

# Indigenous partnerships strategy

National Environmental Science Program  
Sustainable Communities and Waste Hub



# Indigenous partnership objectives and goals

The Sustainable Communities and Waste (SCaW) Hub recognises and values the experiences, perspectives and cultures of Indigenous Australians. The program supports Indigenous aspirations to maintain, protect and manage culture, language, land and sea Country, and heritage.

National Environmental Science Program (NESP) researchers are working with Indigenous experts and Traditional Owner groups to help achieve improved on-ground outcomes for the environment. This involves better understanding of caring for land and sea Country through embedding Indigenous knowledge systems into the protection of biodiversity and threatened species. Collaborative partnerships are key to the Hub's success.

The NESP provides an evidence base for environmental and climate policy-makers and agencies. Informed decision-making using the best available research greatly improves our capacity to protect our environment, conserve our biodiversity, and develop effective climate policies and services.

Where applicable, the Hub will continue to partner with Indigenous land and sea managers, weaving together Indigenous and western environmental knowledge systems, and applying Indigenous-led approaches to strengthening and sharing knowledge. This will improve common understanding of caring for land and sea Country, and the protection of biodiversity and threatened species.

Indigenous partnerships and a deep respect for traditional knowledge are embedded in the continuing program from the outset. The program:

- builds on previous engagement and draws on the lessons learnt from the review of Indigenous engagement in NESP
- addresses Indigenous environmental research needs as identified by Traditional Owners and Indigenous communities.

Hub research will deepen our shared leadership role in looking after Country and meeting our mutual aspirations for the future. Hubs will embed strong cultural capability in their research and work with Indigenous people to build research capacity. The partnership principles laid out in this document are provided as a guide to building effective collaborations.

## **SCaW Indigenous partnership objectives and goals**

The research objectives and goals of the SCaW Hub are embedded in the six National NESP Indigenous partnership principles:

### **1. Respect and mutual benefit**

#### ***Objective:***

Respect and mutual benefit are critical to achieving a successful partnership. Relationships are built over time, with on-going communication. It is essential to understand Indigenous aspirations and goals through taking the time to co-design research.

#### ***Goal:***

Knowledge held by Indigenous peoples should be valued and protected throughout the partnership. The program, hubs and individual researchers should ensure all legal obligations are understood before collecting information (including an understanding of free and prior informed consent) and be guided by the objectives of the Global Indigenous Data Alliance (GIDA).

## **2. Right to Indigenous cultural and intellectual property**

### **Objective:**

The SCaW Hub acknowledges the rights of Indigenous peoples to their Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP).

### **Goal:**

Indigenous intellectual property rights will be managed in accordance with Article 31 of the United Nations declaration on the rights of Indigenous peoples. Ethics approval is to be sought prior to commencing research that involves ICIP. These obligations are mandated in the NESP funding agreements with the SCaW Hub. All project and program management staff should be cultural-capability trained, for example through True Tracks ®.

## **3. Co-created research**

### **Objective:**

There is greater value for all partners for research that is co-created. Indigenous research should address Indigenous identified research priorities.

### **Goal:**

Benefits from research undertakings through the SCaW Hub are to be shared with Indigenous communities. Consultation with Indigenous peoples and communities will be conducted at the same time as other stakeholder engagement to inform research at appropriate phases and use best practice engagement approaches developed in consultation with Indigenous communities. For case study examples of co-created research see 'Our knowledge our way in caring for Country'.

## **4. Indigenous led governance**

### **Objective:**

Indigenous led governance provides program level oversight of the successful implementation partnerships.

### **Goal:**

The SCaW Hub's Indigenous Facilitator seeks advice from the Indigenous Advisory Committee on matters that may include Indigenous values, the right to self-representation, self-definition, self-identification and self-determination. In consultation with the NESP cross-hub Indigenous Facilitation Network, the SCaW Hub's Indigenous Facilitator will ensure that shared knowledge is appropriately incorporated into research. By having a member present from each hub, the network can provide a range of perspectives and expertise.

## **5. Relationships-focused**

### **Objective:**

Regular relationship-focused communication builds trust in the partnership. It is a key responsibility of the SCaW Hub to communicate its outcomes and research results to participating Indigenous peoples and communities.

