



Clean Air and Urban Landscapes Hub

National Environmental Science Programme

Indigenous Engagement and Participation Strategy

for the Clean Air and Urban Landscapes Hub,
National Environmental Science Programme

Version 1

1 May 2015



Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners and Country

The Clean Air and Urban Landscapes (CAUL) Hub acknowledges Australia’s Traditional Owners and pays respect to the past and present Elders of the nation’s Aboriginal communities. CAUL honours the deep spiritual, cultural and customary connections of Traditional Owners to the Australian landscape.

Table of Contents

Vision and Purpose	3
1: Overview	3
2: Timing	5
3: Key Deliverables & Indicators	11
Appendix A: Guidelines from The Department of the Environment Indigenous Engagement and Participation Strategy 2014.....	10
Appendix B: Key reference documents.....	14

This strategy is based on

Department of the Environment 2014, *National Environmental Science Programme Indigenous Engagement and Participation Strategy Guidelines v1.0*, Australian Government Department of the Environment, Canberra, Australia.

Vision and Purpose

To increase awareness, collaboration and participation of Indigenous Australians in order to improve the development and uptake of research, business operations and knowledge and communications activities of the Clean Air and Urban Landscapes NESP Hub.

1. Overview

Clean air and urban landscapes are of major significance to Australia's economic prosperity, environmental sustainability and population health. The Clean Air and Urban Landscapes Hub (CAUL) will help transform urban systems and enhance the liveability of Australia's cities and towns by delivering an integrated program of research on the quality of air and waterways, urban ecology and public health, led by global experts in these fields. The transformative potential of CAUL will be maximized by including diverse perspectives on urban environments, especially the perspectives of Indigenous Australians.

This document, the CAUL Indigenous Engagement and Participation Strategy (IEP Strategy), outlines the research and operational processes that will guide our collaboration with and the participation of Indigenous Australians in the development and delivery of our program of research. The NESP Indigenous Engagement and Participation Strategy Guidelines (April 2015) and an understanding of the success of the Northern Australian NERP Hub Indigenous activities have heavily guided the CAUL IEP Strategy Version 1. The CAUL IEP Strategy is a living document with changes occurring as our practices and approach evolves. This is particularly the case for this first version, as we note that our IEP Strategy will be developed further in consultation with a proposed reference group of Indigenous stakeholders, which is yet to be established. Until this group has had substantial input into this strategy it should be considered as an 'intention statement' of CAUL and a framework in which to realize this intention. This strategy is also yet to receive endorsement by our recently formed steering committee, which will include a member with an Indigenous Australian perspective. The CAUL Hub IEP Strategy Version 2 will be presented alongside the Research Plan Version 2 in October 2015, after these key people and groups have convened and provided input.

CAUL researchers are committed to genuine engagement with and participation of Indigenous Australians through a range of strategies that are relevant to the spectrum of cultural sensitivities and views. This is essential to building strong, effective and mutually respectful relationships. This strategy is aimed at giving the chance for Indigenous Australian stakeholders to shape help shape our research through the inclusion of Indigenous Australian perspectives and knowledge. It also offers the opportunity to build partnerships and increase our understanding of Indigenous communities in our cities, and those working with our partner institutions through existing reconciliation action plans and other engagement strategies, programs and projects.

The CAUL IEP Strategy will form a key element of the research planning process and our knowledge transfer and communications strategy.

- For *project investors*, the IEP Strategy will ensure that CAUL activities are culturally appropriate, inclusive and have provided opportunities to add Indigenous Australian knowledge to the research outcomes. It will also ensure existing Indigenous Australian projects or programmes such as Reconciliation Plans at our four research institutions are used as guides and added to where possible
- For *project researchers*, the IEP Strategy will assist their cultural awareness and provide opportunities for improvement in their research outputs
- For *research users*, the IEP Strategy will enhance research outputs by providing opportunities for Indigenous Australian knowledge to shape research protocols
- For *public audiences*, the IEP Strategy will provide new ways of understanding Indigenous Australian perspectives of the urban environments

