideration of Aboriginal rights and outcomes is central to us delivering on our obligations as a regulator, scheme administrator and advisor to government.

This strategy will help enhance our impact

IPART's Enhance our impact Strategy outlines our vision to support all markets and systems in NSW to be operating efficiently, effectively and sustainably to support the wellbeing of people in NSW. The Strategy aims to do this across four goals:

- citizen-focused decision making
- seek avenues to make meaningful change
- strengthen IPART's capability and culture
- best practice governance.

Our Aboriginal Outcomes & Impact Strategy progresses these goals through an Aboriginal-specific lens. This is done so through 3 Strategic Focus Areas:

- empowering voices (citizen-focused decision making)
- enabling Aboriginal-led outcomes (seek avenues to make meaningful change)
- building capabilities and workforce (strengthen IPART's capability and culture; maintain best practice governance).



Appendices

Appendix A

Strategy map and logics

How our approach and actions
aim to drive outcomes

Strategy map

Vision: Influencing positive impact and enabling Aboriginal-led outcomes in markets and services we regulate or influence.

Strategic Priority	Objective	How we achieve it	Action Areas
1. Empowering voices	Aboriginal peoples have a meaningful say and influence in decisions that impact them, these voices are centred and elevated through our processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our processes enable culturally appropriate avenues for Aboriginal perspectives, views and feedback. Aboriginal voices are centred through our decision-making processes, supporting self-determination and cultural expertise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embedding engagement: Embed and implement IPART's Aboriginal Engagement Framework across all business areas, including through project planning, implementation and evaluation. Centring perspectives: Develop procedures to elevate and centre Aboriginal engagement outcomes and perspectives of Aboriginal peoples, communities, and organisations within review and regulatory processes. Enhanced decision-making: Create and implement processes for Aboriginal outcomes and perspectives to be considered across Tribunal and Executive Leadership Team decision-making.
2. Enabling Aboriginal-led outcomes	Markets, programs and services that we have influence over positively impact the lives of Aboriginal peoples, communities and organisations, aligned with their needs and aspirations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We understand the impacts of our work from an Aboriginal perspective. We can articulate our levers for change and areas of influence in the context of Aboriginal priorities and aspirations. We understand what self-determination means in our regulatory context, evaluate equity considerations, and enhance Aboriginal regulatory inclusion. We develop Aboriginal targeted partnerships, programs, or business participation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulatory inclusion and impact: Identify and prioritise Aboriginal-led outcome areas by analysing impacts of our work from an Aboriginal perspective, understating how these intersect with our core regulatory and pricing functions. Regulatory influence: Update and review regulatory frameworks, support and compliance measures to drive and influence Aboriginal engagement and impact best practice within regulated entities. Ethical data practice: Develop an approach to how IPART handles and uses data regarding Aboriginal peoples, guided by Indigenous Data Sovereignty principles.

Strategic Priority	Objective	How we achieve it	Action Areas
3. Building capabilities and workforce	IPART staff have strong awareness and knowledge of Aboriginal histories, cultures and contemporary contexts to inform how we engage and work alongside Aboriginal peoples. Our workforce reflects the communities we serve, and the skills required, supported by intentional employment approaches.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed opportunities for on-going cultural capability development for all staff. • Nurture a culturally safe and inclusive work environment. • Develop Aboriginal employment opportunities and development pathways. • Strong governance and accountability to deliver on the Strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and capability: On-going Aboriginal cultural capability development, training and resources for staff based on evidence-based frameworks • Employment and development: Develop Aboriginal recruitment, employment and development strategy/plan (including consideration of graduate opportunities, leadership development, mentoring, and secondment possibilities). • Supportive and safe workplaces: Review and enhance workplace policies and practices to support a culturally safe workplace, and up-to-date anti-discrimination policy.

Alongside the 3 Strategic Priorities, IPART will continue our current on-going initiatives that support Aboriginal outcomes. This includes celebrating Aboriginal cultures and communities through key events and dates of significance, collaborating with other government agencies on Aboriginal outcomes, and support NSW Government Aboriginal procurement policies.

