

INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION PLAN



VERSION 1, MARCH 2023





ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

As an organisation, South Coast Natural Resource Management recognises and respects that we live and work on the traditional Lands of First Nations peoples. We acknowledge and honour First Nations peoples as the spiritual and cultural custodians of this land, and we recognise the ongoing importance of their values, languages, beliefs, and knowledge.

We are committed to working in partnership with First Nations peoples to support and promote respectful cultural and ecological practices, and to ensure that their land, culture, and knowledge are respected and protected. We acknowledge and pay our respects to Elders, past, present and emerging, and extend this respect to all First Nations peoples.

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MESSAGE FROM LUKE BAYLEY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Effective regional natural resource management demands leadership and active participation from Indigenous Australians. Colonisation across Australia has not extinguished traditional knowledge and Indigenous communities have shown incredible resilience in adapting. This deep resilience, knowledge, and connection to Country of Indigenous peoples is fundamental in providing a basis from which we can partner to improve the health of the South Coast regions people, land and waters.

Indigenous peoples hold a spiritual connection to land and water across the region, Country is fundamental to their own wellbeing. By working closely with our Indigenous friends, community members and mentors, we learn more about Country, develop deeper understandings of each other that then enables us to collectively develop solutions that promote healthy people and healthy Country.

South Coast NRM embraces working and being led by First Nations people. Seeking guidance from the First Nations community is the only pathway to ensure that natural resource management projects have cultural integrity and value. Our commitment to supporting and facilitating improved Indigenous participation is built around a belief that a cultural understanding of landscape and environment are an essential component of designing and delivering successful restoration works.

As the regional natural resource management organisation for the South Coast of WA, South Coast NRM is working hard to realise increased participation in all aspects of our organisational governance, project design, delivery, and evaluation. As a community not-for-profit, South Coast NRM recognises that we must seek to understand, collaborate, and invest in the Aboriginal led organisations across our region as these Aboriginal led organisations have cultural and legal responsibility for community, Land, and sea matters. South Coast NRM wants to see Aboriginal led organisations thrive and exert more influence across the region.

To achieve these goals, it is vital South Coast NRM commits to continued engagement with First Nations communities and listens and acts on Indigenous perspectives and feedback.

South Coast NRM is deeply appreciative of the relationships we hold with Indigenous people across the region. We are committed to deepening these relationships for the benefit of the local community, the land, and the waterways. We pay deep respect to the Elders who guide our work and to the young people who inspire and challenge us to do better.

Luke Bayley
CEO
South Coast NRM

MESSAGE FROM LESTER COYNE, ABORIGINAL REFERENCE GROUP CHAIR

For thousands of years, Australia's First Nations people have lived on and cared for the land, with a deep understanding of the environment that has been passed down through generations. This knowledge, often referred to as caring for Country, can provide critical insights into the restoration of damaged landscapes.

First Nations people have a spiritual and cultural connection to the Land that includes a responsibility for proper stewardship and protection. Collaborating with First Nations people is therefore crucial when working on landscape renewal and restoration projects. Our unique perspectives and knowledge about the environment are often specific to the local region, making our insights essential in the planning and implementation of ecological restoration initiatives.


Across hundreds of generations, First Nations people lived on our lands in harmony with flora and fauna and within strict obligations to keep and maintain our hunter and gatherer role. This included an obligation to maintain at the highest level our body, mind and spirit which was achieved through a dedicated commitment to ensuring the Land was healthy. In this way, and by honouring these interconnections, our spirits remained high and our mental health strong.

Collaboration with First Nations people can lead to more effective and sustainable approach to ecological restoration and natural resource management work. Our Traditional knowledge and practices should be seen as enhancing contemporary scientific approaches. First Nations people have a deep understanding of the interrelationships between people, species, and the environment and can provide unique insights into the broad scale impacts of fire, water, and land clearing. Our knowledge and our ways, when combined with contemporary scientific approaches, can restore, and renew healthy and thriving ecosystems.

Genuine collaboration with First Nations people promotes stronger relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and emphasises the importance of using our knowledge in planning and delivering the restoration and maintenance of healthy ecosystems. It also provides an opportunity for non-Indigenous people to learn and understand the deep cultural and spiritual significance of the Land to First Nations people and the role this connection plays in the health of our communities.

In conclusion, First Nations people possess unique knowledge and perspectives that can provide critical insights into the restoration of damaged landscapes.





Collaboration between First Nations people and non-Indigenous people is essential when working on landscape renewal and species protection projects across the region, combining traditional knowledge and contemporary scientific approaches to restore and maintain healthy and thriving ecosystems. Therefore, it is crucial to have First Nations people fully participating in all such projects, which means at the table when planning, designing, and delivering landscape-scale environmental projects.

Lester Coyne
Menang Elder
Aboriginal Reference Group Chair

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

South Coast Natural Resource Management (South Coast NRM) plays a critical role in delivering a regional vision for looking after the environment and communities where we live. This is clearly articulated in Southern Prospects, the South Coast Regional Strategy for Natural Resource Management, 2019-2024. South Coast NRM and the community affirm that meaningful engagement with First Nations peoples is an essential part of achieving this vision.

As a regional organisation responsible for engaging community in landscape management, threatened species work and restoration projects, we recognise there are unique opportunities for South Coast NRM to work and walk together with First Nations peoples and other Australians.

The purpose of this Indigenous Participation Plan is to guide South Coast NRM's collaboration with, and support for, Indigenous organisations and communities when planning and implementing natural resource management programs, activities and projects throughout the South Coast region. As a lead regional organisation, we take responsibility for increasing Indigenous participation through our own efforts and commitments and also through supporting and facilitating our community to develop pathways to increased Indigenous participation.

The Indigenous Participation Plan is a live document. Annual reviews are built into our program and governance frameworks and evaluation of achievements and barriers will form part of each version revision. The Indigenous Participation Plan builds upon South Coast NRM's previously developed Aboriginal Engagement Guidelines and Protocols from 2018^[1] and will sit as an essential strategic document for the organisation.

This Indigenous Participation Plan establishes an active model of engagement and participation via a co-design process between Aboriginal people, partner organisations and South Coast NRM. It is designed to provide an action-oriented approach to strengthen relationships, create employment opportunities and enhance respect for Aboriginal peoples and Country across the region, and beyond.

[1] Southern Prospects 2019-2024: The South Coast Regional Strategy for Natural Resource Management was developed in 2018 following extensive regional consultation. The 119-page document is available on the South Coast NRM Website, <https://southcoastnrm.com.au/southern-prospects/>

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

Through the development of objectives, outcomes, and actions, this Indigenous Participation Plan provides a measurable and practical guide for South Coast NRM to develop a framework for staff, partners and the wider natural resource management community, to deliver the plan. By doing so, this plan aims to support and increase the participation of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal people in all aspects of natural resource management across our region, from project design through to project delivery services and evaluation.

Our Indigenous Participation Plan forms an important part of South Coast NRM's cultural competency and skill development for staff and will be used to enhance relationships and underpin the best decisions about land and water management within the South Coast region. This plan includes identifiable measures of success which will be used for monitoring and reporting.