A major opportunity for CAUL lies in its highly interdisciplinary nature. Integrating an Indigenous Australian perspective across these different disciplinary areas will be a focus of the Strategy. We will focus on maximizing participation activities that best align with CAUL's strategic research plan and are achievable with available resources, specifically: identifying key Indigenous organisations and people in the cities where our research is focused, or whose expertise covers our research project areas; personal contact and workshops with Indigenous stakeholders allowing iterative refinement of research projects in a respectful and collaborative manner; outreach activities that foster development of long-lasting public communications such as on-line tools, maps and visualizations. To complement these activities, we will also access the expertise or existing strategies of CAUL hosts and partners, especially as we develop and start to implement our Indigenous Engagement and Participation in Research Protocols. See Appendix A for the guidelines as provided by the Department of the Environment, which will be followed.

Innovative aspects of the Strategy will include:

- High quality visualizations and maps of urban environmental data with input from Indigenous Australians
- Empowerment of urban communities through citizen science projects which offer Indigenous Australian perspectives, and opportunity to interact and learn from local traditional owner groups
- Increased uptake of Indigenous Australian knowledge through specific outreach to new audiences for science communication via vehicles such as architect - design collaborations and projects run in collaboration with local artists
- Integration of Indigenous Australian perspectives on urban landscapes, including an annual public discussion series about Indigenous Australian perspectives on future city design and urban ecology.

In developing this strategy CAUL recognises that there are a number of resources and recognised initiatives and protocols that showcase direct engagement and collaboration with Indigenous Australian communities. We acknowledge the Guidelines (2014 and 2015) provided by the Department of Environment for the list provided below, extracted from Guidelines (2014 and 2015) and provide their list of relevant documents and resources in Appendix B of this strategy for reference.

2. Timing

By the completion of the contract period, the CAUL Hub will have significantly shaped the research landscape for clean air and urban landscapes in Australia. Through this IEP Strategy, it will also have generated a long-lasting archive of data, maps and visualizations, policy papers and public communications inclusive of an Indigenous Australian perspective, derived through collaboration and participation of traditional owner groups and key stakeholders in the cities that we work. These achievements will depend on specific goals set during the establishment of the CAUL research program; building awareness and confidence in CAUL among Indigenous stakeholders and communities; understanding potential research opportunities to include Indigenous Australian knowledge and their research needs; and developing effective public communications with other disciplines.

The IEP Strategy will achieve these goals through three phases of implementation– **Awareness**, **Engagement** and **Transformation**. Note that these phases are not distinct, 1) they are aligned with the Knowledge Brokering and Communications Strategy, and the Research Plan; and 2) they have significant overlap and run at different times for different CAUL research projects. Additionally, a number of these goals will require iterative development, especially over the next few months as we engage with Indigenous stakeholders to better understand their needs, undertake cultural awareness training for the CAUL Hub and identify opportunities for collaboration.

Phase 1: Awareness

As a new research hub, CAUL starts with a low profile among its participant communities, including Indigenous Australian communities. The first goal of the Strategy will be to raise awareness of the Hub. A significant aspect of this phase will be articulating CAUL's strategic aims and developing communications processes and protocols to engage with the appropriate Indigenous Australian groups, individuals and organisations. Effective internal communications and training will help to demonstrate to hub members the need for cultural awareness, ways to increase participation of Indigenous Australian people in the development of their projects and the value that can be added to these projects by such participation. The *Awareness* phase will also be marked by extensive one-on-one contact between the CAUL's Knowledge Broker and key individuals within host institutions and Indigenous Australian organisations or traditional owner groups to gain an

understanding of relevant processes already underway. The *Awareness* phase will be substantially complete by the time of the first Annual Progress report, but background awareness-raising activities will continue throughout the project.

Phase 2: Engagement

Engagement overlaps with the awareness phase significantly. Once significant project and 'brand' awareness within Indigenous Australian stakeholder groups or individuals has been achieved, and the IEP strategy has been shaped in response to this consultation, Indigenous Participation will move to an *Engagement* phase. This phase will be marked by significant dialogue with research users and Indigenous Australian stakeholders through one-to-one contact and workshops. An example of an initial goal for this phase will be to produce a background paper summarizing the existing state of understanding regarding Indigenous Australian knowledge in an urban context. Public audiences will be engaged in this phase through innovative outreach projects such as an annual collaboration with architecture and design experts culminating in a high-publicity evening forum at a major art installation. Another example of public engagement will be CAUL participation in existing citizen science projects, such as urban BioBlitzes, including a focus on Indigenous Australian knowledge and participation.