Aboriginal Outcomes and Impact Principles



Aboriginal rights and self-determination



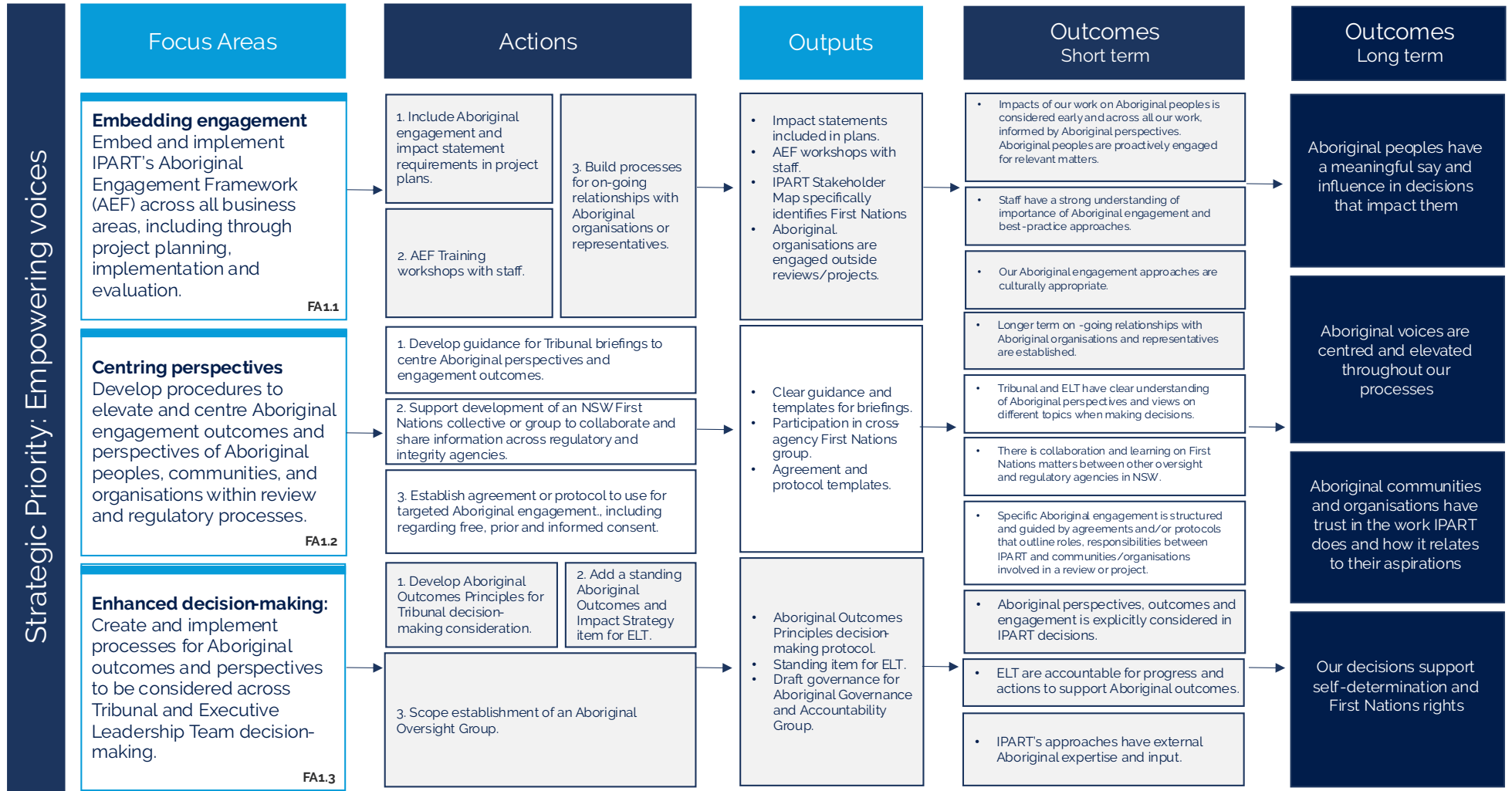