Students from Bremer Bay Primary School with Noongar educator Kimberley Gray

VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Following the Southern Prospects 2019-2024 regional plan, this Indigenous Participation Plan takes its overarching vision from the stated 25-year Cultural Heritage Aspiration^[2] and builds upon the five key principles:

ASPIRATION (25 + YEARS)

All natural resource management actions in the South Coast region recognise and respect natural cultural heritage values. Aboriginal practices, spiritual and cultural values are considered across all themes, to support conservation and protection of our natural environment.

- Protected natural cultural heritage places in partnership with the Aboriginal community.
- Community recognises, values and incorporates Aboriginal traditional ecological knowledge, land management practices and connection to Country.
- Aboriginal community with capacity to engage in all areas of natural resource management including managing Country.

Within the overarching context provided by Southern Prospects, a regional commitment to cultural integrity is made. To enable this, the Indigenous Participation Plan will be guided by, and will focus in on, the following principles:

- Acknowledge, value, and embed Aboriginal cultural knowledge and world views in all stages of project and program development through to delivery and evaluation.
- Respect First Nations people's rights, obligations, and responsibilities as traditional custodians of the land, sea and waterways.

[2] See Southern Prospects page 44 for the 25-year aspiration statement about cultural values within the region.

VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Support the promotion and strengthening of cultural connections and identity as a critical component of landscape and ecological restoration projects.
- Facilitate economic independence of Aboriginal people through providing opportunities for employment, service contracts and enterprise development.
- Establish and maintain effective relationships with Aboriginal people and entities from across the region and assist, facilitate and support non-Indigenous partner organisations to do the same.
- Demonstrate a commitment to First Nations community engagement and connection at all levels.
- Monitoring and evaluation of projects will include evaluation of Indigenous participation outcomes, barriers and successes.



Hon. Alannah MacTiernan with Fred Warren, Gnowangerup Native Plant Nursery, and Robbie Minter, Chair Gnowangerup Aboriginal Corporation

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

FIRST PRINCIPLES

The lands and waters of the South Coast region have been actively managed by First Nations peoples for thousands of years. South Coast NRM recognises that Aboriginal people are custodians of land and have obligations and responsibilities to care for Country. We recognise that deep knowledge of, and connection to, Country is vital for sustainability and that the connection to land and environment is of fundamental importance to the wellbeing of Aboriginal communities, and indeed all people.

South Coast NRM accepts that cultural values need to be recognised and respected to drive sustainable and positive natural resource management outcomes and to ensure cultural integrity within our projects and programs. Cultural heritage assets, and the people and values connected to those assets, should as a result significantly influence the formulation and delivery of management, protection, and restoration projects across the region.

VALUES AND PROJECTS

The South Coast region contains a rich and diverse array of Aboriginal cultural heritage assets and sites. Many, including the culturally significant natural environments of the Stirling Range and the Fitzgerald Biosphere, are of regional, national, and international significance and are well known to Noongar people from the region. Others are associated with the diverse and unique local environments for which the region is renowned. All are of significance to Indigenous people.

Over the years, South Coast NRM projects have been developed to document the oral histories of Aboriginal Elders, and to support a regional context for the preservation and transmission of knowledge. Within this general aim, specific projects have been implemented; for example, to engage Aboriginal youth, develop career pathways, improve cultural mapping of the region, and support sustainable Indigenous enterprises within the land restoration economy.

Looking forward, South Coast NRM is developing projects to expand the preservation and transmission of the cultural heritage of the South Coast region and support Aboriginal corporations and community to build capacity, increase engagement and promote self-determination. In recognition of the importance of cultural heritage to the success of natural resource management activity themes, South Coast NRM established, and maintains, an Aboriginal Reference Group to guide, promote and advise on cultural heritage aspects and priorities.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

NEW ERA FOLLOWING THE SETTLEMENT

The recent finalisation of the Southwest Native Title Settlement is an exciting development within our region. Six Regional Councils have been created to oversee the Settlement delivery as articulated within the six Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUA's) now signed and being established within each region. A significant portion of the South Coast NRM region falls within the Wagyl Kaip Regional Council boundary with a small portion also within Ballardong People's region.

As the Settlement begins to gather momentum, and the Regional Councils are established and staffed, there will be many opportunities to support the aspirations of Noongar/ Nyungar people that the Regional Council's will now be pursuing. A major focus will be joint-management initiatives and it is anticipated that South Coast NRM and other partner organisations will be identified as potential partner groups.

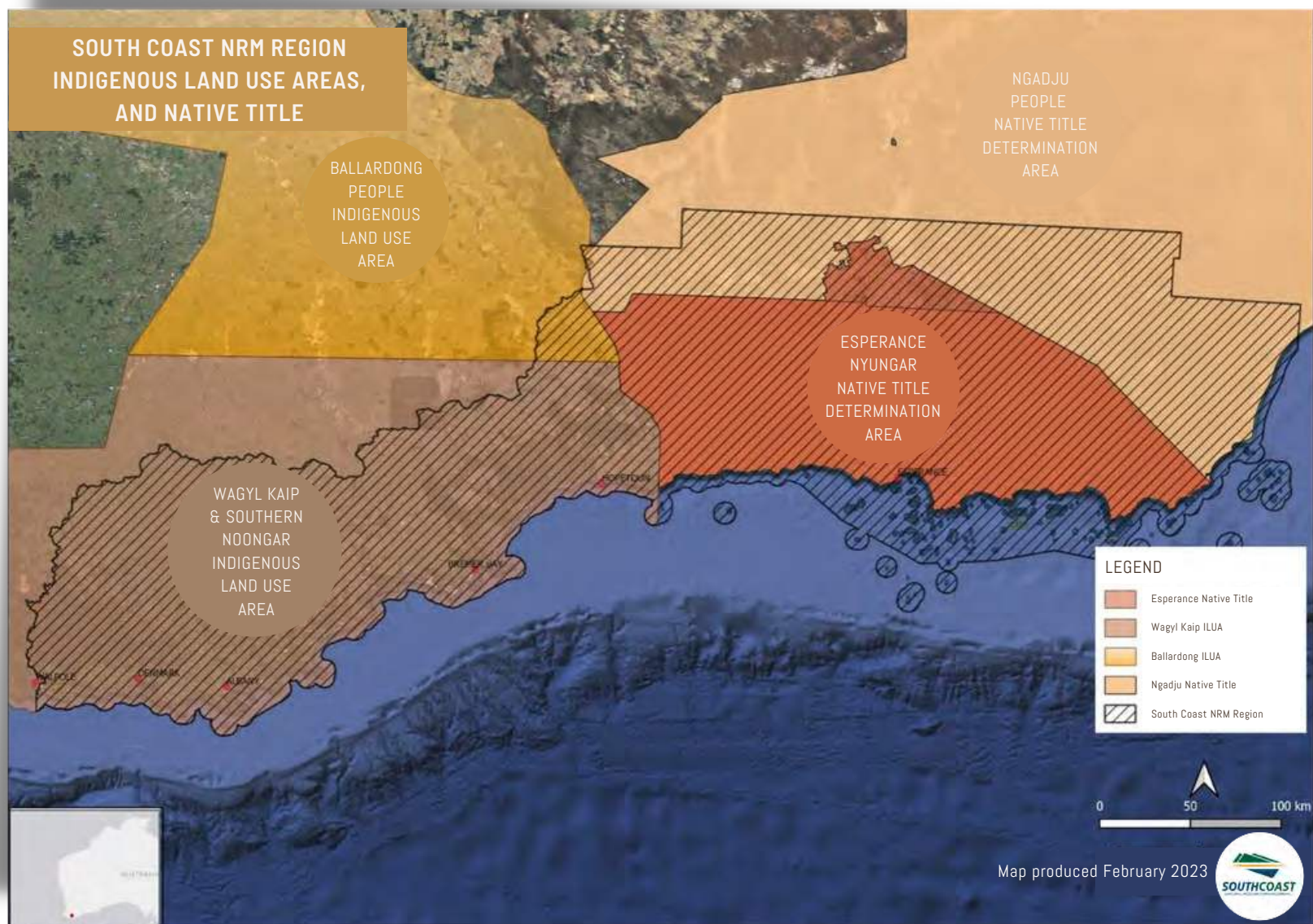
Across the entire South Coast region there are many Aboriginal groups that should be engaged to ensure cultural practices, languages and culturally important places are recognised, valued, and protected and with whom opportunities for on Country work can be developed. The region includes two Native Title Determination areas (Esperance Nyungar, and Ngadju); two regions that are managed by Regional Councils under Indigenous Land Use Agreements as part of the Southwest Native Title Settlement (Ballardong and Wagyl Kaip); and several Aboriginal corporations and entities including four with established Ranger programs (see Figure 1).

