

Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation Service Charter

The ILSC's long term vision is for: ***Indigenous people to enjoy the rightful entitlements, opportunities and benefits that the return of country and its management brings.***

The ILSC works towards this vision by:

- acquiring and returning land and water-related rights and assets to Indigenous people
- supporting Indigenous people to preserve and protect cultural and environmental sites and traditional knowledge through reconnection with Country
- building the capacity and capability of Indigenous people to sustainably manage and protect Country
- partnering with Indigenous people to lead and influence opportunities for their Country.

By 'Country' we mean the tangible and intangible aspects of Indigenous Australia collectively held by Indigenous Australians – sometimes referred to as the Indigenous Estate. Physically, this refers to land under Indigenous care and control alongside fresh and saltwater Country over which there are recognised Indigenous interests. Less tangibly, it refers to the cultural assets, cultural knowledge and intellectual property collectively held by Indigenous Australians and associated with their Country.

Established to partially redress the dispossession of Indigenous Australians through colonisation we provide for the contemporary and future land and water needs of Indigenous Australians, particularly those unlikely to benefit from Native Title or Land Rights. From cities and towns, to regional and remote areas, we work in partnership with Indigenous Australians across diverse landscapes and demographics.

Through our activities Indigenous people are generating capital from Country – economic, cultural, social and environmental assets that persist and develop in value over time – providing greater opportunities for a more prosperous and culturally centered future.

The ILSC's high-level strategies are set out in the *National Indigenous Land and Sea Strategy 2021–23*, and more detailed strategies in the annual *Corporate Plan*. As part of its new approach, the ILSC is committed to strengthening its relationships with its partners and beneficiaries, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia.

This Service Charter sets out our commitments to you. It explains:

- the purpose of the ILSC
- the service standards you can expect from the ILSC
- how you can help the ILSC to serve you better
- what you can do if you are not satisfied that the ILSC has met the commitments in this charter.

All those engaging with the ILSC are entitled professional and competent service, delivered in an efficient and timely manner. The ILSC will review this charter regularly, and report on achievements in our Annual Report.

Purpose of the ILSC:

The ILSC is established under the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005* (ATSI Act), which sets out the ILSC's functions, powers and governance framework. The ILSC is a corporate Commonwealth entity under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act). The ILSC Board is the Accountable Authority under the PGPA Act.

The ILSC was established on 1 June 1995 as part of the national settlement after the Mabo judgment recognised common law native title rights to land. The *Native Title Act 1993* was also part of this settlement.

The ILSC's purpose, as defined in section 191B of the amended ATSI Act, is to assist Aboriginal persons and Torres Strait Islanders to acquire and manage land and water-related rights to provide economic, environmental, social, or cultural benefits.

Our Business:

Our Country Our Future is the ILSC's national funding program. It operates across urban, regional and remote areas—it doesn't matter where in Australia you live. Through *Our Country Our Future*, the ILSC can provide a wide range of assistance to those proposing projects: from brokering and developing partnerships, to facilitating and coordinating support, to providing funding assistance.

Our Country Our Future has five broad focus areas which are considered to present greater opportunities for Indigenous Australians or where Indigenous landholders may have a competitive advantage:

Conservation/Healthy Country

Supporting cultural and environmental protection and the development of enterprises based on the delivery of eco-system services.

Urban Investment

Pursuing strategic land purchases in urban areas or providing management support to enhance commercial, social and cultural uses for Indigenous urban assets.

Tourism

Supporting the development of land, salt and fresh water country based cultural and eco-tourism operations across the Indigenous Estate.

Niche Indigenous Products

Helping to build industries based on Australian Indigenous flora and fauna and introduced species, leveraging traditional practices and cultural knowledge to grow consumer interest in these products.

Agribusiness

Developing enterprises in key sectors including aquaculture, horticulture and livestock industries.