Phase 3: Transformation

Towards the end of the second year of the project, CAUL will have significantly engaged with its participant Indigenous Australian stakeholders, and individual projects will be starting to deliver research outcomes as a result of genuine Indigenous Australian participation and engagement. At this point, CAUL projects will start to move to a *Transformation* phase. The focus of this phase will be on maximizing the influence of Indigenous Australian knowledge in our research findings. One aspect of this will involve existing university Indigenous Australian engagement processes such as Reconciliation Plans or place based projects in cities. CAUL knowledge brokering and communications activity will also be directly focused on integrating research outcomes into accessible formats and practical tools for Indigenous users of the research – through newsletters, one-to-one contact and forums. In Phases 2 and 3, CAUL will also be organizing citizen science projects directly aligned with CAUL research, all with direct involvement of local traditional owners and other key Indigenous stakeholders.

Details of specific goals for later stages (*Engagement* and *Transformation*) of the project will be revised and confirmed in subsequent project reviews – in collaboration with our Indigenous reference group and Steering Committee, and once the initial Research Plan has been delivered. Although CAUL IEP Strategy activities will evolve during the project, there will also be an emphasis on generating genuine engagement with and opportunities for participation by Indigenous Australian groups that will provide a legacy beyond the life of the project itself.

A table summarizing the phases of the programme and key tasks for each phase is given in the following table:

Table 1: Phases of CAUL IEP Strategy and Key Tasks

Timing	Phase	Key tasks
May 15–Apr 16	Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm within-group understanding of value of IEP • One-to-one contact with project and CAUL relevant key Indigenous stakeholders as per cities projects are based • Define IEPS research protocol • Establish IEPS reference group and host meeting • Hub leadership cultural awareness and IEP in research training
July 15–Dec 17	Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Background Briefing' paper summarising existing Indigenous Australian urban perspective knowledge • Confirm within-group understanding of content of IEP • Workshops with major stakeholders to develop research protocols, partnerships, collaborations and participation • Public outreach through annual Indigenous Australian perspectives of our urban landscape forum series
Jan 17–	Transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of public visualization legacy system on urban Indigenous Australian perspectives

3. Key Deliverables and Suggested Indicators

The following table outlines the major deliverables from the CAUL IEP Strategy, along with suggested indicators that will be used for measuring the success of these activities. All indicators will be revised and formulated according to the Monitoring & Evaluation Plan. Of key importance will be the initial activities to deliver genuine engagement and participation of Indigenous stakeholders in the research development and in the operations of the CAUL Hub. CAUL Hub Indigenous Engagement and Participation in Research Protocols will assist in delivering specific research project tasks, and will be delivered in collaboration with our proposed Indigenous stakeholder reference group and steering committee.

Table 2: Objectives, Outcomes and Performance Indicators of the CAUL Hub Indigenous Engagement and Participation Strategy

Objective and outcomes	Activities	Indicators
<p>1. Ensure research is relevant and beneficial to Indigenous Australian communities and organisations and builds capacity of Indigenous Australians to undertake research.</p>	<p>Involve, collaborate, partner with indigenous people and organisations in development or research and undertaking the research</p> <p>CAUL annual workshop for all researchers to include a workshop in indigenous Australian perspectives, to be run by indigenous organisation</p> <p>Review opportunities for student, postgrad, other roles for employment of Indigenous people; including scholarships in partnership with CAUL Institutions</p> <p>Review project plan– to include a desktop study into Indigenous Australian Perspectives of Urban Environment</p>	<p>Number of Indigenous Australians or organisations involved in the research</p> <p>Number of Indigenous Australians engaged by researchers to support research</p> <p>Number of researchers engaged by Indigenous Australian groups to support project initiatives</p>
<p>2. Ensure research is conducted according to the highest ethical standards</p>	<p>Implement protocol for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - acknowledgement of country - remuneration for traditional owners conducting welcome to country 	<p>These protocols have been developed with appropriate consultation and have been implemented</p>
<p>3. Provide opportunities for Indigenous Australian employment, and to transfer skills, share knowledge and increase cultural awareness across the CAUL Hub and networks</p>	<p>Collaborative agreements of all relevant projects working with Indigenous Australian partners</p> <p>Cultural Awareness and research participation of Indigenous Australians, training for our research group</p>	<p>Number of Indigenous Australians, organisations who work consistently / over time with CAUL Hub research Diversity and number of jobs and roles Indigenous Australians are fulfilling</p>