Country, culture and community



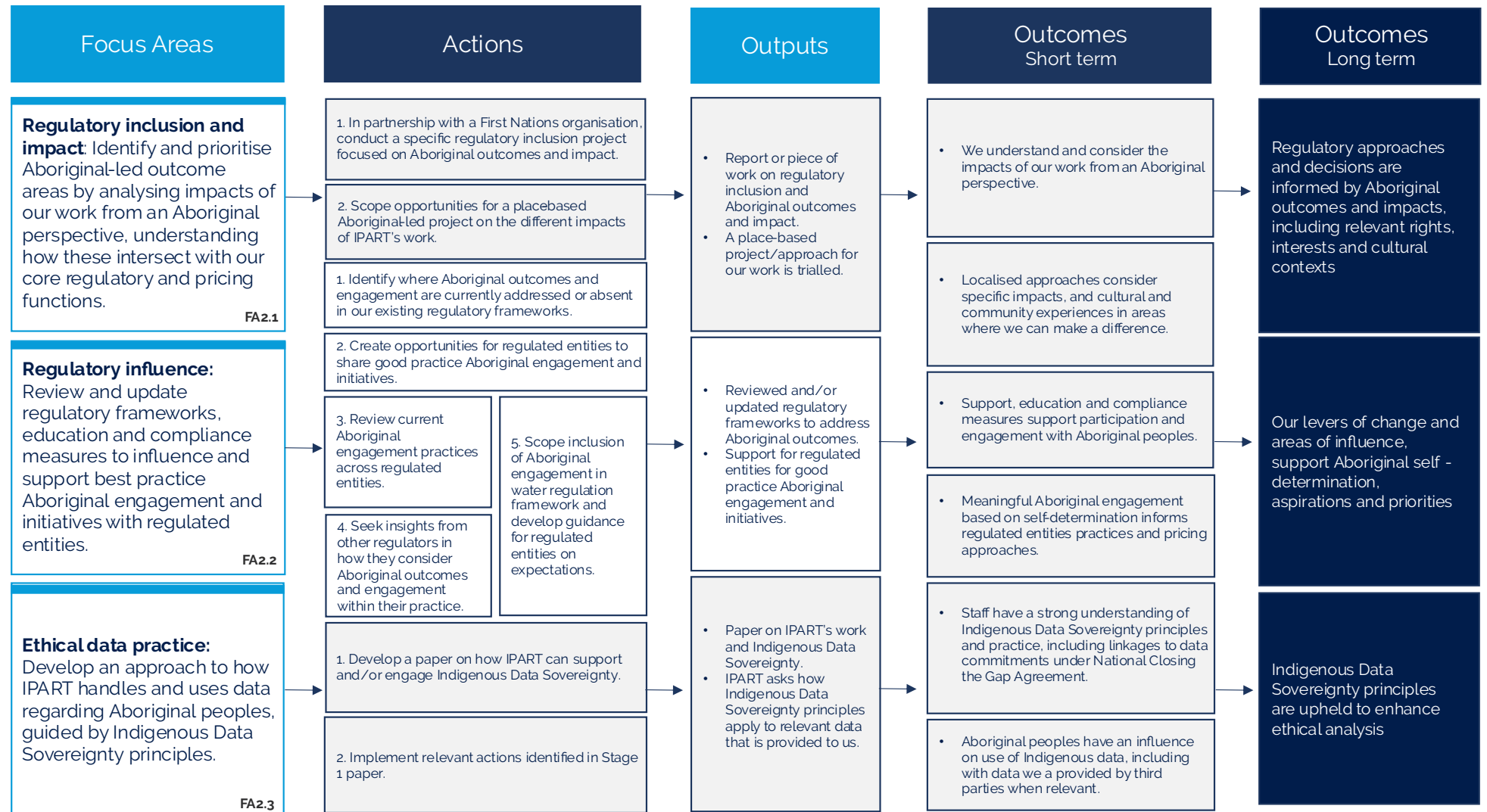
Reciprocity: relationships and sustained connections