### **Goal:**

Communication of scientific outcomes must be undertaken in a form that is acceptable. This means that it is fit-for-purpose to the intended audience, engaging and in a format that is easily accessible. To assist this, the SCaW Hub has developed communications, knowledge brokering and Indigenous partnerships strategies to ensure consistent messaging that are all aligned.

## 6. Individual approach

### Objective:

Using tailored approaches to partnerships means that there can be a greater chance of achieving shared benefits between individual partners.

### Goal:

The SCaW Hub is committed to the use of a flexible, adaptive approach that is tailored to the needs and capacity of Indigenous partners. Cultural sensitivities and aspirations are also considered. The Three-Category approach is a useful method to help determine the appropriate level of research partnership and engagement.

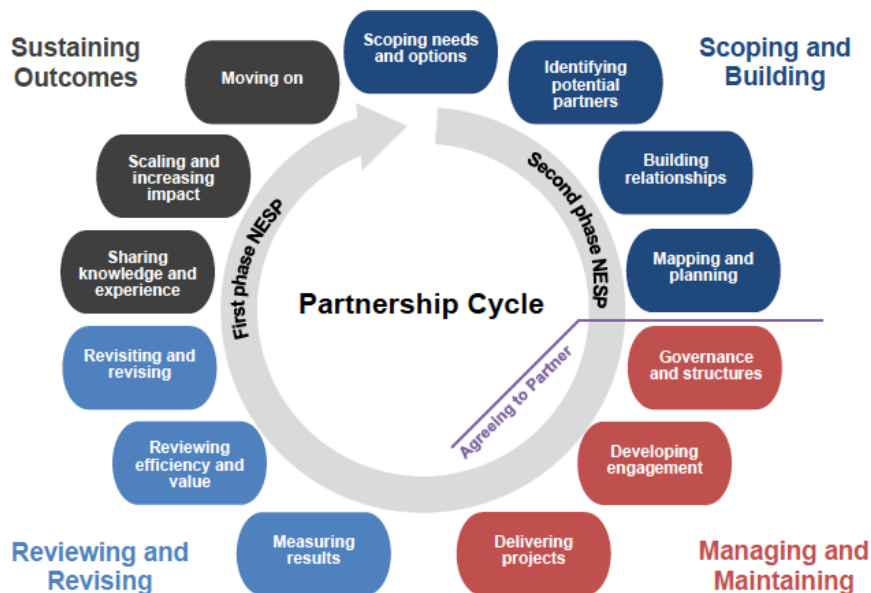
### Embedding Indigenous partnership principles

Building strong partnerships and facilitating positive knowledge exchange in the Hub's implementation phase enables identification of areas and issues of social, economic, cultural and spiritual significance to Indigenous communities. Early and meaningful engagement helps embed the Indigenous partnership principles, reduces assumptions and improves opportunity for appropriate consideration and integration of benefit gained from Indigenous research.

The SCaW Hub's Indigenous partnership principles are to be considered at each stage of the partnerships cycle (refer to Figure 1) and are to be applied when building new partnerships or maintaining existing ones. This includes when partnering for Indigenous-led research. Key stages are:

- Scoping and building a partnership.
- Managing and maintaining a partnership.
- Reviewing and revising a partnership.
- Sustaining the outcomes of a partnership.

Figure 1 – Partnering cycle (adapted from Partnership Brokers Association)



(Source: National Environmental Science Program, 2021)

# Indigenous partnership approach

Creating sustained resilient and strong partnerships is central to the success of SCaW Hub projects. We recognise this enables identification of areas and issues related to social, economic, cultural and spiritual significance to Indigenous communities. We also recognise the important contribution co-developed research has towards reconciliation and to realise opportunities of mutual benefit to Indigenous and non-Indigenous research. The result is an advantage to Australia from both a research and social perspective.