	<p>Profile Indigenous Australian research / ideas in annual plan, and other identified opportunities, and participate during relevant national recognition days.</p> <p>Look at online opportunities to promote Indigenous Australian urban perspective knowledge – incorporate in online legacy projects.</p> <p>Ensure Indigenous businesses are considered through tenders and procurement, where possible.</p> <p>Knowledge Week activities</p>	<p>Perceptions and attitudes amongst Indigenous Australians towards CAUL research are increasingly positive</p> <p>Number of researchers to have completed cultural awareness training specific to research increases each year</p>
4. Effectively communicate research results and share knowledge with Indigenous Australians or organisations	Collaborate on projects, papers, reports Collaborate on forums, workshops and other engagement activities around Indigenous Australian perspectives of the urban environment	
5. Ensure meaningful Indigenous Australian participation in CAUL governance	Represented on steering committee	Confirmed representation
6. Work collaboratively with CAUL institutions RAPS and other activities which promote Indigenous Australian Perspectives of the Urban Environment	<p>Work with Uni Melb School of Design on Indigenous Place project – http://msd.unimelb.edu.au/indigenous-place</p> <p>Brief leadership team and project leaders to ensure research project decision making is informed on Indigenous Australian issues, that collaborations are sought, opportunities are realised and protocols are followed.</p> <p>Develop partnerships with CAUL institutions' RAPS; including any information on activities in annual RAP reports</p> <p>Consider a CAUL CAP with Reconciliation Australia</p>	
7. Work collaboratively with CAUL research partners, stakeholders and others on RAPs and other activities which promote Indigenous Australian Perspectives of the Urban Environment	<p>Annual forum/s with the M Pavillion on urban design and architecture from an Indigenous Australian perspective</p> <p>- to profile existing work, identify opportunities for collaboration and to develop partnerships for CAUL Hub</p> <p>Collaborate with Monash University Caring For Country project</p> <p>Collaborate with local council on their Indigenous peoples' events where relevant to CAUL research priorities.</p>	

Appendix A: Guidelines from The Department of the Environment

to be followed in developing CAUL Indigenous Engagement and Participation Research Protocols

The development of Indigenous Engagement and Participation Research Protocols are key deliverables of the Initial phase of the CAUL Hub IEP Strategy. The guidelines provided by the Department of Environment will be used as a base for their development. As such we have included key explanatory and reference text from the guidelines below.

We acknowledge the source of the text below as: Department of the Environment 2014, *National Environmental Science Programme Indigenous Engagement and Participation Strategy Guidelines v1.0*, Australian Government Department of the Environment, Canberra, Australia.

Consultation

- Prior, free and informed consent is obtained in a culturally appropriate manner from all research participants and stakeholders before undertaking research with and about Indigenous peoples and communities.
- All information on the intended and actual aims, processes, activities, uses and outcomes of the research should be clearly communicated to promote open and honest exchange between researchers and Indigenous peoples and communities.
- Participants should be made aware that consent given by them regarding their participation in the research may be withdrawn at any time during the life of the project.
- There will be ongoing consultation and negotiation with participants in the research during the life of a project and, where relevant, following its completion.
- Prior free and informed consent must be sought when required regarding publications (electronic, print or other forms), media and recording that result from or form part of the research.
- Clear information must be available to all participants about where and how to raise concerns or complaints about the conduct of the research.