Strategic priority logics

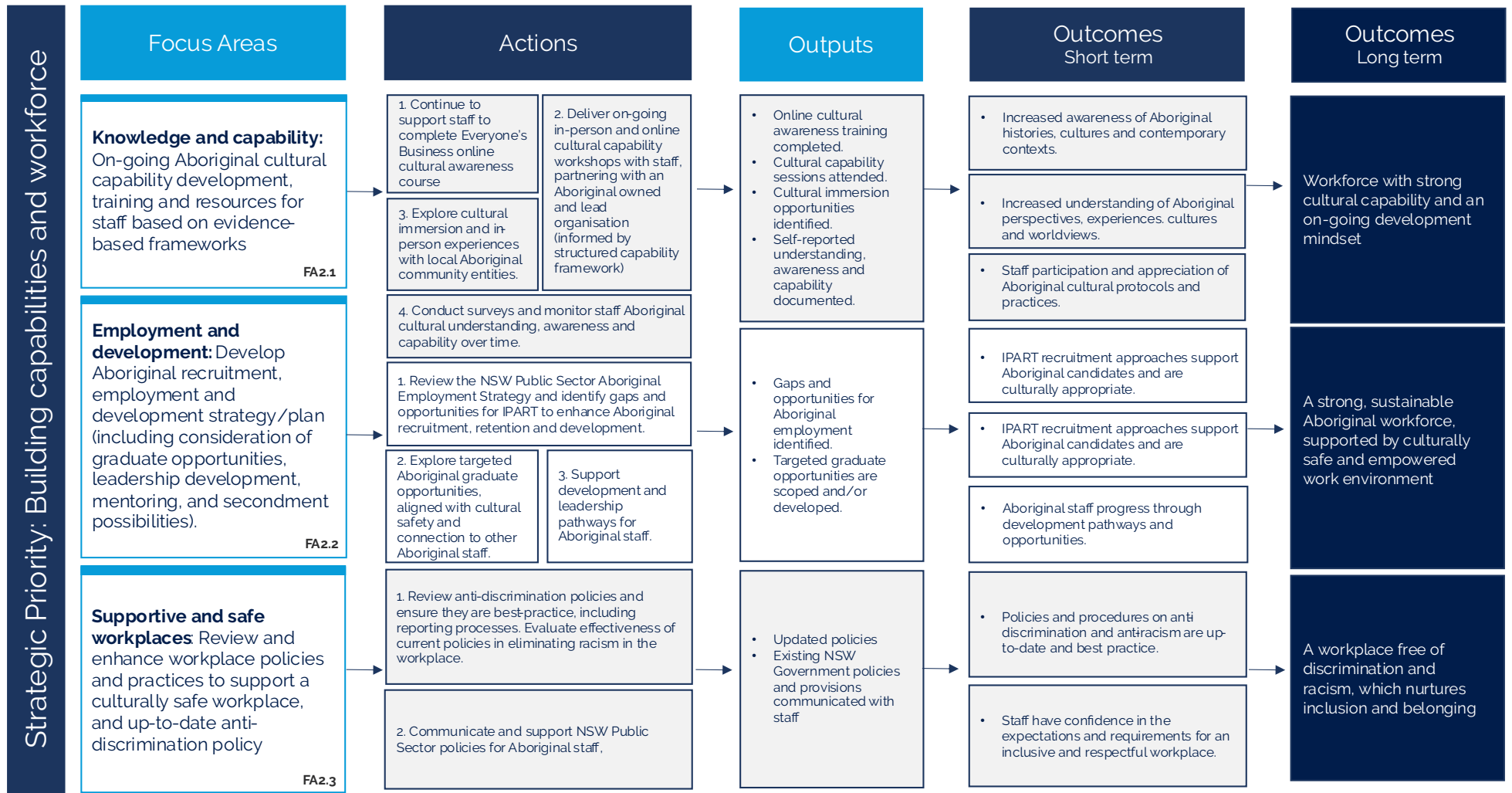
Strategic Priority 1: Empowering voices



Strategic Priority 2: Enabling Aboriginal-led outcomes



Strategic Priority 3: Building capabilities and workforce



Appendices

Appendix B

Action Plan

Aboriginal Outcomes
& Impact Strategy

Our Aboriginal Outcomes and Impact Strategy takes a multi-horizon approach. Each Action Plan will build off the previous, ensuring sustainable and meaningful action to achieve our strategic vision.

