



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

Our Stories on Country Agreement

Our Stories • Our Truths • Our Future





Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and live. From the desert to the high Country, connecting to our beaches and sand, through the snow, the rivers and salt waters, in our cities, the bush and islands, we reflect, respect, and celebrate the unique and diverse communities we serve.

We walk with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, celebrating the oldest continuing living cultures in the world – listening, learning, and yarning, to understand the past and work as one towards an inclusive future. We pay our respects to all Elders past and present. We are committed to creating positive change and promoting meaningful reconciliation.







Connections, by Mahalia Mabo

About the artwork

The artwork, Connections, acknowledges the journey of the department's ongoing commitment to creating positive outcomes for First Nations employees and communities across Australia.

It tells the story of the cultural objectives that underpin the department's journey of shared purpose: Embracing Cultures; Yarning with Communities; and Connecting to Countries.

About the artist

Mahalia Mabo is a proud Manbarra, Nywaigi, and Meriam woman. She comes from a long line of artists and creatives. Mahalia is an intuitive artist. Her artwork represents her connection to Country, family and her salt-water heritage. Her paternal grandfather connects her to Mer in the Torres Straits and her paternal grandmother connects her to the Great Barrier Reef and its creation story.





First Nations Network Message

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Network are proud to join the Secretary in endorsing the department's Agreement, "Our Stories on Country".

We are pleased to share 'Our Aspirations' (next page). Our Aspirations outline what we would like to see, feel, hear and be in an organisation that is truly committed to transformation.

We are profoundly inspired by the opportunity that lies before us – the opportunity to share an organisational future where every individual, regardless of background, has the opportunity to thrive.

We look forward to true engagement, authentic connection and sustainable outcomes to advance the aspirations of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, their communities and the departments.

Let us draw strength from the wisdom of Elders, the resilience of our people and communities, and the shared vision of our future.



Our Aspirations



Empowered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

We are proud to recommend the department as an employer to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We can reach our full potential in the APS, in part, because our department invests and supports our career aspirations and pathways.



Engaged and responsive workforce

We feel culturally safe in the workplace surrounded by respectful and humble colleagues.

We are proud that our department acknowledges the importance of understanding the histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures facilitated through truth-telling.

We feel heard and valued when our department considers the perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the early stages when developing policies, strategies and programs that are relevant to our people and communities.





Collaborative leadership for success

We see that our leaders are genuine and respectful on their cultural journey, actively participating in immersion programs in a meaningful way.

We feel our leaders are transparent when communicating and messaging is clear and accurate from top down.

The self-determination and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are supported by the decolonising of systems and processes to enable the best outcomes for our people and communities.



Meaningful engagement and strong partnerships

We hear our communities speak positively about the department and see them reaching out to connect with us.

We see commitment to shared-leadership and the voices of our communities in the work of the department.



Action for impact

We deliver on significant investment and policy development contributing to strengthened cultural, economic, social and well-being outcomes.



Secretary's Message

This agreement – Our Stories on Country – embodies the shared commitment of DITRDCA – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, leadership team and staff across the department to create a workplace which truly values the culture, knowledge and insight of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

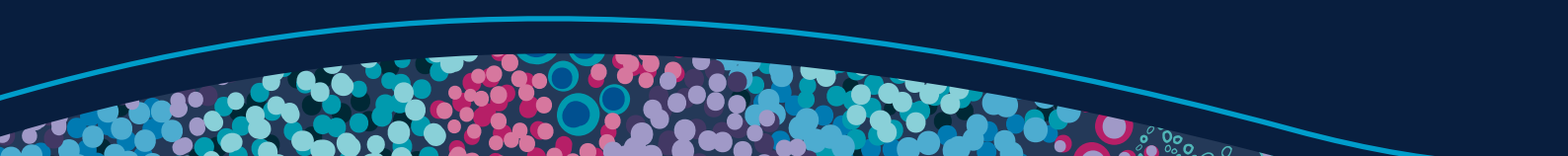
At the heart of the agreement is a set of aspirations for our department, developed, articulated and agreed by the members of the First Nations Network.