OPPORTUNITIES OPENING

It is the intention of this Indigenous Participation Plan to seek out, identify, and maximise, the opportunities for Indigenous entities from throughout the region to play a significant role in the design, delivery and evaluation of landscape and ecological restoration projects across the region. Indigenous organisations and entities are invited to provide details for a Directory of Aboriginal Business and Service Providers, which will assist promotion and connection of enterprises seeking to fulfil procurement of Aboriginal services.

With Native Title secured in parts of the region and Indigenous Land Use Agreement's established across the rest, circumstances are conducive for Indigenous enterprises and entities to play a much more substantial role in land management.

FIGURE 1. SOUTH COAST NRM REGION INDIGENOUS LAND USE AREAS, AND NATIVE TITLE



ACHIEVEMENTS

The South Coast region has a particularly rich Aboriginal cultural heritage with many recognised sites of importance to local Aboriginal people[4]. A key role for South Coast NRM is to engage the Aboriginal community in natural resource management, and for 23 years the organisation has engaged and worked in partnership with the Aboriginal community to deliver natural resource management outcomes for the region, grow capacity, and support engagement to enable this to occur.

To ensure that delivery of natural resource management projects and programs is aligned with Southern Prospects, dedicated Reference Groups comprised of experts and community members for each theme from Southern Prospects have been established and coordinated by South Coast NRM.

A dedicated Aboriginal Reference Group was created in 2010 and has played a critical role in determining, and then guiding, implementation of the organisation's investments and aspirations regarding cultural values.

Cultural Heritage is recognised as a bridging theme to achieve consistent outcomes across each of the biophysical themes of Land, Water, Coastal and Marine, and Biodiversity. This is reflected in the profile assigned to Culture within Southern Prospects 2019-2024. The Aboriginal Reference Group provides advice to the South Coast NRM Board and identifies investment priorities and targeted activities to be pursued to meet Southern Prospect's cultural objectives.

The Cultural Heritage theme has focused primarily on developing opportunities for Aboriginal people within the region to participate in, and contribute to, the management of priority natural resource sites of cultural significance. Aboriginal involvement in natural resource management has steadily increased with more active participation of Aboriginal communities in a range of projects across the region.

[4] Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage maintains an Aboriginal Heritage Inquiry System (AHIS) with some basic information publicly available. See: <https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/departments-of-planning-lands-and-heritage>. Also, there are many individual Property Management Plans and other documents which detail heritage sites within the region. It should be noted that both Wagyl Kaip Regional Council and Ballardong Peoples Regional Council has established a Cultural Advisory Committee that will provide advice and guidance on heritage matters within their regions.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

Achievements to date have focused on engagement, projecting cultural locations, capacity building and supporting enterprise development.

ENGAGING ABORIGINAL PEOPLE IN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Aboriginal people have been engaged in a range of activities across the broad spectrum of natural resource management activity including cultural awareness events, dual naming projects, development and installation of interpretive signage, cultural field trips, Aboriginal youth programs, Noongar Kaartdijin in Schools program, environmental works and graphic design.

PROTECTION AND RESTORATION OF CULTURAL LOCATIONS

Protection and restoration works have been guided by the Cultural Heritage Land and Sea Management Plans, developed through consultation with Traditional Owners and Elders and have engaged Aboriginal ranger teams and works teams to carry out much of the restoration works.

TRAINING

Training has been provided to Aboriginal people to achieve accreditation in horticulture and nursery skills, chemical use and safe handling, chainsaw operation and maintenance, tree felling, senior first aid, mentoring and Phytophthora dieback green card training. In addition, three Aboriginal School Based Trainees have been supported to date in gaining Certificate II in Business. The two all Aboriginal Green Army teams hosted by South Coast NRM have provided employment opportunities and a career pathway in natural resource management for eleven young Aboriginal men.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

SUSTAINABLE INDIGENOUS ENTERPRISES

Indigenous owned and led enterprises servicing the natural resource management sector and restoration works to heal Country have been supported and mentored through Aboriginal business forums. Aboriginal enterprises have been supported (Certificate II and Certificate III training, business mentoring and advice, capacity building and financial help for infrastructure, equipment, study tours and business planning and setup). Support has mostly been directed at enabling Aboriginal people to be involved in restoration economy works.

ABORIGINAL SCHOOL BASED TRAINEES

South Coast NRM has maintained a commitment to have at least one Aboriginal School based Trainee appointed each year. Working closely with partners and the TAFE our trainees are provided with a broad range of interesting and instructive activities aimed to provide solid foundation for understanding opportunities with natural resource management for career development.

ENGAGEMENT WITH INDIGENOUS YOUTH

The long running and successful Strong and Proud (Wumbudin koul-yee-rah) program has been delivered in Albany and Tambellup offering youth from the region after school opportunities to participate in culturally appropriate environmental and recreation activities built around the Noongar seasons.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Under the guidance of the Aboriginal Reference Group, South Coast NRM continues to actively pursue the eight Cultural Heritage outcomes outlined in the Regional Strategy, Southern Prospects[5]. As planning begins for the next Southern Prospects regional review, it is timely for the organisation to progress from a Regional Aboriginal Engagement Strategy to preparing an Indigenous Participation Plan. This Indigenous Participation Plan is specifically intended to map out and then evaluate the goal and pathways to increasing Aboriginal participation in natural resource management across the south coast and seeks to structure this participation into all levels from project design, service delivery and contract procurement.