This Action Plan outlines actions to be achieved across 2 years, split by Stage 1 (priority year 1) actions and subsequent Stage 2 actions (Year 2).

Strategic Priority 1: Empowering voices

Objective: Aboriginal peoples have a meaningful say and influence in decisions that impact them, these voices are centred and elevated through our processes.

Action Area 1.1: Embedding engagement

Overview: Embed and implement IPART's Aboriginal Engagement Framework across all business areas, including through project planning, implementation and evaluation.

Action	Timeline	Responsibility	Measures of success
1. Include Aboriginal engagement and impact statement requirements in project plans templates.	Stage 1	<u>Action Owners:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager, Strategy & Planning Manager, Aboriginal Strategy & Engagement <u>Responsibility:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director, Strategy & Engagement 	100% of project plans include explicit consideration of Aboriginal engagement and impacts.
2. Aboriginal Engagement Framework Training workshops with staff.	Stage 1	<u>Action Owner:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager, Aboriginal Strategy & Engagement <u>Responsibility:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director, Strategy & Engagement 	# sessions; # staff attending sessions.
3. Build processes for on-going relationships with Aboriginal organisations or representatives.	Stage 1	<u>Action Owner:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager, Aboriginal Strategy & Engagement <u>Responsibility:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director, Strategy & Engagement 	Process established; # of Aboriginal representatives, groups and organisations engaged outside specific review processes.

Other supporting actions for embedding engagement

- Refresh Aboriginal Engagement Framework with case studies and examples from IPART's engagement initiatives.
- Regularly communicate components, examples and different sections of the Aboriginal Engagement Framework through miPART
- Survey Aboriginal stakeholders who participated in recent priority reviews or engagement processes to identify improvements and experiences

Action Area 1.2: Centring perspectives

Overview: Develop procedures to elevate and centre Aboriginal engagement outcomes and perspectives of Aboriginal peoples, communities, and organisations within review and regulatory processes.

Action	Timeline	Responsibility	Measures of success
1. Develop guidance for IPART briefings to centre Aboriginal perspectives and engagement outcomes.	Stage 1	<u>Action lead:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager, Aboriginal Strategy & Engagement <u>Responsibility:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director, Strategy & Engagement 	Guidance developed and communicated with staff.
2. Support development of an NSW First Nations collective or group to collaborate and share information across regulatory and integrity agencies.	Stage 2	<u>Action lead:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager, Aboriginal Strategy & Engagement <u>Responsibility:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director, Strategy & Engagement 	# miPART Aboriginal Engagement Framework posts/content
3. Establish agreement template or protocol to use for targeted Aboriginal engagement, including regarding free, prior and informed consent. (outlines roles, responsibilities and other matters).	Stage 2	<u>Action lead:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager, Aboriginal Strategy & Engagement <u>Responsibility:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director, Strategy & Engagement 	Protocol developed.

Action Area 1.3: Enhancing decision making

Overview: Create and implement a process for Aboriginal outcomes and Aboriginal perspectives to be considered across Tribunal and Executive Leadership Team decisions.

Action	Timeline	Responsibility	Measures of success
1. Develop Aboriginal Outcomes Principles for Tribunal decision-making consideration	Stage 1	<u>Action lead:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager, Aboriginal Strategy & Engagement <u>Responsibility:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director, Strategy & Engagement 	TBC
2. Add a standing Aboriginal Outcomes and Impact Strategy item for ELT Strategy focused meetings	Stage 1	<u>Action lead:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager, Corporate Services <u>Responsibility:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director, Corporate Services 	TBC
3. Scope establishment of an Aboriginal Advisory Oversight Group	Stage 2	<u>Action lead:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager, Aboriginal Strategy & Engagement <u>Responsibility:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director, Strategy & Engagement 	TBC

Strategic Priority 2: Enabling Aboriginal-led outcomes

Objective: Markets, programs and services that we have influence over positively impact the lives of Aboriginal peoples, communities and organisations, aligned with their needs and aspirations.