Engagement and participation

The contribution of Indigenous people to research doesn't stop at consultation. A critical component is the deeper engagement and participation activities which help embed cultural perspectives, build Indigenous Australians' capacity and establish partnerships between researchers and Indigenous communities.

Opportunities for Indigenous Australians' engagement should be available at all levels of hub governance, including membership of the hub Steering Committee. Wherever possible, existing Indigenous governance structures, such as community steering groups or committees should be engaged to provide guidance to NESP hub project activities.

Consideration should be given to the mechanism for engagement—formal meetings and processes may not always be conducive to equitable participation. Where possible, Indigenous communities and people should be consulted on how they wish to engage with specified hub activities.

Indigenous people should also be considered for a role in the knowledge brokering process. The hub IEP and Communication and Knowledge Brokering strategies should reflect this opportunity and could assist in identifying areas for further Indigenous Australians' involvement in hub research.

Effective communication is a key activity that underpins trusted relationships and good will. Communication material must be appropriate to the Indigenous audience being engaged—literacy levels, the level of understanding of scientific concepts and cultural appropriateness should be considered.

Indigenous Australian participation as collaborators and partners in research activities is to be encouraged and rewarded. Direct involvement as collaborators and employees is often the most effective means of incorporating Indigenous Australian perspectives in research activity in all programme phases. Within available resourcing levels, hubs should seek the employment of Indigenous people in a range of research, technical, field support and administrative positions. Where possible, Indigenous peoples' employment should be undertaken through organisations that have appropriate institutional arrangements.

Hub IES should include the development of employment pathways that provide professional development opportunities and capacity building for Indigenous people including through post doc and graduate programmes.

To enhance capacity development, opportunity should be provided for Indigenous participants to represent and promote research work and findings at conferences and other fora, including joint authorship and public presentations. Similarly, provision should be made for researchers to increase their Indigenous cultural awareness and competence through formal and informal means.

Adoption of Indigenous knowledge, intellectual property rights and closing the loop

The deep connection of Aboriginal Australians' with land and water and their enduring history with the landscape means they are able to bring unique and valuable perspectives and knowledge to a range of scientific research.

The recently developed Nagoya Protocol gives some guidance on the intellectual property rights of Indigenous knowledge that is used in scientific research. The [Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilisation](#) (the Protocol) is a global agreement that implements access and benefit sharing obligations of the Convention on Biological Diversity. It is a multilateral treaty with 193 parties including Australia and has the objectives of biological diversity conservation, the sustainable use of its components and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. The Australian Government is consulting with a range of stakeholders, including the research community and Indigenous people on the best way to implement the protocol in Australia¹.

¹ [Department of the Environment Website](#), accessed 6 February 2015

The Protocol states:

Where scientific research and development on genetic resources uses Indigenous traditional knowledge, countries have to make sure that the knowledge was acquired in accordance with the rules of the country where those Indigenous people live. The knowledge should be accessed with the prior informed consent of the Indigenous community providing the knowledge, and on mutually agreed terms.

In developing the IES and undertaking research, hubs must ensure that:

- The contribution of resources, knowledge and access to other information made by Indigenous peoples is acknowledged by way of rights in the research outputs and/or access to research results.
- Research outcomes are made available to the Indigenous persons or community in a form that is useful and understandable.
- Indigenous co-researchers are recognised in publications to which their knowledge and endeavours have contributed.
- Researchers are aware of and commit to the equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the utilisation of Indigenous knowledge.

Respect

Establishment of effective and respectful relationships are fundamental to achieving successful outcomes. Understanding and actioning Indigenous Australian cultural protocols is a key principle of that respect.

Protocols for Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country in the case of large gatherings, will form part of the CAUL IEP Strategy. These are respectful acknowledgements of Australia's traditional owners and further information can be found on the [Reconciliation Australia](#) website. We note that an appropriate fee is charged for a Welcome to Country and this will be factored into budgets accordingly.

Cultural sensitivity is key to successful partnerships with Indigenous Australians. We have copied and included the guidelines suggested by the Department of Environment, as a basis of our protocol for working with Indigenous communities:

- **In Indigenous culture, an individual may not necessarily be able to speak on behalf of others.** It is important to identify Indigenous people with rights and interests in a place, especially Indigenous people authorised to speak for a place, taking into account that Indigenous people will have differing degrees of knowledge about heritage places and their importance.