The Indigenous partnership approach seeks to facilitate appropriate participation by Indigenous people, groups, and communities when undertaking research activities. We will ensure compliance with Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) and where possible require all Hub and project teams to undertake training, for example through True Tracks® to ensure ICIP rights are upheld. Our projects will seek to invest and enhance Indigenous research capability including research capabilities and rural and remote Australia. Our approach embeds skilled transfer to Indigenous people but also Indigenous people sharing cultural knowledge and skills regarding sustainable communities and waste management with non-Indigenous people.

Throughout the life of this Hub we will foster increased cultural awareness between members of the SCaW Hub, the participating nodes, and in the communities where we will be conducting our research. To assist us in this endeavour the SCaW Hub in consultation with its Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC) developed the following criteria pertaining to research projects.

Criteria of Indigenous projects are as follows:

1. The project to include at least one Indigenous researcher where possible.
2. The project to be codesigned, co-implemented and evaluated with Indigenous people, communities or researchers.
3. The project to seek the participation of an Indigenous partner.
4. For creating cultural security and safety, trust and understanding, all non-Indigenous researchers will participate in cultural competency education.
5. Job creation, where possible, in particular in regional and remote communities.

The above criteria align well with the principles for Indigenous partnerships. The common themes across SCaW research projects are:

- equality and equal opportunities across all SCaW projects
- Indigenous people are treated as equals across all projects
- the aspirations of Indigenous people both in the present and the future must be considered for all research projects.

## **NESP Three-category approach**

In addition to aligning with the Indigenous partnership principles, our partnership approach supports the NESP three-category approach for research projects. The three-category approach recognises there may be differences in how our research partners are engaged and involved in our projects. These differences could be related to matters such as limited capacity, the nature of the research being conducted, or the interest in the outcomes of the project.

### **Category 1 projects codesign the plan + collaborate on the work + communicate the outcomes:**

- Category 1 projects are codesigned with Indigenous people, organisations and communities.

- They respect Indigenous priorities and values and ensure Indigenous people have meaningful participation in the governance of the project.
- These projects work towards an application of Caring for Country in an urban context to offer ways of interacting with nature for economic, social and cultural prosperity.

**Category 2 projects collaborate on the work + communicate the outcomes:**

- Category 2 projects explore opportunities for two-way transfer of skills and knowledge sharing through Indigenous employment and research opportunities.
- Category 2 projects often take place on Country, for example research that has a field work component.

**Category 3 projects communicate outcomes:**

- Category 3 projects communicate and share results with relevant Indigenous organisations.
- All research that is undertaken, irrespective of its nature, will have impact on Indigenous Australians. Category 3 projects are often laboratory or desktop based and do not directly work with or benefit from Indigenous knowledge.

*(Source: National Environmental Science Program, 2018)*

**Practical actions and impact**

A key focus of the Indigenous partnerships strategy will be the practical approach taken to engage in sustained relationships with Indigenous people, communities and organisations. These practical actions intend to have a social and economic impact for Indigenous people and communities. This approach will also increase the research capabilities of Indigenous peoples while increasing knowledge of non-Indigenous Australian on the ways of Indigenous waste management practice and across all knowledge outcomes areas for the Hub.

# Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) Protocols

Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) refers to the rights that Indigenous people have, and want to have, to protect their traditional knowledge, and cultural heritage and traditional cultural expressions. These rights are underpinned by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Article 31(1) of the declaration states:

*Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.*

The rights are reflected in what is encompassed by traditional knowledge and how cultural knowledge is expressed.

<b><u>Traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expression</u></b>	
<p><b><u>Traditional knowledge encompasses</u></b></p> <p>Know-how, skills, innovations or practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that are passed between generations in a traditional context</li> <li>• that form part of the traditional lifestyle of Indigenous and local communities who act as their guardian or custodian.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Traditional Cultural Expression</u></b></p> <p>The forms in which traditional culture is expressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• form part of the identity and heritage of a traditional or indigenous community</li> <li>• are passed down from generation to generation.</li> </ul>

This table presents the ICIP principles and descriptions.