This Indigenous Participation Plan will guide the process of maximising employment and enterprise opportunities for First Nations people through project development, staffing, contract engagement of Aboriginal suppliers and through monitoring and evaluation of projects against the plan.

Particular note should be made of the following two Cultural Heritage outcomes set by our regional community through Southern Prospects 2019-2024 that remain central to our strategies and aspirations. Throughout consultations these two primary outcomes have been identified as critical to the development of an effective and achievable Indigenous Participation Plan[6]:

Outcome H4: Sustainable Aboriginal enterprises established: Support the establishment of sustainable Aboriginal enterprises based on natural resource management principles by Aboriginal communities.

Outcome H6: Improved Aboriginal community capacity: The Aboriginal community has the capacity to be actively involved in natural resource management across the region.

kaarak "forest red tailed cockatoo"

[5] Southern Prospects 2019-24, Table of Outcomes and required actions, pp 44-45

[6] Southern Prospects 2019-24, Section 5.2.3, Future Directions, pp 44-45



AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT REGIONAL DELIVERY PARTNER PANEL AND ASSOCIATED PROJECT WORK ORDERS

Working in partnership with First Nations people is central and key to achieving improved on-ground outcomes for the environment. South Coast NRM has identified creating opportunities for First Nations people to participate in the design, delivery, and evaluation of Project Services, including seeking and identifying Aboriginal lead projects, as a critical first step in increasing the level of Indigenous participation in natural resource management across the South Coast Management Unit[7] (Management units as defined by the Australian Government). We will seek out opportunities to apply this concept across projects within the region.

Whereby South Coast NRM is engaged as a Regional Delivery Partner under a Deed of Standing Offer[8] with the Australian Government, South Coast NRM will work to meet and exceed the minimum targets for Indigenous employment and sub-contractor engagement and supply across the South Coast Region Management Unit. These targets are referred to as the 'mandatory minimum requirements for Indigenous participation' (MMR). South Coast NRM is committed to increase its level of Indigenous participation through a combination of Indigenous co-design, employment, supply contracts and the direct engagement of Indigenous Ranger groups, Indigenous owned enterprises, casual work teams and trainees.

This Indigenous Participation Plan establishes a mandatory minimum requirement of Indigenous participation target of 4% employment and 4% total value of sub-contracts which is above the Australian Government targets. We note that the Australian Government have classified the South Coast Management Units as a remote management unit requiring a higher level of Indigenous participation than non-remote management units. While this is a requirement, South Coast NRM fully endorses this requirement and is seeking to work beyond this with our community.

South Coast NRM acknowledge that these mandatory minimum requirement targets will deliver significant Indigenous employment and/or supplier use which are over and above the minimum target levels required by the Australian Government.

[7] Australian Government defined regional management units to provide environmental protection, sustainable agriculture and nature resource management services across Australia, of which the South Coast Management Unit is one (MU 37). See here for more details: <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/land/regional-delivery-partners/management-units>.

[8] The Deed of Standing Offer is essentially a head contract with the Australian Government.

REGIONAL DELIVERY

Through the co-design phase, all partners will be encouraged and, where appropriate and required, assisted to set and meet, mandatory minimum requirement targets of their own. South Coast NRM will work closely with Indigenous entities and all partner groups across the region to ensure that mandatory minimum requirement targets are factored into projects, from the project design phase and on.

The Australian Government's 2022 Approach to Market seeking a Regional Delivery Partner Panel for our region provides a significant opportunity for South Coast NRM to drive Indigenous participation and meet the goals and aspirations of Southern Prospects. South Coast has identified an alignment between the participation aspirations of Southern Prospects and the Approach to Market requirements that will be manifest through establishing the following work process principles:

PARTICIPATION BY FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES IN PROJECT DESIGN SERVICES

South Coast NRM recognises that it is critical to involve First Nations people in all stages of project development commencing with project design. Consequently, Indigenous entities from the region will be invited to be part of project design. South Coast NRM recognises that the costs to First Nations peoples and entities associated with participating in design will need to be met to ensure active and full participation. Having First Nations representation from commencement of project design will strongly guide the aspiration to maximise Indigenous participation within all projects and assist to identify procurement, contractual service delivery and evaluation opportunities.

ENVIRONMENTAL ON-GROUND WORKS AFFECTING FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES' SITES, PLACES, VALUES OR COMMUNITIES

Throughout the region there are many locations where there is a convergence between environmental projects and First Nations cultural sites, heritage or interest. As efforts to expand conceptualisation and delivery of restoration projects on a landscape scale are increased, it is anticipated that the opportunities for the organisation to align environmental works with cultural considerations will expand. South Coast NRM will work with Traditional Owners and Elders as well as local and regional First Nations organisations to ensure that Indigenous people are included in, supportive of, and benefiting from landscape renewal and ecological restoration projects.

REGIONAL DELIVERY

Beyond those areas where there is a known presence of Indigenous heritage that must be accounted for in environmental works, South Coast NRM is seeking to do better and do more in terms of cultural engagement across the region.

The organisation is anticipating that there are many landscapes, areas and sites that are of interest and of historical significance to Aboriginal communities. It is South Coast NRM's intent, wherever possible, to work with local Aboriginal communities to ascertain how and where land restoration or mapping activities that previously missed cultural dimension can and should be included. Actualising this intention will require close, sustained, and supported engagement with the Aboriginal community, and South Coast NRM is committed to this process.

PROJECT SERVICES

Across all projects and across the region, South Coast NRM will facilitate the engagement of First Nations peoples in the design and delivery of Project Services. This will require a particular focus on identifying opportunities to subcontract Indigenous enterprises and/or First Nations people to deliver services and will also require identification of barriers to participation that need to be addressed.

Regarding projects and landscapes with particular significance to First Nations peoples, South Coast NRM will ensure that First Nations entities are able to provide a lead in the design and aspirations for all such projects as they relate to cultural values. This will include having First Nations members within any design team from commencement of project scoping.

OTHER PROJECT SERVICES

There are Project Services that will be required within landscape renewal and ecological restoration projects across the region that can only be delivered by First Nations peoples and entities. In all such cases, South Coast NRM will work closely with First Nations people to ensure the appropriate entity and relevant Aboriginal Elders and representatives are engaged to provide the services.

Services that can only be delivered by First Nations people may include:

Cultural Practices: Supporting First Nations people to conduct cultural practices such as Welcome to Country, smoking ceremonies, language maintenance, collection of bushfoods and medicines.

REGIONAL DELIVERY

Value Survey and/or Assessment: Supporting the survey and assessment of site/s to identify and record significant cultural values and resources and assisting the correlation of cultural values with environmental and ecological values within projects.

On Country Visits: Assisting First Nations people to reconnect to Country, including sharing knowledge and stories with young people and undertaking activities that contribute positively to the health of Country.

Cultural Site Management: Supporting the active management of culturally significant sites.

Cultural records: Assisting First Nations people to locate and access management plans, ethnographic research and historical records that may contain material of benefit and use to contemporary First Nations communities' efforts to become more active in natural resource management across the region.



