



Indigenous Advisory Committee Bulletin Meeting 55

The Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC) held its 55th meeting on Wednesday 12 and Thursday 13 November 2025 in Canberra, ACT.

The Committee met with the Minister for the Environment and Water Senator the Hon Murray Watt and the Department's Secretary Mr. Mike Kaiser.

Environmental Law Reform

The Department's Environment Law Reform Taskforce updated the IAC on reform of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act) and the upcoming opportunities for engagement. The government introduced the law reform Bills to parliament on Thursday 30 October 2025. The reforms will deliver stronger environmental protection and restoration, more efficient and robust project assessments and greater accountability and transparency in decision making. Upcoming opportunities for engagement and feedback include consultation on the National Environmental Standards and the Senate Inquiry into the Bills.

Cultural Heritage Reform Priorities

The Committee received an update on the First Nations cultural heritage reforms and considered their input to the Dhawura Ngilan review.

International Environment, Reef & Ocean

The Committee discussed the new High Seas Biodiversity Treaty and noted how it aims to incorporate the knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and to respect and promote their rights.

Incorporation of Traditional Ecological Knowledge and First Nations engagement in conservation planning

Feedback from this discussion will guide how future communication between the department, Threatened Species Scientific Committee and IAC is structured, aimed at ensuring consistent, transparent, and meaningful input.

State of the Environment

The Committee commended EIA on the approach taken for SoE26 and its continued efforts to improve the inclusion of the insights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in State of the Environment reporting, including through the development of draft cultural safety frameworks and protocols. The Committee noted the importance of continuing to strengthen this work.

National Environment Science Program (NESP)

The Committee noted an update on the National Environmental Science Program and its recent independent evaluation. The Committee looks forward to engaging with the department on the shape of future research programs.

About the IAC

The IAC is a statutory body established in 2000 under the EPBC Act. All IAC members are First Nations Australians and are ministerially appointed based on expertise in land and sea management, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and cultural heritage management.

Members

Dr. Rohan Henry (Chair)

Dr. Teagan Shields (Deputy Chair)

Ms. Liz Wren

Dr. Cass Hunter

Prof. Stephen van Leeuwen

Mr. Stan Lui

Ms. Rebecca Halliday