



Australian Government  
Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation



The ILSC GROUP

PEOPLE. COUNTRY. OPPORTUNITY.

9 September 2021

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## **Re: Indigenous Skills, Engagement and Employment Program (ISEP)**

The Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC) welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the Indigenous Skills, Engagement and Employment Program (ISEP) Discussion Paper, and to our ongoing engagement in the development of the National Roadmap for Indigenous Skills, Jobs and Wealth Creation (National Roadmap).

### **About the ILSC**

The ILSC is a corporate Commonwealth entity under the Public Governance, *Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act), first commencing as the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) on 1 June 1995. It was established by the ATSI Act in response to the High Court's Mabo judgement (1992), and as such complements the *Native Title Act 1993* in recognising common law native title rights to land.

In 2019, the ILC became the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC) with the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Amendment (Indigenous Land Corporation) Act 2018* extending the corporation's remit to include water-based interests (salt and fresh).

The ILSC's purpose, as defined in section 191B of the amended *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005* (ATSI Act), is to assist Aboriginal persons and Torres Strait Islanders:

- to acquire land and water-related rights; and
- to manage Indigenous-held land and Indigenous waters;

so as to provide economic, environmental, social or cultural benefits for Aboriginal persons and Torres Strait Islanders.

The ILSC is funded by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land and Sea Future Fund (ATSILSFF). The ILSC received \$54.8 million in 2020-21, equivalent to the legislated annual allocation of \$45 million (in 2010 values).

## The ILSC's interest in the ISEP

The ILSC delivers on its purpose via three main mechanisms:

- Its principle funding program, Our Country Our Future, which enables the development and delivery of new land and water acquisition and management projects with Indigenous groups;
- Its subsidiaries Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia (Voyages - tourism), the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence Ltd (NCIE Ltd – social enterprise), and Primary Partners Pty Ltd (PPPL – agribusiness operations); and
- Funded land management programs: the Real Jobs Program in the Northern Territory (RJP – work based training and employment in land management, tourism and agribusiness), the Savanna Fire Management Program in the Northern Territory, the North West Indigenous Pastoral Program in South Australia (NWIPP – improving land productivity and creating employment opportunities), and the Reef Trust project in Queensland which decreases soil and contaminants run-off into the Great Barrier Reef lagoon.

Through all of these mechanisms, the ILSC delivers “indirect” employment and training outcomes (indirect meaning that outcomes are generated by ILSC activities whilst not directly provided by the ILSC).

Our experience in generating employment and training outcomes, including on country, provides the ILSC with a direct interest in the development and success of the ISEP. Added to this is the ILSC's commitment to contribute to delivering benefits for Indigenous Australians via our mechanisms as well as by using adding our voice to those of Indigenous Australians when calling for co-designed, evidence-based programs for Indigenous Australians.

## ILSC feedback on the Discussion Paper

As mentioned above, the ILSC has a significant interest in the development of the National Roadmap of which the ISEP is a part. The ILSC's interest is more aligned with the broader elements of the National Roadmap than in the development of the ISEP itself, and this submission is not intended in any way to contradict the views of Indigenous people and subject matter experts who may be providing input to the Discussion Paper.

The ILSC will however offer the observation that particularly in regional and remote settings, but across Australia, the ISEP should be focused on connection to country in order to be both sensitive to community and cultural needs, and effective in providing training, jobs and long term career prospects. This approach should be based on an interface with the broader National Roadmap agenda, the Remote Engagement Program, and other relevant Government programs, and should focus on:

1. Working alongside communities to identify the soft and hard infrastructure needs of the community and the region to enable a holistic cross-Government planning approach to providing training, jobs and community infrastructure. This would help embed shared decision-making into the ISEP and play a role in the Government's implementation of the Closing the Gap agreement and allow for a more flexible and responsive approach by Government and providers.
2. Identifying existing opportunities and creating new opportunities for the management of country, to maximise the opportunities presented by traditional land management techniques. This can include the remediation and maintenance of land and the utilisation of traditional fire management knowledge and practice to benefit Indigenous people and their land as well as non-Indigenous land holders. This, along with point 1 above, can help to foster and grow a 'Culture Based Economy' that recognises customary practices while providing mainstream opportunities.
3. Allowing applicants to determine the local regional boundaries for the delivery of a specific funding proposal, but only following consultation with local Indigenous communities. This is to ensure that non-Indigenous providers – or Indigenous providers who are not local to the nominated delivery area – are not setting artificial boundaries that do not respect geographical or cultural sensitivities and needs.

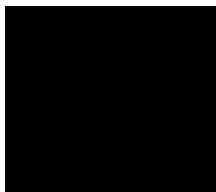
In addition, whilst I recognise that the Remote Engagement Program is not a focus of the Discussion Paper or of the ISEP, I take this opportunity to state that the ILSC's position on a number of related matters is in alignment

with many of the recommendations of the recent Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs inquiry report 'Indigenous Participation in Employment and Business'. I believe that strategies aimed at building capability in Indigenous people and their locally controlled and driven organisations, including Prescribed Bodies Corporate, are essential to closing the gap of disparity as well as to realising the potential for Indigenous participation into the national economy.

The ILSC looks forward to providing further comment on the National Roadmap in the future, including its alignment with the Standing Committee report and its inclusion of the Remote Engagement Program.

Should you have any questions regarding the contents of this submission, please contact [REDACTED] in my office on [REDACTED] or email [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely



Group CEO

Cc Mr Blair Exell, A/g Chief Executive Officer, NIAA