Students from Gairdner Primary School with Noongar Elder, May Penny

INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION TARGETS

The South Coast NRM Indigenous Participation Plan targets will be applied within our own organisation and will also be applied to partners and sub-contracted delivery providers across the region. Achievements will be measured and registered across all our projects and will monitor participation achievements in terms of staff levels, subcontracts, employment, trainees and provision of other services.

ADOPTED AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT TARGETS

South Coast NRM will achieve the following targets by the end of the contracted project:

TARGET	CURRENT STATUS
15% or greater value of subcontracts (requirement; greater than 4%) to Indigenous enterprises to assist with delivering the contracted goods and services in the remote area	13.4% of subcontracts (average over 4 years) to Indigenous enterprises to assist with delivering the contracted goods and services in current Regional Land Partnership project
17% or greater value of Indigenous employment (requirement; greater than 4%) Indigenous employment (on average) of the contracted goods and services to be delivered in the remote area	13.9% of Indigenous employment (average over 4 years) to assist with delivering the contracted goods and services in current Regional Land Partnership projects

Note: As per the Approach to Market tender documents regarding setting Indigenous Participation targets for our region and with our partners, the following components will be taken into consideration:

The local employment market, including consideration of the number of Indigenous businesses, workers and job seekers, and their relevant skills, capabilities, qualifications and training;

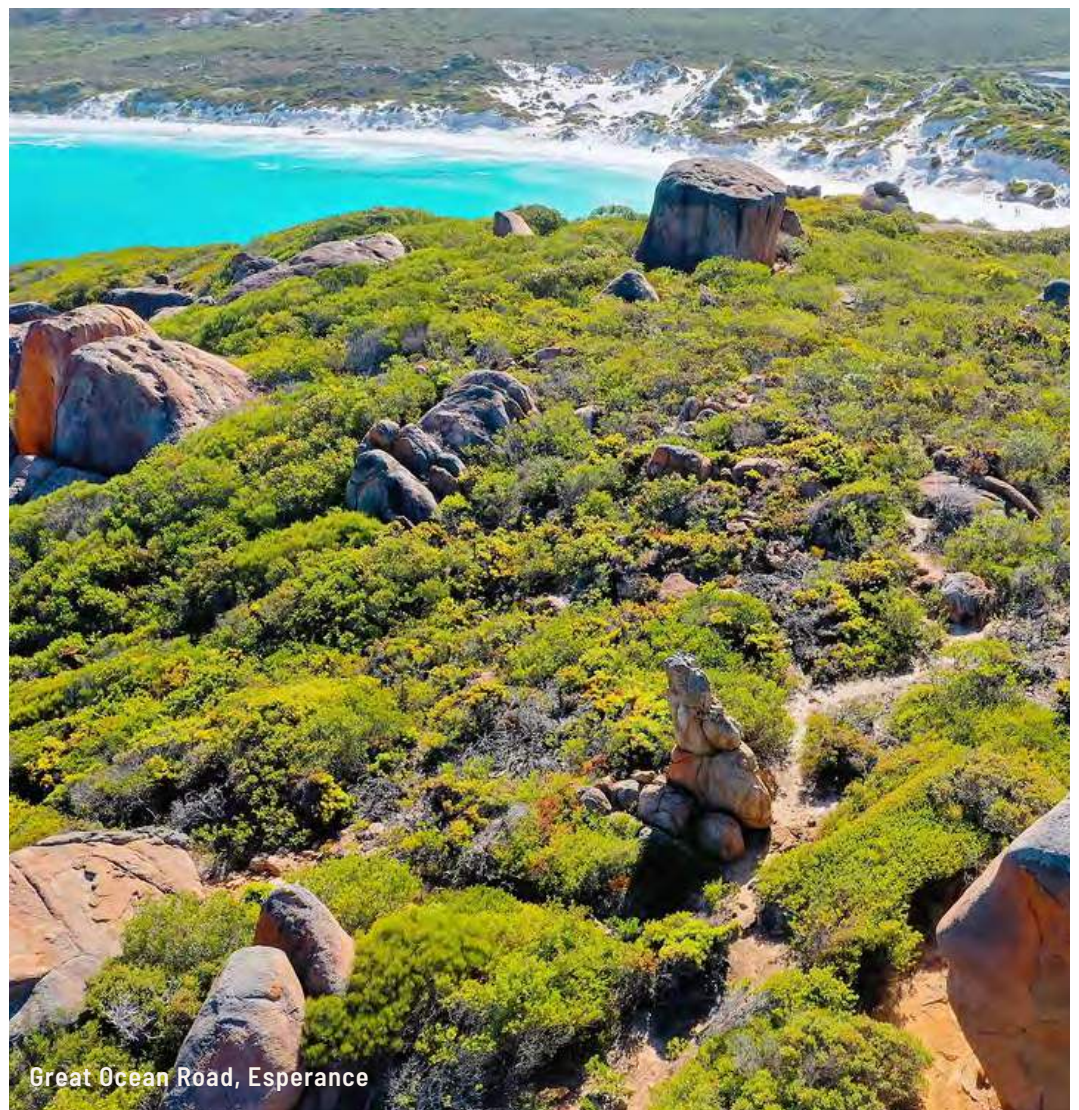
The scale, value and location of the contract, and skills and capabilities required to deliver the goods and services;

INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION TARGETS

The availability of supply-side services to support the meeting of any targets and assist in building the capacity of Indigenous businesses and jobseekers to take up opportunities; and

Existing Commonwealth, State and territory policies and/ or targets.

South Coast NRM will comply with the Mandatory Set-Aside arrangements and will actively provide Indigenous small and medium enterprises with the opportunity to demonstrate value for money in respect of remote procurements[9].



Great Ocean Road, Esperance

[9] South Coast NRM will establish, maintain and update a Directory of Aboriginal Service Providers within the region which will be available to partner and community groups from the region. As part of our procurement and sub-contracting processes tenderers will be advised to give preference to Aboriginal service providers from their area and advised of the Mandatory Set Aside arrangements. South Coast NRM will wherever possible assist Indigenous enterprises to seek and secure service delivery contracts.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Indigenous Participation Plan is a framework for South Coast NRM to provide, promote, monitor and assess participation achievements and obstacles for the next five years, particularly in relation to meeting its obligation under contract with the Australian Government.

Responsibility for delivering the Indigenous Participation Plan will be assessed as follows:

ENDORISING AND ADOPTION

South Coast NRM Chairperson on behalf of South Coast NRM Board

GUIDANCE ON DELIVERY

South Coast NRM Board, Chief Executive Officer, staff and Aboriginal Reference Group. This will include responsibility for developing partnerships, memorandums of understanding, and agreements with First Nations entities across the region.

APPLICATION, DELIVERY, AND PROMOTION

Operational staff under direction and guidance of the Executive Manager Operations, and Cultural Heritage Program Manager with support from the Cultural Heritage team. This element will further extend to subcontractors, partner groups, and First Nations entities with facilitation and support from South Coast NRM staff.

MONITORING AND REPORTING

Chief Executive Officer, Executive Manager Operations, Cultural Heritage Program Manager, and Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator.