Following this agreement, the aspirations will guide us in creating a thriving workplace for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, and for building partnerships with community grounded in cultural humility and a shared commitment to their self-sufficiency and self-determination.

This agreement is the start of our journey, not the end. That journey will, for us, be one of self-evaluation, learning and reflection, being mindful of the historic power imbalances and institutional injustices which our Government has committed to rectify as part of the Priority Reforms set out in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Always was, always will be.

Jim Betts





**“Our Stories on Country –
Embodies the shared commitment
of DITRDCA, Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander employees,
leadership team and staff across
the department”**

The background features a dark blue field with a large, dark blue, irregular shape on the right side. On the left, there are clusters of colorful circles in shades of pink, purple, and blue. A thick, dark blue curved line separates the text area from the decorative elements.

Our Vision

We **VALUE** the **CULTURES**, **KNOWLEDGES** and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, families and communities.

We engage with **INTEGRITY** and **PURPOSE** leveraging our influence and **COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCE** to contribute to self-determination and enriched communities.



Our Principles

In all that we do to realise the vision of this Agreement we will be grounded in our key principles.



Acknowledging the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in sustaining the world's oldest living culture



Honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders social obligations as essential to the ways we live, learn and situate ourselves as Aboriginal peoples in our lands and on the lands of other Aboriginal peoples



Truth telling of historical, social and political past realities which shape our experiences, lives, positions and futures



Privileging the voices and expertise of Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander peoples, including Elders, Traditional Owners and Native Title holders, communities and organisations



Centering shared decision making as the core to self determination



Empowered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

Our success as an organisation is a thriving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce where employees strengths, lived experiences and diversity are valued and celebrated.



Our Agreement

Network Aspirations

We are proud to recommend the department as an employer to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We can reach our full potential in the APS, in part, because our department invests and supports our career aspirations and pathways.

Steps for Success



Growing our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce



Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Thriving Career Pathways



Sharing and celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Career Stories



Engaged and responsive workforce

We will strengthen our deeper understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and enduring knowledges to foster a culturally capable and respectful environment.



Network Aspirations

We feel culturally safe in the workplace surrounded by respectful and humble colleagues.

We are proud that our department acknowledges the importance of understanding the histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures facilitated through truth-telling.

We feel heard and valued when our department considers the perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the early stages when developing policies, strategies and programs that are relevant to our people and communities.

Steps for Success



Strengthening cultural confidence for Managers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees



Creating stories of Cultural Humility



Growing Cultural Humility Journeys

An abstract graphic on a dark blue background. On the left side, there are stylized, colorful figures in shades of pink, teal, and purple, some appearing to be holding hands or standing in a line. A large, thick, dark blue curved line sweeps across the middle of the image, separating the text from the background. The text is in a clean, white, sans-serif font.

Collaborative leadership for success

We are grounded in collaborative and accountable leadership that embodies meaningful commitment alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, families and communities and celebrate success (progress).



Network Aspirations

We see that our leaders are genuine and respectful on their cultural journey, actively participating in immersion programs in a meaningful way.

We feel our leaders are transparent when communicating and messaging is clear and accurate from top down.

The self-determination and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are supported by the decolonising of systems and processes to enable the best outcomes for our people and communities.

Steps for Success



Building a Strong Leadership Framework



Capturing Stories of Success



Developing a Communications Strategy to provide open and transparent progress with Communities



Meaningful engagement and strong partnerships

We commit to working in genuine and respectful partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, families and communities towards aspirations of self-determination for their communities.



Network Aspirations

We hear our communities speak positively about the department and see them reaching out to connect with us.

We see commitment to shared-leadership and the voices of our communities in the work of the department.

Steps for Success



Embedding Community Engagement Principles



Fortifying Partnerships with Shared Purpose



Nurturing Connections with Communities



Action for impact

We are committed to impactful, positive and enduring contribution to thriving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.