Action Area 2.1: Regulatory inclusion and impact

Overview: Identify and prioritise Aboriginal-led outcome areas by analysing impacts of our work from an Aboriginal perspective, understanding how these intersect with our core regulatory and pricing functions.

Action	Timeline	Responsibility	Measures of success
1. In partnership with a First Nations organisation, conduct a specific regulatory inclusion project focused on Aboriginal outcomes and impact.	Stage 1	<u>Responsibility:</u> • TBC	TBC
2. Scope opportunities for a place-based Aboriginal-led project on the different impacts of IPART's work.	Stage 2	<u>Responsibility:</u> • TBC	TBC

Action Area 2.2: Regulatory influence

Overview: Identify and prioritise Aboriginal-led outcome areas by analysing impacts of our work from an Aboriginal perspective, understanding how these intersect with our core regulatory and pricing functions.

Action	Timeline	Responsibility	Measures of success
1. Identify where Aboriginal outcomes and engagement are currently addressed or absent in IPART's existing regulatory frameworks.	Stage 1	<u>Responsibility:</u> • TBC	TBC
2. Create opportunities for regulated entities to share good practice Aboriginal engagement and initiatives	Stage 2		TBC
3. Review current Aboriginal engagement practices across regulated entities.	Stage 2	<u>Responsibility:</u> • TBC	TBC
4. Seek insights from other regulators in how they consider Aboriginal outcomes and engagement within their practice.	Stage 2	<u>Responsibility:</u> TBC	TBC
5. Scope inclusion of Aboriginal engagement in water regulation framework and develop guidance for regulated entities on expectations	Stage 1-2	<u>Responsibility:</u> TBC	

Action Area 2.3: Ethical data practice

Overview: Develop an approach to how IPART handles and uses data regarding Aboriginal peoples, guided by Indigenous Data Sovereignty principles.

Action	Timeline	Responsibility	Measures of success
1. Develop a paper on Indigenous Data Sovereignty and how these principles may apply to IPART's work	Stage 1	<u>Responsibility:</u> • TBC	TBC
2. Implement relevant actions identified in Stage 1 paper	Stage 2	<u>Responsibility:</u> • TBC	TBC

Strategic Priority 3: Building capabilities and workforce

Objective: IPART staff have strong awareness and knowledge of Aboriginal histories, cultures and contemporary contexts to inform how we engage and work alongside Aboriginal peoples. Our workforce reflects the communities we serve, and the skills required, supported by intentional employment approaches.

Action Area 3.1: Knowledge and capability

Overview: On-going Aboriginal cultural capability development, training and resources for staff based on evidence-based frameworks

Action	Timeline	Responsibility	Measures of success
1. Continue to support staff to complete Everyone's Business online cultural awareness course	Stage 1	<u>Action Owners:</u> • TBC - HR Manager <u>Support:</u> • Manager, Aboriginal Strategy & Engagement <u>Responsibility:</u> • Director, Corporate Services	.TBC – # completion if it can be recorded on myCareer
2. Deliver on-going in-person and online cultural capability workshops with staff, partnering with an Aboriginal owned and lead organisation (informed by structured capability framework)	Stage 1	<u>Action Owner:</u> • Manager, Aboriginal Strategy & Engagement <u>Support:</u> • TBC – HR Manager <u>Responsibility:</u> • Director Strategy & Engagement • Director Corporate Services	TBC
3. Explore cultural immersion and in-person experiences with local Aboriginal community entities.	Stage 2	<u>Action owner:</u> • Manager, Aboriginal Strategy & Engagement <u>Responsibility:</u> • Director, Strategy & Engagement	TBC