REVIEW, EVALUATION AND UPDATE

Aboriginal Reference Group, Cultural Heritage Program Manager, and First Nations groups and individuals from across the region.

OPPORTUNITIES AND SERVICES

The first major opportunity to enact the Indigenous Participation Plan, to build on the previous leadership in Indigenous participation, is through the Australian Governments Regional Delivery Partners Panel for environmental protection, sustainable agriculture and natural resource management services (pending the establishment of a Deed of Standing Offer and subsequent Project Work Orders).

Within the tender response to the Australian Government, South Coast NRM has collaboratively developed with the community and proposed five Investment Concepts to address the currently released environmental outcomes as outlined by the Australian Government (Outcome 1: Species and Landscapes and Outcome 3: Ramsar Wetlands Protection[10]), noting that the sustainable agricultural outcomes are yet to be released at the time of this version of the Indigenous Participation Plan.

The five draft Investment Concepts addressing the Australian Government's environmental outcomes which formed part of South Coast NRM's tender response are:

Sustaining biodiversity and cultural values of the Fitz-Stirling through landscape-scale action

Creating Custodians of Kepwari and Qualliup (A First Nations led Ramsar Investment Concept)

Safeguarding the South Coast's priority threatened mammals: An integrated threat management approach

Boosting Birds on the Brink: Recovering highly threatened birds on the South Coast, WA

Cockatoo Comeback: Safeguarding and enriching black cockatoo habitat on the South Coast

OPPORTUNITIES AND SERVICES

These draft investment concepts each intentionally contain significant potential for specific action projects to be designed in consultation with partner groups to deliver targeted outcomes. A crucial component of such consultations will be with First Nations people and First Nations entities.

During co-design the expectation will be that First Nations groups will be involved from project design phase and will be responsible for determining the level of Indigenous participation to be achieved through service delivery, sub-contracts and work teams.



[10] Environment outcome logics for Regional Delivery Partners Panel: <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/land/regional-delivery-partners/outcome-logics>

IMPLEMENTATION AND ACTIONS

To attain success for this Indigenous Participation Plan, South Coast NRM will embed Indigenous participation as a recognised project outcome into all relevant areas of our work, with the goal of ensuring participation becomes a 'business as usual' approach. This will include the following key objectives, outcomes, and activities.

Deliver Cultural Competency training to all South Coast NRM Board and staff members and seek to extend these opportunities to partner organisations;

Establish and deepen working relationships with Aboriginal groups and partners across the region;

Facilitate multiple format workshops and forums with Aboriginal groups and partners to develop participation strategies;

Commit our organisation to achieving minimum employment and trainee targets for Indigenous staff;

Align the procurement policies of our organisation and our partners with Indigenous procurement policy at a local, state and national level;

Ensure that our internal procurement policy and processes clearly outline how Indigenous participation is best pursued;

Facilitate and support Aboriginal participation opportunities with our partners;

Develop, maintain, and update a Directory of Indigenous Business and Service Providers for the South Coast region;

Work with a local Indigenous organisation to update South Coast NRM's Aboriginal Engagement Guidelines and Protocols document within the next year;

Continue to identify opportunities to support, promote and build the capacity of Indigenous enterprises and Indigenous service providers within the region;

Celebrate success and promote the benefits of increasing Indigenous participation within natural resource management across the region.

IMPLEMENTATION AND ACTIONS

REGIONAL STRATEGY AND INVESTMENT

South Coast NRM's Aboriginal Reference Group have for several years established the investment priorities for the organisation with regard to the Cultural Heritage theme of Southern Prospects.

As an expert advisory panel, the Aboriginal Reference Group has been tasked with identifying investment targets that best advance the key objectives of the Cultural Heritage theme, which is considered a bridging theme together with Regional Capacity, that provides foundations and enables actions to support the achievement of the biophysical aspirations of Southern Prospects (Land, Water, Biodiversity and Coastal and Marine).

The key objectives and outcomes identified by the Aboriginal Reference Group continue to guide investment planning for the organisation. Summarised in Table 1. is the reference group's priority activities and timeframes to pursue these objectives and outcomes. These key objectives and outcomes will provide the framework for achieving the goals of our Indigenous Participation Plan.



Lindsay Dean, speaking with Ms Rebecca Stephens MLA - Member for Albany

TABLE 1. KEY OBJECTIVES, OUTCOMES AND ACTIONS IDENTIFIED BY THE ABORIGINAL REFERENCE GROUP

KEY OBJECTIVE/S	OUTCOME	KEY ACTIONS	TIMEFRAMES
PROTECTED NATURAL CULTURAL HERITAGE PLACES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY	<u>Improved understanding of climate change:</u> Identify current and potential Aboriginal Cultural sites at risk of climate change impacts	Desktop review of sites for risks associated with climate change.	2024
		Identify and manage impacts of climate change on documented Cultural sites.	2026
		Work with Elders to identify and manage sites of significance (including those on private land)	2024
		Work with local groups to develop a protocol which can be used for unmapped sites.	2025
		Investigate opportunities for Aboriginal property, or as partners to implement carbon storage and carbon credit projects.	2026
	<u>Protection of heritage places:</u> Identification and protection of significant Cultural natural heritage places in partnership with the Aboriginal community	Identify and manage priority sites and registered sites.	2023
		Map landscape scale projects and activities in consultation with the Aboriginal community and corporations.	2025
		Develop a demonstration project to raise awareness of Cultural heritage and promote opportunities to replicate the approach.	2024
		Projects are built on collaborative knowledge including Cultural and biodiversity values.	2024
		Support the progression of joint management in Conservation and Land Management Act lands and local government reserves.	2024
	<u>Improved awareness and education:</u> The wider community understands, respects and is involved in Aboriginal Cultural heritage	Support the Aboriginal community to be actively involved in sharing knowledge.	2024
		Provide opportunities to improve the understanding of Cultural heritage values.	2024
		Support the adoption of dual naming across the region.	2026
		Increase the profile of Aboriginal corporations across the region.	2025
		Develop and implement school programs for Cultural education.	2025

KEY OBJECTIVE/S	OUTCOME	KEY ACTIONS	TIMEFRAMES
TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE	<u>Improved information:</u> Support the retention of Traditional Ecological Knowledge and land management practices with respect for intellectual property	Review and develop intellectual property rights. Support incorporation of Traditional Ecological Knowledge into property management plans. Facilitate the incorporation process with South Coast NRM plans and projects, projects run by partner groups and where appropriate establish opportunities for Traditional Owners to work with Shires, private landowners and the not-for-profit sector with conservation estate interests. Update existing Cultural heritage land and sea management plans to ensure intellectual property is protected. Work with each Aboriginal corporation to identify Elders appropriate for carrying story across generations. Direct transfer of Traditional Ecological Knowledge to younger generations by living experience (learning by doing). Support activities that allow younger community members to be on Country with Elders.	2024 2026 2024 2025 2027
		Assist other South Coast NRM internal programs and projects to identify opportunities to integrate Traditional Ecological Knowledge. Improve community capacity to integrate Traditional Ecological Knowledge into land management plans and projects. Multi-level focus from joint management with Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Shire partnerships and even private land holders and not for profit conservation properties. Improve the capacity of the community to engage with partner groups and the wider community. This should include training in Cultural awareness delivery, research, publications, and use of media.	2024 2025 2025