Network Aspirations

We deliver on significant investment and policy development contributing to strengthened cultural, economic, social and well-being outcomes.

Steps for Success



Statement of Commitment/Intent



Undertake a truthful assessment of current landscape



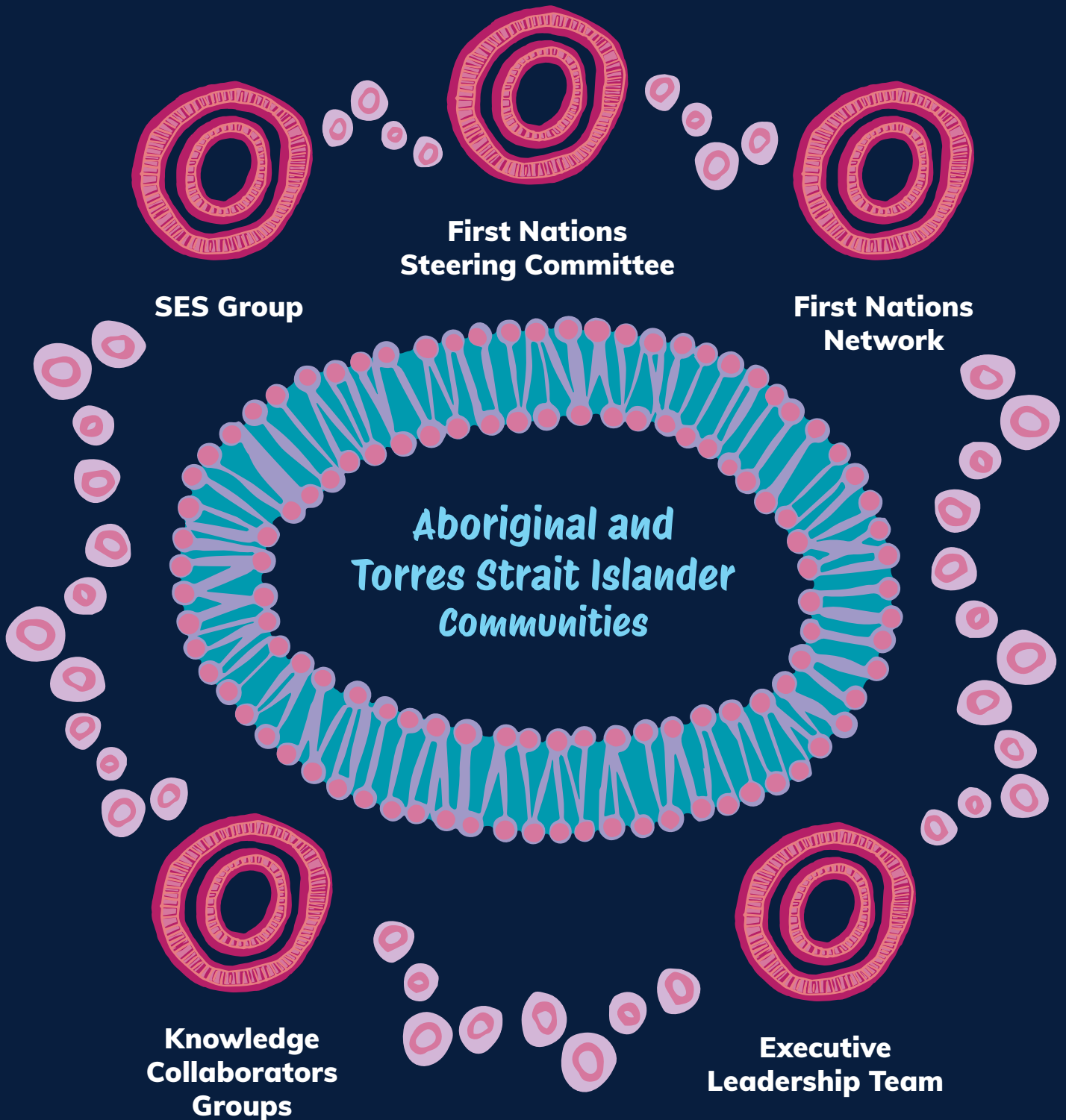
Develop an Action for Impact Plan



Establishment and implementation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Group Leadership Collaboration Circles

Leadership model

In order to oversee implementation and ensure regular monitoring and evaluation, it is critical that our Agreement is supported through a strong leadership model, which is based on shared-decision making and amplifying the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and communities.