Action	Timeline	Responsibility	Measures of success
4. Conduct surveys and monitor staff Aboriginal cultural understanding, awareness and capability over time.	On-going	<u>Action owner:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager, Aboriginal Strategy & Engagement <u>Responsibility:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director, Strategy & Engagement 	Increased self-reported awareness and understanding levels

Other supporting actions for knowledge and capability

- Partner with other regulators to host regular lunch and learns on Aboriginal topics and concepts
- Create miPART pages on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including how staff can enrol and complete UNDRIP education module from Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
- Provide information on miPART on Closing the Gap Agreement obligations for NSW Government

Action Area 3.2: Employment and development

Overview: Develop Aboriginal recruitment, employment and development strategy/plan (including consideration of graduate opportunities, leadership development, mentoring, and secondment possibilities).

Action	Timeline	Responsibility	Measures of success
1. Review the NSW Public Sector Aboriginal Employment Strategy and identify gaps and opportunities for IPART to enhance Aboriginal recruitment, retention and development.	Stage 1	<u>Action Owners:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBC - HR Manager <u>Support:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager, Aboriginal Strategy & Engagement <u>Responsibility:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director, Corporate Services 	TBC
2. Explore targeted Aboriginal graduate opportunities, aligned with cultural safety and connection to other Aboriginal staff	Stage 2	<u>Action Owner:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBC - HR Manager <u>Support:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graduate working group <u>Responsibility:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director, Corporate Services 	TBC
3. Support development and leadership pathways for Aboriginal staff.	Stage 2	<u>Action owner:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBC - HR Manager 	TBC

Action Area 3.3: Supportive and safe workplaces

Overview: Review and enhance workplace policies and practices to support a culturally safe workplace, and up-to-date anti-discrimination policy.

Action	Timeline	Responsibility	Measures of success
1. Review anti-discrimination policies and ensure they are best-practice, including reporting processes. Evaluate effectiveness of current policies in eliminating racism in the workplace	Stage 1	<u>Action Owners:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBC - HR Manager <u>Support:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager, Aboriginal Strategy & Engagement Belonging and inclusion committee <u>Responsibility:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director, Corporate Services 	TBC
2. Communicate and support NSW Public Sector policies for Aboriginal staff	Stage 1	<u>Action Owner:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBC - HR Manager <u>Responsibility:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director, Corporate Services 	TBC

References

- ¹ [Aboriginal Social, Cultural and Historical Contexts](#), Working Together: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health and wellbeing principles and practice, Chapter 1, pp.7-18.
- ² [The history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples advocating for the right to be heard](#), Australian Human Rights Commission.
- ³ [NSW Aboriginal Land Rights and Native Title in Australia](#) - Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 (NSW) and Native Title Act 1993 (Cth), NSW Aboriginal Land Council (NSWALC); [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples \(UNDRIP\)](#), United Nations; [National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 \(NSW\)](#); [Aboriginal Cultural Heritage reform](#), NSW Government 2025.
- ⁴ [Adult labour under the Aborigines Protection Act](#), Towards Truth, Justice and Equity Centre and Indigenous Law Centre UNSW; Australia Parliament, Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs 2006, *Unfinished business: Indigenous stolen wages*. Parliamentary paper no. 412 of 2006.
- ⁵ [Control of wages, savings and property](#), Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs 2006, *Unfinished business: Indigenous stolen wages*. Parliamentary paper no. 412 of 2006; [Adult labour under the Aborigines Protection Act](#), Towards Truth, Justice and Equity Centre and Indigenous Law Centre UNSW.
- ⁶ [Stolen Wages System](#), Towards Truth, Justice and Equity Centre and Indigenous Law Centre UNSW.
- ⁷ [Aborigines Protection Act](#), National Museum of Australia.
- ⁸ [United Nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), Australian Human Rights Commission.
- ⁹ [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Article 10](#), United Nations, p. 11.
- ¹⁰ [NSW Aboriginal Water Strategy and Action Plan](#), NSW Government; [National Closing the Gap Inland Waters Target](#), NSW Government.
- ¹¹ [Water regulation handbook](#), IPART, p.104