What you can expect from the ILSC:

We are a dynamic organisation that acts with responsibility, respect and courage, through teamwork and trust. In all dealings with clients, the ILSC aims to:

Be proactive, efficient, collaborative and accountable

- Look for and anticipate opportunities (in current, new and emerging industries) to invest in the Indigenous Estate, in collaboration with Indigenous land holders and others.
- Foster networks, partnerships and/or formal strategic alliances across the Indigenous Estate.
- Maintain efficient and cost-effective internal processes.
- Measure outcomes for Indigenous people from our projects, and not just count the number of projects (outputs).

Respond quickly and courteously to requests for information or services

- Provide accurate information that is easy to understand and offer explanations, if required.

- Reply to written or telephoned queries within 10 working days. If this is not possible, staff will acknowledge your request and explain the delay.
- Explain why, if the ILSC cannot provide assistance, and help you to find alternatives.

Provide the best possible standard of information

- Ensure all queries are directed to staff who can help you with the information you need. Staff will provide their names so you can contact them again if you need more help.

Be honest and open, fair and impartial

- Make decisions in accordance with statutory requirements and ILSC policies.
- Explain our decision-making process.
- Explain how decisions are made and the reasons for them.

Consult widely and listen to constructive feedback

- Actively seek views about the ILSC from Indigenous people, organisations and other key stakeholders.
- Listen carefully when people make useful suggestions on how we can improve our services and give serious consideration to these suggestions.

Continue to re-evaluate how the ILSC achieves its purpose

- Through consultation, regularly review and evaluate policies and procedures to ensure they are effective and efficient and meet the needs of our Indigenous customers

Observe privacy, confidentiality and cultural protocols

- Observe privacy and confidentiality obligations in all dealings as required by the ATSI Act, the *Privacy Act 2013* and the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*
- Ensure that any information received about Indigenous sacred matters remains confidential.

What we ask of you:

When seeking ILSC assistance/partnerships:

When you present your project to the ILSC, understand that the ILSC will at a minimum seek from you:

1. Evidence that the project is land-based (care, use and improvement of land) and water-based, on Indigenous held land.
2. That your group can demonstrate good governance and financial management.
3. The Indigenous benefits (economic, environmental, social and cultural) that your project will create.
4. Indigenous beneficiaries of the project (who and how many).
5. The nature of the funding or partnership you seek.
6. How your project will be viable and sustainable and not require ongoing funding from the ILSC.

You have the responsibility to:

- Treat staff with courtesy and respect. ILSC staff have no obligation to deal with people who behave inappropriately
- Advise the ILSC if you do not understand the information given to you so staff can clarify it with you
- Let staff know in advance if you are unable to attend an appointment
- Make sure the information you send the ILSC is accurate and received in the requested time
- Ensure that all information given to the ILSC provides a full and frank disclosure of relevant information
- Provide the ILSC with any suggestions or feedback on how things could be done better.

You have the right to:

- Lodge a written complaint if you feel the ILSC has not dealt with an issue fairly.

The ILSC welcomes feedback:

The ILSC welcomes all reasonable comments and feedback as this provide valuable information on the quality of our service delivery and the effectiveness of policies and procedures. Compliments, suggestions and complaints are recorded, where appropriate to assist in the review and improvement of ILSC processes.

Complaints:

To make sure that your complaint is handled as quickly as possible, please call the ILSC on 1800 818 490 to ensure that our staff can direct your matter to the appropriate area for resolution.

We understand that in most instances disagreements and complaints can be resolved over the phone, however if you still need to have your complaint dealt with formally through the ILSC's Complaints Handling Procedure, it will need to be submitted in writing.

If you do not want your complaint handled by your nearest ILSC office, you may request that the Chief Operating Officer review your matter, please advise ILSC staff when you call if this is the case.

Depending on the nature of your complaint and who it involves at the ILSC, our staff will be able to advise you on how to proceed with lodging a written complaint.

We will reply in writing to your written complaint within 30 working days of receipt.

In circumstances where you are not satisfied with how the ILSC has dealt with your complaint, you may have a right to request the Commonwealth Ombudsman to investigate the matter.

How to contact the ILSC:

- By phone free call: 1800 818 490
- For divisional office contacts please visit the ILSC website: <https://www.ilsc.gov.au/contact/>