<b>ICIP Principle</b>	<b>Description</b>
Principle 1 - Respect	Start from the principle in Article 31 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People: Indigenous peoples have a right to maintain, control, protect and develop their ICIP.
Principle 2 – Self Determination	Empower Indigenous people in decision-making processes. Set up Indigenous advisory groups and steering committees. Provide regular updates.
Principle 3 – Consent and Consultation	Commit to obtain (and maintain) the free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) of indigenous peoples for projects that affect their rights, in line with the spirit of the UN Declaration.  Seek FPIC for use of ICIP in a project before the project commences, and continuing through all stages of the project and after.

ICIP Principle	Description
	<p>Provide enough information for people to understand all the benefits and risks of a project</p> <p>Allow enough time for people to make a decision.</p>
Principle 4 – Interpretation	<p>Indigenous people should be recognised as the primary guardians and interpreters of their cultures.</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is your terminology current or outdated?</li> <li>• Does the publication affect culture of the Indigenous group?</li> <li>• Does it expose confidential, personal and/or sensitive material?</li> </ul>
Principle 5 – Cultural Integrity	<p>Maintaining the integrity of cultural heritage information or knowledge keeps culture strong.</p> <p>When using ICIP ensure that the use or the context is not harmful or inappropriate.</p> <p>Seek advice on correct cultural context and ask about cultural restrictions which might apply to the use of ICIP.</p>
Principle 6 – Secrecy and Privacy	<p>Indigenous people have the right to keep secret their sacred and ritual knowledge in accordance with their customary laws. Privacy and confidentiality concerning aspects of Indigenous people’s personal and cultural affairs should be respected.</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the project expose secret/sacred, confidential or sensitive material?</li> <li>• Speak to elders or Indigenous peoples in authority to identify and sensitivities, sacred or religious issues.</li> <li>• Be aware that including personal information without permission may offend.</li> <li>• Consult family and community on deceased persons’ images and representations.</li> </ul>
Principle 7 – Attribution	<p>Indigenous people should be attributed as the owners of ICIP. This is in addition to copyright attribution to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attribute Indigenous contributors, writers, creators, source communities and custodians is a prominent place in all publications.</li> <li>• Ask for correct wording (or pronunciation) for how person or community would like to attributed with ownership or contribution.</li> </ul>



ICIP Principle	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider whether traditional custodian's notice is necessary.</li> </ul>
<p>Principle 8 - Sharing of Benefits</p>	<p>Indigenous people have the right to share in the benefits from the use of their culture, especially for commercial use.</p> <p>The economic benefits from use of their ICIP should also flow back to the source communities. Consider how can Indigenous people be included, such as through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment.</li> <li>• Access to research outcomes.</li> <li>• Copies of materials.</li> <li>• Payment.</li> </ul>
<p>Principle 9 – Maintaining Indigenous Culture</p>	<p>Consider how a proposed use might impact on the future use by others who are entitled to inherit the cultural heritage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indigenous cultures are dynamic and evolving and protocols within each group and community change; consultation is an ongoing process.</li> <li>• Give thought to ways of maintaining relationships for future consultation (how can you maintain the link?).</li> <li>• Consult for any future uses.</li> </ul>
<p>Principle 10 – Recognition and Protection</p>	<p>Use existing laws and develop policies to protect ICIP. Some suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use IP laws.</li> <li>• Place copyright notices in publications.</li> <li>• Use traditional custodian notices.</li> <li>• Include ICIP clauses in contracts..</li> <li>• Use written releases to clear rights for proposed uses.</li> <li>• Use trade marks.</li> <li>• Develop policies and protocols and allow review.</li> <li>• Provide avenues for Indigenous people to make complaints and seek resolution of issues.</li> </ul>

### Compliance

To assist with Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) compliance, solutions such as True Tracks ® will be adopted. True Tracks offers a professional development workshop that presents a framework that can help people navigate the use of ICIP appropriately. SCaW recognises the copyright of True Tracks ®. Permission will be sought prior to using True Tracks ® or other material under copyright.

This Indigenous partnerships strategy also complies with, and has been developed in conjunction with, the SCaW Hub's data management strategy, as well as the Hub's knowledge brokering and communications strategies.

# Facilitation and governance

The Indigenous Facilitator's primary role is to ensure that genuine Indigenous participation takes place within and across the SCaW Hub and to identify outcomes to benefit Indigenous Australians.