KEY OBJECTIVE/S	OUTCOME	KEY ACTIONS	TIMEFRAMES
CAPACITY TO ENGAGE IN ALL AREAS OF NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	<u>Sustainable Aboriginal enterprises established:</u> Support the establishment of sustainable Aboriginal enterprises based on natural resource management principles by Aboriginal communities	Consider how to best support sustainable Indigenous businesses in areas such as Cultural tourism, environmental services and bush food production, landscape restoration and Cultural mapping.	2024
		Investigate the development of a chapter of Noongar Chamber of Commerce within the South Coast. Include investigation of networking services and entities tied to Indigenous procurement policies.	2025
		Host Aboriginal enterprise forums to promote understanding of the many opportunities emerging within natural resource management and ecological restoration projects.	2025
		Provide collaborative support for Ranger groups, this can include training and mentoring activities that assist ranger groups to become more effective and independent.	2024
	<u>Improved Aboriginal community capacity:</u> The Aboriginal community has the capacity to be actively involved in natural resource management across the region.	Improving knowledge and capacity of young Aboriginal people to understand gain access to and become participants in natural resource management activities and projects.	2025
		Support Aboriginal ranger programs across the region and support employment in resource management activities for Aboriginal people including through casual works teams. Assist partner organisations to establish partnerships with the Aboriginal community.	2025
		Support Native Title groups to build capacity to get back on Country and manage land.	2026
		Build the capacity of the Indigenous community including remote hinterland towns (which currently lack support).	2027
	<u>Develop agreed protocols:</u> Protocols continue to be established for Aboriginal engagement and partnerships in natural resource management.	Maintain an ongoing review and development of Protocols. When requested assist partner groups to establish protocols in consultation with First Nations partners.	2024
		Develop Memorandums of Understanding with the two Native Title groups and with other Aboriginal Corporations from across the region.	2025
		Establish protocols and support local alliances to involve and promote the aspirations of remote hinterland towns.	2025

INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION



MEASURES AND INDICATORS

A series of potential measures and indicators to evaluate Cultural Heritage outcomes were recommended to support Southern Prospects 2019-2024 aspirations. These outcomes remain relevant and continue to act as a guide to setting targets for projects and programs and establishing standard approaches to measurement.

Indicators are selected according to the principles of cost, simplicity, consistency, practicality, and capacity to deliver information across the region. Beyond the Indigenous Participation Plan, these measures will form the base inputs for monitoring and assessing performance for review by South Coast NRM as part of its normal financial and business reporting processes, and will support annual reporting of Strategy achievements.

Potential Indicators – Cultural Heritage theme (Southern Prospects 2019-24, Table. 5.2. page 46)

ASSET	INDICATOR	MEASURE
Aboriginal Cultural Heritage (knowledge and places)	Aboriginal Cultural Heritage considered and incorporated into natural resource management planning and projects	<p>Number of Aboriginal people and organisations consulted and involved in natural resource management activities.</p> <p>Number of cultural projects, training sessions undertaken. Number of jointly managed areas.</p> <p>Number of Aboriginal enterprises delivering services through sub-contracts.</p> <p>Number of Aboriginal people receiving training and employment in natural resource management.</p>
Other Cultural Heritage (knowledge and places)	Other Cultural Heritage considered and incorporated into natural resource management planning and projects	<p>Number of people and organisations:</p> <p>Consulted and involved natural resource management activities;</p> <p>Number of cultural projects, training sessions undertaken.</p>

EVALUATION

In addition to continuing to measure these indicators, and for the purposes of South Coast NRM's annual monitoring and evaluation of the Indigenous Participation Plan, the following will form part of the Project Plan for each specific project:

TARGET	CURRENT STATUS
% (greater than 4%) value of subcontracts to Indigenous enterprises to assist with delivering the contracted goods and services in the remote area	% (greater than 4%) Indigenous employment (on average) of the contracted goods and services to be delivered in the remote area
% (greater than 4%) Indigenous employment (on average) of the contracted goods and services to be delivered in the remote area	% value of Indigenous employment (average over 4 years) to assist with delivering the contracted goods and services in current RLP project.



Steven McCleery, South Coast NRM Aboriginal School Based Trainee, with Johanna Tomlinson, Hon. Reece Whitby and Ms Rebecca Stephens MLA

REPORTING ON AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

South Coast NRM will report on progress against the mandatory minimum requirement targets in this Indigenous Participation Plan on an annual basis via the Indigenous Procurement Policy Reporting Solution platform. This includes providing details of subcontracts or purchases made with Indigenous enterprises, total full time equivalent workforce for the quarter, and total full time equivalent Indigenous workforce for the quarter.

During the Deed of Standing Offer period (expected to be five years starting in July 2023), South Coast NRM will report annually as required by the Australian Government. This may include reporting against:

Regional Capacity Services (the Indigenous Participation Plan sits under, and is supported through, the delivery of Regional Capacity Services) progress highlighting key achievements and/or issues;

Any proposed adaptive management actions for the Regional Capacity Services;

Community and First Nations peoples' participation and investment levels;

Reporting on Work Healthy and Safety; and

Reporting against the Indigenous Participation Plan by sub-contractors will be confirmed following engagement of South Coast NRM for Regional Capacity Services through the Deed of Standing Offer and then subsequent Project Work Orders (where project activities and sub-contracts will be developed).

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SCHEDULE OF REVIEW AND UPDATE

South Coast NRM will annually review, report and update on the Indigenous Participation Plan, achievements, challenges and learnings, to both internal and external stakeholders.

Indigenous Participation Plan Version Review Table

Version (Year)	Version 1 2023		
Achievements	Submitted		
Challenges	Short timeframe		
Learnings	Value of broad consultation		

As a result of the co-design process, South Coast NRM's Indigenous Participation Plan will be reviewed, and a Version 2 prepared for submission with the project proposals following co-design.

Subsequently, South Coast NRM's Indigenous Participation Plan will be reviewed, and updated appropriately, on each of the following occasions:

- 1. When the South Coast NRM provides a Project Design for Project Services;
- 2. Where there are changes in the delivery of any Services; and
- 3. On an annual basis

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SCHEDULE OF REVIEW AND UPDATE

SCHEDULED REVIEW DATE	KEY ELEMENTS FOR REVIEW
October 2023 – December 2023	<p>Facilitate and incorporate deeper Indigenous Participation Plan revision;</p> <p>Entering co-design phase with Australian Government and community for environmental projects (and potentially sustainable agricultural projects); and</p> <p>Broaden scope of Indigenous Participation Plan beyond Australian Government contracts.</p>
October 2024 – December 2024	Annual review
October 2025 – December 2025	Annual review
October 2026 – December 2026	Annual review
October 2027 – December 2027	<p>Annual review</p> <p>Detailed review and evaluation of Indigenous Participation Plan as part of 5-year Australian Government contract</p>

PROCESS FOR INCORPORATION OF FEEDBACK INTO THE INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION PLAN

South Coast NRM has sought and incorporated feedback on this Version One of the Indigenous Participation Plan from the South Coast NRM's Aboriginal Reference Group, and individual Aboriginal community members. A register of persons who have reviewed Version One is available.