- **Men and women's business is separate in Indigenous culture.** Both men and women with rights and interests in an area should be identified because men and women may be responsible for different places and values.
- **Identify interests of surrounding Indigenous communities.** Activities that affect water flows for example, will require consultation with upstream/downstream Indigenous communities.
- **Understand the rules.** It is critical to identify, understand and adhere to any processes or protocols that Indigenous people have established for consultation to ensure relationships are trusted and enduring.
- **New project = new consultation.** Consultation should be undertaken for each new project unless Traditional Owners and other interested indigenous communities agree that this is not necessary.
- **Be flexible and allow enough time.** The business of family, community and country is a priority for Indigenous communities and meetings may be cancelled with little or no notice. Flexibility and enough time to engage must be factored in.

Australia now has 50 declared Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs). These are actively managed by Indigenous owners and mark an important contribution to Australia's nation-wide network of parks and reserves. It is not only essential but a mark of respect to find out whose country you are entering and to engage appropriately (and early) as research is being developed. Be mindful that many Indigenous communities or lands require permits to enter to ensure people's privacy and these will need to be organised with land or community councils in advance. Many areas are restricted because of their cultural significance and permission will need to be sought to enter. The guiding principle to undertaking research in these culturally sensitive areas or engaging with any Indigenous community, is ASK FIRST.

Appendix B: Key Reference Documents

As cultural awareness and inclusion of Indigenous perspective in research training are key aspects of the Initial phase of the CAUL Hub IEP Strategy, it is important to include the basis of the Australian Government's requirement for Indigenous Engagement and Participation. As such we have included key explanatory and reference text from the guidelines below.

We acknowledge the source of the text below as: Department of the Environment 2014, *National Environmental Science Programme Indigenous Engagement and Participation Strategy Guidelines v1.0*, Australian Government Department of the Environment, Canberra, Australia.

International instruments

The [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (2007) (Declaration) is a key initiative that provides internationally recognised principles for the treatment of Indigenous peoples and to which Australia became a signatory in 2009. As an international instrument, the Declaration provides a blueprint for Indigenous peoples and governments around the world, based on the principles of self-determination and participation, to respect the rights and roles of Indigenous peoples within society. It is the instrument that contains the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of Indigenous peoples all over the world². It explicitly provides for the rights of Indigenous peoples to participate in decision-making regarding matters which would affect them:

- **Article 18:** Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions.
- **Article 25:** Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard.
- **Article 19:** States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them.

² Mick Gooda, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, [Human Rights Commission](#)

National Instruments

[Closing the Gap in Indigenous Disadvantage](#) is a key reform which commits the Commonwealth, States and Territories to unprecedented levels of investment to close the gap in Indigenous disadvantage. In 2008, the Council of Australian Governments agreed to six targets to address disadvantage faced by Indigenous Australians in life expectancy, child mortality, education and employment. The targets are set out in the [National Indigenous Reform Agreement](#) and establish a clear framework for reform activity.

The Australian Government's [Indigenous Advancement Strategy](#) commenced on 1 July 2014 and provides direction on achieving results in the Government's key priority areas in Indigenous Affairs, including: Jobs, Land and Economy; Children and Schooling; Safety and Wellbeing; Culture and Capability; and Remote Australia Strategies.

The Australian Government, through the Auditor-General, is currently reviewing all its programmes against an [Whole of Government Indigenous Service Delivery Arrangements](#). The review is to ensure that all Commonwealth agencies:

- in delivering their programmes, cater for and respond to the needs of Indigenous people, and
- consistent with their broader responsibilities, reform their programmes and operations to maximise effort in achieving the Government priorities in Indigenous Affairs—getting children to school, adults into work, making communities safer, achieving the Closing the Gap targets and the Government's new engagement with Indigenous Australians.