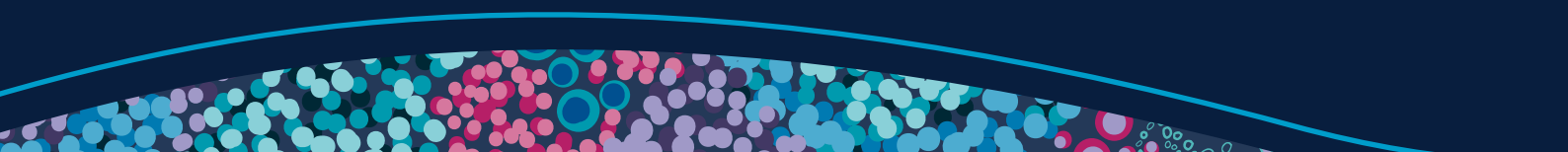


Indicators of success

Steps Towards Success Thread	Baseline Measure	Tools to Measure
Our Aspirations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our Aspirations Barometer conducted with the First Nations Network, identifying how staff are feeling on scales for each aspiration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our Aspirations Barometer This mechanism will also identify key threads in the Agreement that will provide a baseline on the steps towards success
Empowered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Employee Career Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of career pathways plans recorded for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff undertaking professional development and formal and informal learning opportunities (includes coaching and mentoring) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yarn to Thrive Plans Some data will be reported through other mechanisms, including the Strategic Workforce Plan
Engaged & Responsive Workforce Cultural Humility Pathways Strengthening cultural confidence of managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of recorded cultural humility pathways in place Number of staff attending and engaging in cultural humility circles/hubs Number of self-assessments and/or 360 Cultural Humility Assessment completed Number of supervisors and managers undertaking the Building Cultural Confidence Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural Humility Pathways Establishment of cultural humility circles/hubs 360 Cultural Humility Assessment Internal Survey Building Cultural Confidence for Managers and Supervisors Program APS Employee Census Survey will capture some of this data

Indicators of success

Steps Towards Success Thread	Baseline Measure	Tools to Measure
Collaborative Leadership for Success First Nations Steering Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steer Co will determine the metric 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBD
Meaningful Engagement and Strong Partnerships Growing and Flourishing Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of partnerships Types of partnerships Strength of partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership Barometer Community Feedback
Action for Impact Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting on Group Action for Impact Plans Number of Quartely Yarns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group Action for Impact Plans Quarterly Yarns Some data will be reported through other mechanisms, including Closing the Gap reporting



Risk and mitigation

Identified Risk	Risk Drivers	Mitigation Action
Inconsistent and lack of shared ownership over Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared leadership and ownership spread across the department Key personnel change leading to shift in priorities and loss of knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement across the organisation Oversight of Agreement through Leadership Structure centered on First Nations Leadership Development of Group Impact for Action Plans Dedicated SES leads across groups with contingency plans for personnel change
Inadequate resources to deliver the Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in funding for delivery of Agreement commitments (e.g. cost-cutting due to unforeseen crisis, operational or other strategic targets) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing funding of key enabling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander functions across the department – including the First Nations Partnerships Division and the Indigenous Liaison Officer team Set the right KPIs to measure success Invest in leaders committed to self-determination and shifting power to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
Lack of capability and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities not feeling culturally safe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embedding initiatives that strengthen cultural humility across the department
Limited trust from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in leadership, that impact the commitments agreed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities Lack of connection between department and communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in maintaining strong connections and partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities



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