Overall, the Indigenous Facilitator will be advising the SCaW Hub's Steering Committee; participating in research planning; working with Hub partner organisations; and working with Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers, and Indigenous communities, to foster inclusion, equality and equity. Furthermore, the Indigenous Facilitator will champion the Hub's mission and ensure cross-hub collaborations.

Specifically, the role of Indigenous Facilitator includes:

- providing advice on policy issues, business practices, and research activities as they relate to achieving Indigenous partnership objectives and the implementation of research plans
- ensuring the aspiration and needs of Indigenous Australians are considered and valued in SCaW strategic and operational activities
- reporting on performance indicators and targets developed to assess the effectiveness of the Hub's Indigenous partnership strategy
- actively participating in the Indigenous Facilitation Network to provide DAWE and the cross-hub leadership with guidance on the implementation of the Indigenous partnership principles.

## Indigenous Facilitation Network

The SCaW Hub's Indigenous Facilitator is a member of the cross-hub Indigenous Facilitation Network. The Indigenous Facilitation Network will be responsible for:

- ensuring Indigenous participation and related oversight of key performance indicators and targets
- assisting in the identification of Indigenous research needs within and across hubs
- connecting and supporting Indigenous researchers
- Indigenous participation.

## SCaW Hub facilitation

Through the efforts of the SCaW Hub Indigenous Facilitator, and in collaboration with the Indigenous Facilitation Network, the SCaW Indigenous Advisory Committee, SCaW Steering Committee and leaders, this strategy will help deliver:

- **Strengthened Indigenous knowledge** - including through creating and maintaining access to land and sea Country; ensuring strong cultural government of Indigenous knowledge; and keeping and revitalising knowledge, language and culture through programs and practice.
- **Strong partnerships** – that enable the building of respect and appreciation for Indigenous knowledge; development of protocols to guide knowledge sharing; and engaging with the principles of free, prior and informed consent.
- **Sharing and weaving knowledge** - Indigenous managers often weave knowledge to manage new and complex land and sea management issues. Indigenous-led and co-developed tools are most appropriate, and those that promote inter-generational transfer of knowledge are highly valued.

- **Indigenous networks** – National and global networks that promote Indigenous knowledge practices are important as they offer peer-to-peer learning opportunities for Indigenous land and sea management practitioners. They support:
  - learning about good partners, projects and approaches to keep knowledge strong
  - learning from others about best-practice protocols and processes for managing partnerships
  - building strength and inspiration through solidarity.

*(Source: Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), 2020)*

### **Indigenous Terms of Reference (ITR)**

The ITR assists researchers establish a framework for the way in which work with Indigenous people, organisations and communities is undertaken. It establishes guiding principles and protocols which must be observed when preparing and implementing plans. The ITR aims to provide a structured pathway towards achieving long term goals.

The ITR encompasses cultural knowledge, understanding and experiences that are associated with a commitment to Indigenous ways of thinking, working and reflecting. Furthermore, the ITR incorporates cultural values, belief and priorities from which Indigenous standards are derived, validated practiced.

The ITR provide a blueprint for working through research by:

- determining what the issue is
- defining what the parameters of the issue are
- how processes or steps are to be used when looking at the issues
- how conflicts and problems will be dealt with
- who will be involved in developing and implementing plans
- what time will be needed to deal with the issues
- what will the cost be, not only in terms of money, but in terms of human relationships and the environment?

The guiding principles which are observed in the ITR include:

- reaffirmation of Aboriginal culture
- appreciation of Aboriginal diversity
- confirmation of own identity in the context of own Aboriginal environment
- validation by own group is a necessary component for assessment of achieving a negotiated standard of competence
- recognition of historical, cultural, political and economic realities of that Aboriginal environment
- the identification of internal and external issues relating to or impacting on that environment
- developing individual and collective options for the future.

*(Source: Darryl Kickett, Centre for Aboriginal Studies (CAS), 1992)*

# Audiences

There are additional committees and stakeholders that can provide advice to the National Environmental Science Program (NESP). Below is a non-exhaustive example list of stakeholders that may need to be individually engaged.