SCHEDULE OF REVIEW AND UPDATE

During the co-design phase, extensive consultation will be undertaken with Indigenous groups across the region as specific projects are designed, scoped, and developed. As part of this process the Indigenous Participation Plan will be revisited and adjusted resulting in Version 2, which will reflect the participation strategies and targets negotiated directly with project partners during co-design.

Negotiated partnering agreements and/or memorandums of understanding with key Indigenous organisations from the region will be pursued in year one of the Indigenous Participation Plan. Any such agreements will play a significant role in amending and refining the Indigenous Participation Plan beyond Version Two.

Similarly, as engagement with smaller groups from across the region is developed around projects, South Coast NRM will utilise and update the Indigenous Participation Plan to reflect new opportunities generated. The annual review and annual republishing of South Coast NRM's Indigenous Participation Plan will reflect and update any such refinements to targets, strategies, monitoring requirements and outcomes.



NEXT STEPS FOR THE INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The South Coast NRM Indigenous Participation Plan will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis with each new iteration released as a new version. The first review will be undertaken in mid-later 2023 to form Version Two. The following development targets will be incorporated into the Indigenous Participation Plan Version Two:

Expanded consultation, feedback and review of the Indigenous Participation Plan: Further consultation and feedback will be sought from Indigenous groups, corporations and First Nations peoples from the region. This will include targeted feedback from Indigenous entities with existing Ranger Teams and other capacity to provide project services. Feedback will also be sought from non-Indigenous partner groups to commence the process of facilitating and supporting Indigenous engagement and participation at the local level. Consultation outcomes and feedback will be incorporated into Version Two.

Project Design: During co-design phases, direct negotiations will occur about specific, on-ground projects. These negotiations will include opportunities and commitments for Indigenous participation, employment and sub-contracts. It should be noted that negotiations around specific projects will also include non-Indigenous subcontractors with an expectation that Indigenous participation outcome goals will be established. The project specific outcome opportunities and goals will be incorporated into Version Two.

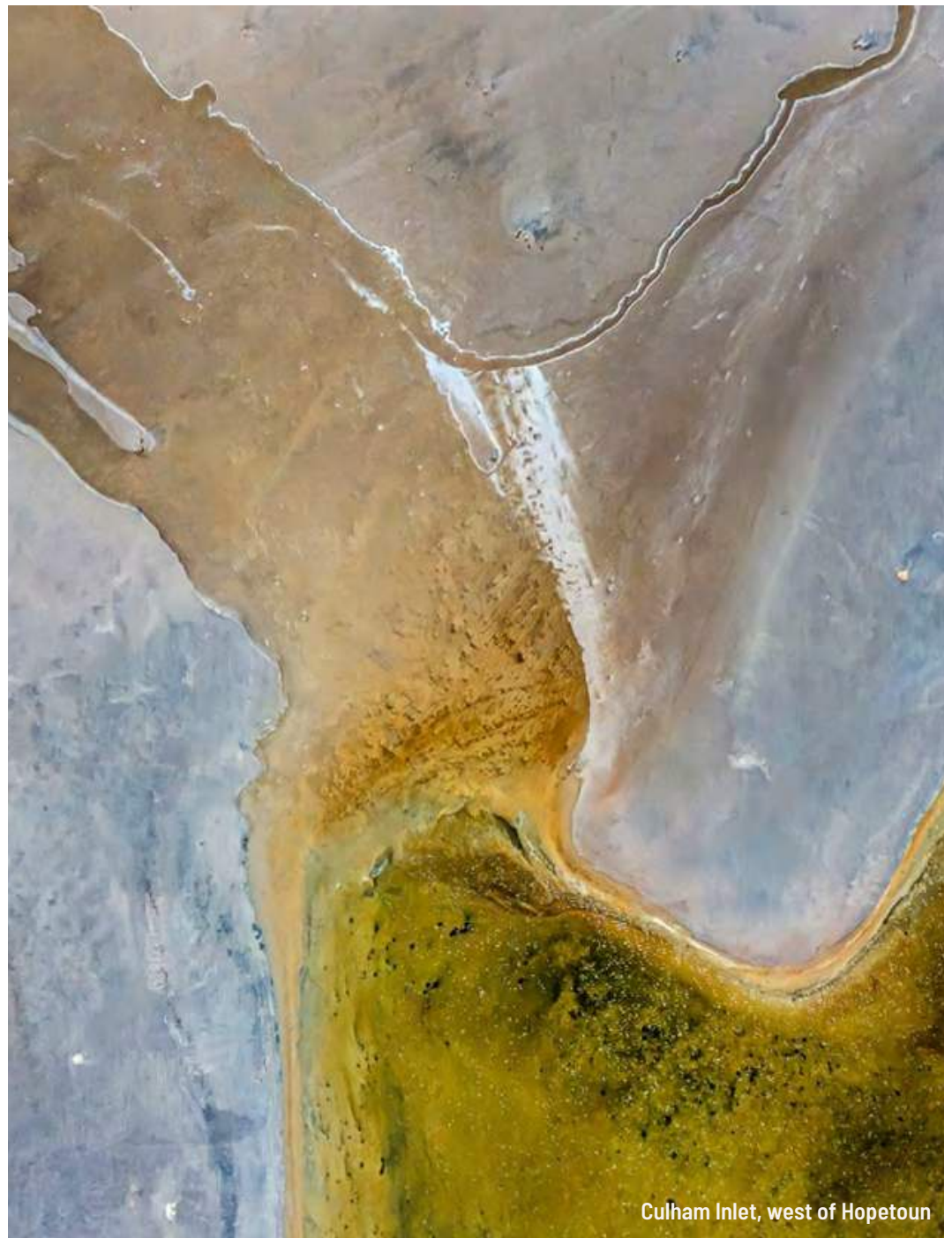
Partnering Agreements: It is South Coast NRM's intention to develop formal Partnering Agreements with the two Native Title bodies and the two Regional Councils contained within the South Coast region. A commitment to enter a facilitated process to establish a Partnering Agreement process with Esperance Tjaltjraak Native Title Aboriginal Corporation has been agreed and the expectation is that this Partnering Agreement will be completed and incorporated into Version Two.

Capacity and Aspiration Workshops: Workshops will be held with participating Aboriginal businesses, entities, and service providers from the region to determine their current capacity, aspirations and barriers to participation in natural resource management. Information gathered will be incorporated into Version Two.

NEXT STEPS

Aboriginal Business and Service Providers Directory: An Aboriginal Business and Service Providers Directory has been established to provide accurate and up to date contact and service information for participating organisations. Version Two will include access to the directory and contact details for participating Indigenous enterprises.

Annual Report Template: An annual report template will be added to Version Two and filled in as part of each subsequent edition and update.



Culham Inlet, west of Hopetoun

THE SOUTH COAST REGION



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