



Australian Government  
Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation



The ILSC GROUP

## Our Country Our Future

# Investment priorities and funding parameters

This document sets out the ILSC's investment priorities and funding parameters. It should be read in conjunction with the *OCOF Program Guidelines*, *OCOF Expression of Interest Form* and *OCOF Application Forms* for the Plan, Manage and Return funding streams.

## Current investment priorities

The ILSC has introduced strategic investment priorities for OCOF funding that are designed to meet our commitments under the *National Indigenous Land and Sea Strategy 2023-28*.

### 1. First Nations leadership in future industries

In line with the ILSC's *Future Industry Initiatives*, we will prioritise projects that contribute to the development of First Nations ownership and participation in the carbon, environmental markets, fisheries and aquaculture, inland water, and renewables and clean energy sectors.

The *Future Industries Initiatives* includes strategies, action plans, and separate companion readers. For each sector they set out the challenges and opportunities for First Nations participation. These are available at [www.ilsc.gov.au](http://www.ilsc.gov.au)

### 2. First Nations groups with no, or limited, access to Country

We recognise First Nations groups with no, or limited, access to their Country face greater barriers to overcome dispossession and achieve self-determination. This impacts their ability to practice culture, access heritage sites, and maintain traditional knowledge. We will therefore prioritise applications from groups with:

- *No access* – the group has no access to their Country and therefore no decision-making rights, e.g. extinguished Native Title, Traditional Owners relocated from Country.
- *Limited access* – the group has no meaningful or practical access to their Country, with non-existent or extremely limited decision-making power e.g. non-exclusive Native Title, ineffective or restrictive Indigenous Land Use Agreements.

### 3. Areas of socio-economic disadvantage

We will prioritise applications that deliver benefits for First Nations groups located in areas of greater disadvantage using the Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD): [www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/socio-economic-indexes-areas-seifa-australia](http://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/socio-economic-indexes-areas-seifa-australia).

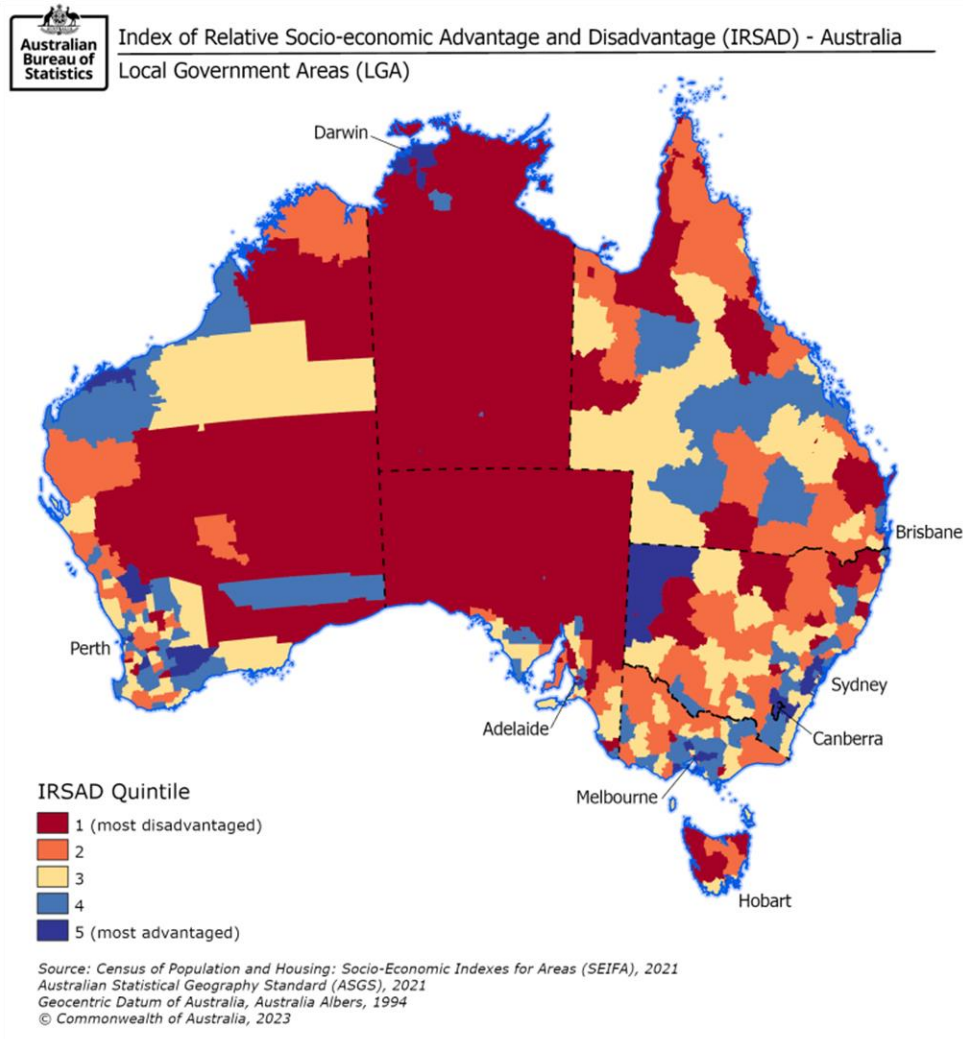
The map on the next page (**Figure 1**) reflects the latest data. Specifically, we will prioritise projects delivering benefits to areas classified as 1 (most disadvantaged) and 2 on the IRSAD Quintile.