Hub	Primary	Secondary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Universities, scientists and researchers</li> <li>Indigenous Network Facilitators</li> <li>Hub staff and partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Departmental policy-makers</li> <li>SCaW Hub Indigenous Advisory Committee</li> <li>State/territory and local governments</li> <li>Indigenous land and sea managers (Native Title Prescribed Bodies Corporate, Aboriginal Land Councils, Indigenous Corporations)</li> <li>Industry, including environmental, agriculture and the finance sector</li> <li>General public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General public (particularly professional networks)</li> <li>Environment non-government organisations</li> </ul>

## Informed consent

The views and knowledge of Indigenous communities and people form a valuable contribution to all areas of research development. It is critical that problems and issues are jointly framed between researchers and Indigenous Australians so there is a common understanding of the challenges, so solutions are able to be appropriately tailored and so that research is holistically developed and enriched as a result. It will also enhance ownership of the outcomes and support increased on-ground adoption of research results. Consultation with Indigenous people and communities must be conducted at the same time as other stakeholder engagement in order to inform research at appropriate phases.

## Consent to conduct research

Research with Indigenous people requires consultation, negotiation and consent and there must be an understanding of and mutual agreement to, the research to be undertaken. Indigenous communities must be well informed of the aims, methods, implications and potential outcomes so they are able to determine their interest in the project and provide appropriate contribution. The intended uses of collected data and resulting products that will be developed from this data should be clearly conveyed. Appropriate consideration should be given to ICIP and permission for data use.

In conducting research, SCaW Hub should ensure:

- 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 are 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 at research commencement, during the life of the program and following its completion.
- Free and prior 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 made available to all participants about where and how to raise concerns or complaints about the conduct of the research.

*(Source: Department of the Environment, 2014)*

### **Community consultation**

A well-informed understanding of the local Indigenous history and current issues in the area of proposed work will be an advantage in Indigenous consultation and engagement activities. Traditional owner groups may vary from place to place and represent a breadth of cultural practices, languages, histories and spiritual belief. As such, the SCaW Hub may need to undertake multiple consultations and obtain consent or undertake agreements with multiple groups. The appointment of an interpreter, cultural broker or cultural mentor may be beneficial at the commencement of discussion as well as during the research process and should be budgeted for accordingly.

### **Cultural brokers, mentors and community connections**

A cultural broker can play a crucial role at the start of the research process to bridge and facilitate a smooth introduction and interaction between the researcher and Indigenous communities. They can provide a valuable service throughout the research process especially if there is need for negotiation or mediation. A cultural broker may be a person from the community or a professional person who has an understanding of the views, cultural values, beliefs and practices of both parties. The person will have contact with both the researchers and the participant group or community.

A cultural mentor is someone who can teach you about local customs and norms and is involved throughout the research process providing advice about views and cultural values, beliefs and practices and associated protocols which need to be followed. They will have a general understanding of the views, cultural values, beliefs and practices of the participants but might not have contact with Indigenous communities during research processes. A cultural mentor may be a person from the participating group or community or a professional/academic person and the role may overlap with that of cultural broker, with one person carrying out both tasks.

Consideration should be given to the mechanism for engagement – formal meeting situations may prove intimidating for Indigenous Australians and not conducive to their equitable participation. Where possible, Indigenous communities and people should be consulted on how they wish to engage with specified Hub activities.

There are many Indigenous representative organisations that can help facilitate broader community connections. It must be remembered that culturally, often one group or individual may not be able to represent the broader interests of Indigenous communities outside their traditional lands, so it is important to ensure all communities are consulted appropriately. The cost of consulting face-face with

Indigenous communities should be factored into budgets where this is required, in addition to appropriate timelines for doing so.

# Monitoring and evaluation

The application of the NESP Indigenous partnership principles will be evaluated at the program level in accordance with the NESP monitoring and evaluation plan. The SCaW Hub will review its Indigenous partnership strategy annually.