Australia is a party to the [UN Convention on Biological Diversity](#) (CBD) and the Department of the Environment leads Australia's efforts to meet its obligations. The Convention provides an important framework for Australia's integration of natural resources and environment and biodiversity management policies. Article 8(j) commits Convention Parties to respect, preserve, maintain and promote the wider use of traditional knowledge with the approval and involvement of the users of such knowledge. Indigenous peoples and local communities have a direct interest and role in implementation of the Convention.

[Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010-2030](#), arising from the CBD, includes increased Indigenous engagement in biodiversity conservation and acknowledges and respects the culture, values, innovations, practices and knowledge of Indigenous peoples³. It will be reviewed during 2015.

³ [Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010-2030](#), p18,

Australia's [Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999](#) (EPBC Act) recognises the role Indigenous people play in the conservation and sustainable use of Australia's natural environment and Indigenous heritage. The objectives of the EPBC Act include:

- to promote a co-operative approach to the protection and management of the environment involving governments, the community, landholders and Indigenous peoples,
- to recognise the role of Indigenous peoples in the conservation and ecologically sustainable use of Australia's biodiversity, and
- to promote the use of Indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge of biodiversity with the involvement of and in co-operation with, the owners of the knowledge.

The Australian Government requires that research is conducted to the highest ethical standards with respect for Indigenous Australian priorities and values. The [Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies](#) were published by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) in 2000 and revised in 2011. The document guides research ethics, embodies the best standards of ethical research and human rights and provides principles on respect for the rights of Indigenous Australians, including their right to full and fair participation in any processes, projects and activities that impact on them. It identifies as essential that Indigenous people are full participants in research projects that concern them, share an understanding of the aims and methods of the research, and share the results of this work. At all stages, research with Indigenous peoples must be founded on a process of meaningful engagement and exchange between the researcher and Indigenous people. It also recognises there is no distinction between researchers and Indigenous people – Indigenous people are also researchers.

Outstanding examples of the adoption and integration of traditional knowledge into research can be found in the Bureau of Meteorology's [Indigenous Weather Knowledge](#) project, a number of [Tropical Research and Coastal Knowledge](#) initiatives and work undertaken by the [North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance](#).

Additional resources (provided by The Department of the Environment, Guidelines)

[Aboriginal Water Initiative](#): being undertaken by the NSW Office of Water, the AWI identifies key water-related environmental, social, cultural and economic priorities and opportunities for Aboriginal communities. It hosts a database of culturally significant sites and information.

[Ask First: A guide to respecting Indigenous heritage places and values](#): this publication provides a practical guide for organisations working in the area of Indigenous heritage. Consultation and negotiation with Indigenous stakeholders is the best means of addressing Indigenous heritage issues and is the first and simplest step people need to take.

[Conducting research with Indigenous people and communities](#): whilst targeted at the justice system, this paper provides a good overview of principles, ethical conduct and good practice examples on involving Indigenous people in research.

[CSIRO Indigenous Engagement and Participation Strategy](#): provides a framework for Indigenous engagement in the research context.

[Facilitators' Guide to Indigenous Water Planning 2012](#): developed by TRaCK, this resource although water focussed, provides some valuable insights into Indigenous consultation and engagement.

[Indigenous Biodiversity Management](#): resources and project information from NERP.

[NERP Northern Australia Hub Indigenous Engagement Plan](#): the National Environmental Research Program Northern Australia Hub developed this plan to guide Hub policy, protocols, practice and internal performance measures as related to Indigenous engagement.

[Ways to improve Community Engagement](#): a report arising from the Indigenous Knowledge Forum suggesting ways to improve community engagement and adopt Indigenous knowledge.

Publicly funded research is bound by Australian laws governing intellectual property rights and these are discussed in the [NESP Data and Accessibility Guidelines](#). Australian intellectual property laws do not currently grant property rights to the custodians, guardians and stewards of knowledge⁴. However hubs should commit to recognising Indigenous knowledge that contributes to intellectual property developed through NESP research to enable mutual benefit to Indigenous peoples, communities and researchers.

The CSIRO's [Indigenous Research Engagement Interim Protocols](#), provides further guidance on this issue (see Item 1.4 – Indigenous Knowledge and Intellectual Property Rights).

⁴ [Indigenous Research Engagement Interim Protocol](#), CSIRO, 2010