#### 4. Equity of access to OCOF program

Where groups are unable to satisfy the capability criteria for the Manage or Return streams, we will consider access to the Plan Stream.

#### 5. Acquisition of water and water-related rights and interests

This is consistent with the 2019 extension of our mandate to support First Nations groups in the management and acquisition of freshwater and Sea Country.



**Figure 1** Areas ranked according to their relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage using Census data.

### Projects that don't meet current investment priorities

**Subject to the current funding parameters (see below), the ILSC will consider *all eligible* projects under the OCOF Program Guidelines.**

The investment priorities will support how we prioritise projects for funding under OCOF.

The ILSC will continue to assess projects based on the degree of change they create and the outcomes they generate for First Nations peoples and communities.



## Current funding parameters

Due to the current demand for OCOF funding, the ILSC has set parameters on the amount of funding that will be considered for proposed projects over the life of the current NILSS to 2028.

For project proposals seeking funding:

- **under \$1m AND where funding partners are required to successfully deliver the project** – a positive weighting will be applied in the assessment process where applicants have co-funding partners confirmed
- **\$1m to \$2m** – a positive weighting will be applied in the assessment process where co-funding partners must be secured
- **over \$2m** – assessed on a case-by-case basis, these proposals must demonstrate exceptional strategic value and benefits for First Nations peoples. Project proposals must make a significant contribution with a national impact, meeting one or more of the ILSC’s investment priorities (see earlier) at scale.

Where project proposals are normally the responsibility of other government agencies, the ILSC will only consider funding up to a limit of 20% of the total project cost, but not more than \$200,000. Examples include:

- public infrastructure and utilities such as public transport, roads, water, and electricity
- essential services such as public hospitals and health facilities, schools, police and emergency services
- municipal services usually delivered by local government such as rubbish collection, libraries, local parks, and swimming pools.

These, and other, examples will be considered in the assessment process.

## Our performance

Over the life of the current NILSS 2023-28, the ILSC has set the following targets to ensure that *Our Country Our Future* meets the investment priorities:

- For **2025-26**, **20%** of approved funds are directed to projects that meet at least one of the investment priorities.
- For **2026-27**, **35%** of approved funds are directed to projects that meet at least one of the investment priorities.
- For **2027-28**, **50%** of approved funds are directed to projects that meet at least one of the investment priorities.





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**PEOPLE. COUNTRY. OPPORTUNITY.**



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