<b>Principle</b>	<b>Performance measures</b>
The project to include at least one Indigenous researcher	Each project to include at least one Indigenous researcher.
The project to be codesigned, co-implemented and evaluated with Indigenous people, communities or researchers	Number of Indigenous participants that agree they have had the opportunity to codesign, co-implement and evaluated SCaW projects.
The project to seek the participation of an Indigenous partner	Number of SCaW projects in which Indigenous participants believe they codesigned, co-implemented and evaluated SCaW projects.
For creating cultural security and safety, trust and understanding, all non-Indigenous researchers will participate in cultural competency education before engaging with Indigenous people and communities	Number of SCaW Executive Team and researchers participate in cultural competency education. Number of SCaW researchers participating in cultural competency education before engaging with Indigenous people and communities.
Job creation for Indigenous people, in particular in regional and remote communities	Jobs created for Indigenous Australians.
Academic impact	Number of citations as a result of this research

## Monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement (MERI) framework

*Note: MERI is covered in the Hub's communications strategy, and referenced in the knowledge brokering strategy.*

Monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement (MERI) are critical components of natural resource management programs, particularly in highly variable natural systems where the outcomes from actions can be uncertain. MERI activities support the efficient and effective use of resources, promote accountability support adaptive management.



**The key components of a MERI framework are:**

- Monitoring - the measurement of indicators specifically selected to measure progress towards achieving program objectives.
- Evaluation - the assessment of the monitoring results against the objectives to determine whether progress is being made, and whether the selected indicators are appropriate measures.
- Reporting - communication of the results of the program.
- Improvement - a feedback loop to planning and decision making to ensure that outcomes from the evaluation are used to continuously improve program delivery.

**7-year timeline**

Meaningful outputs and impacts that contribute to sustainable communities and waste management is a focus of the Hub. Each year there are expected Indigenous outputs and associated impacts. These outputs and impact are listed in the following table.

Year	Output	Impact
Year 1	Projects are codesigned and have sustained on-going participation of Indigenous people  Researchers participate in cultural awareness education	Foundation for enduring, respectful two-way partnerships  25 percent of researchers participate in cultural awareness education
Year 2	Indigenous leaders are engaged, participate and supportive	Clear outcomes for Indigenous people and communities articulated and progressed  50 percent of researchers participate in cultural awareness education
Year 3	National Indigenous cultural competency programme operational across all nodes	Cultural competency contributes to respectful two-way partnerships  75 percent of researchers participate in cultural awareness education
Year 4	Opportunities for sustainable Indigenous research participation	Increased use of Indigenous researchers, advisors, facilitators, consultants, etc.  80 percent of researchers participate in cultural awareness education
Year 5	Increased number of Indigenous researchers	Enhanced Indigenous research skills and experience  At least 80 percent of researchers participate in cultural awareness education
Year 6	Attract Indigenous people into the tertiary education sector	Increased number of Indigenous people into the tertiary education sector Contributes to "Closing the Gap"

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Year 7	Build Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) capabilities of Indigenous peoples	A range of successful STEM awareness education and engagement initiatives for Indigenous people
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How each impact is measured to be determined in consultation with the SCaW Hub's Indigenous Advisory Committee.

## Related materials

- [Australian Government branding – guidelines on the use of the Australian Government logo by Australian government departments and agencies](#)
- [Australian Government public data policy statement](#)
- [Australian Government style manual](#)
- [Australia's science and research priorities](#)
- [Desk-top review of Indigenous engagement in the National Environmental Science Program \(NESP\). SGS Economics and Planning for the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, Canberra](#)
- *NESP brand standards* (provided to hubs)
- *NESP data and information guidelines* (provided to hubs)
- [NESP grant opportunity guidelines](#)
- *NESP knowledge brokering and communications strategy* (provided to hubs)
- [NRM monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement \(MERI\) framework](#)
- [Our knowledge, our way in caring for Country: Indigenous-led approaches to strengthening and sharing knowledge for land and sea management](#)
- Three-category approach workbook ([further information](#)).

This strategy should be read in conjunction with the:

- *National Environmental Science Program knowledge brokering and communications strategy*
- *Sustainable Communities and Waste Hub communication strategy*
- *Sustainable Communities and Waste Hub data management strategy*
- *Sustainable Communities and Waste Hub knowledge brokering strategy*.