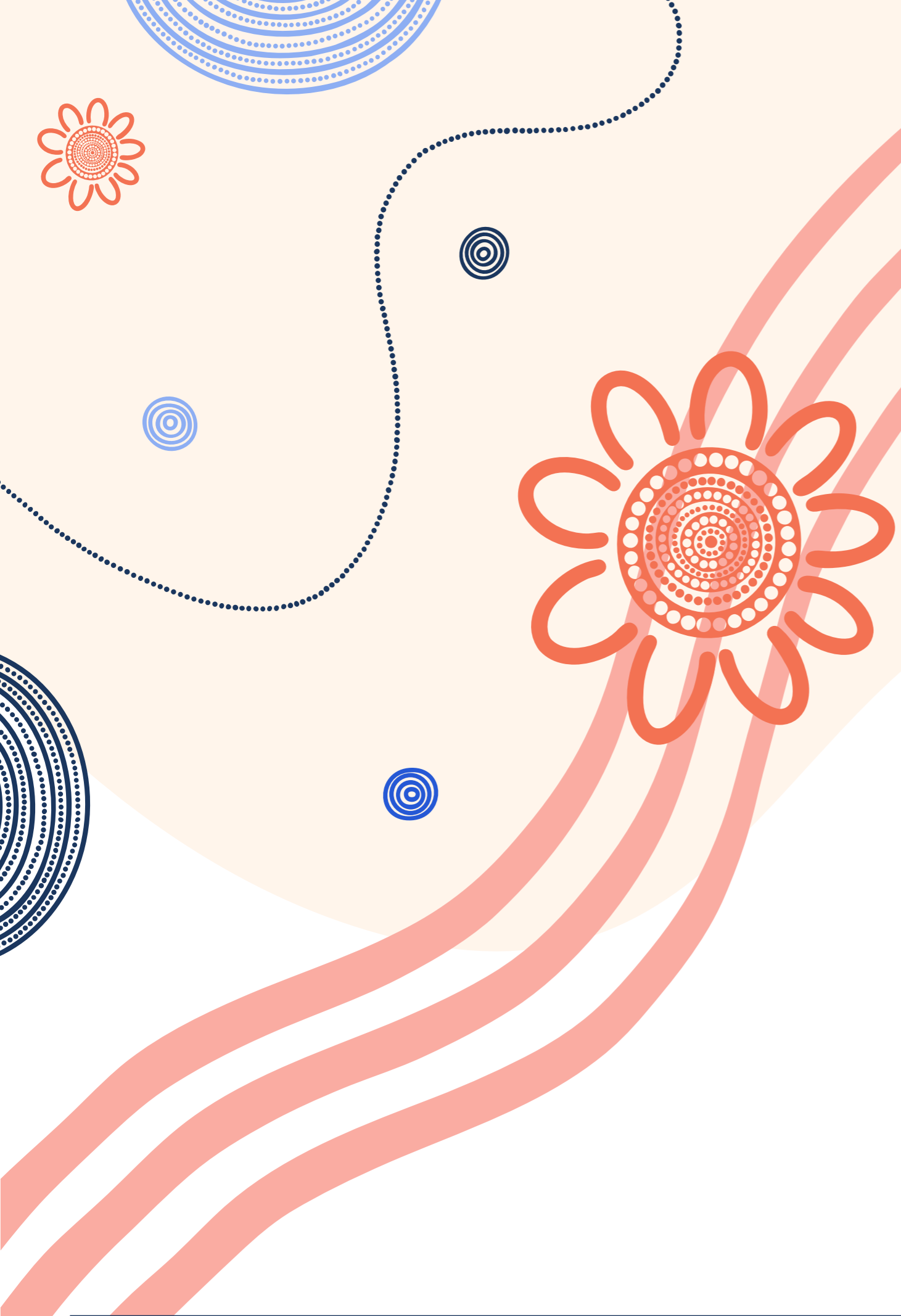




Aboriginal Affairs Strategy

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July 2025





Introduction

The Aspect Board and staff are committed to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to implement our Aboriginal Affairs Strategy. It is driven by the Aspect Strategic Plan and supports Aspect’s continuing growth of knowledge and cultural competence. Our vision is for a country built on respect, acknowledgement and unity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures. We recognise the impacts of our shared history on First Nations peoples. We acknowledge their continual strength, resilience and commitment to equality. We are committed to working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their communities, walking together to deliver the best outcomes.

Aboriginal Identity

This strategy embraces the concept of effective engagement with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples. As stakeholders they represent

- Employees
- Suppliers
- Community members
- Advisors.

Upon implementation, as this work too evolves, we will consider the best practice approaches for Aspect to be able to safely and within cultural limitations undertake effective vetting processes to ensure the stakeholders being engaged as suppliers, employees or through community are endorsed.

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Throughout this document you may see variations between Aboriginal & Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in language, some are deliberate some will be refined as we progress this strategy.

Strategy elements

Our strategy is founded in two key elements, Aboriginal led co-design and strong governance.



Aboriginal led co-design ensures the strategy is founded in the Aboriginal experience, with limited tensions as a result of power or framing imbalance and strong governance enables effective relationships with our clients, with a core strategy oversight, we establish and strengthen our relationship enabling our work to be highly informed based on internal and sector expertise whilst ensuring the strategy is responsive as it evolves and progresses. This shares the experience and keeps all parties informed, and in control of decision making.

Aboriginal led co-design

Aspect has been engaged under Aboriginal led co-design in the development of this strategy, and we want to ensure that this approach exists through local relationships, employment and all facets of Aboriginal Affairs.

Framing context and placing Aboriginal People at the forefront of decision making on matters that affect them, is integral to the concept of self-determination.

This will be considered as we implement, and scale this strategy.

Governance

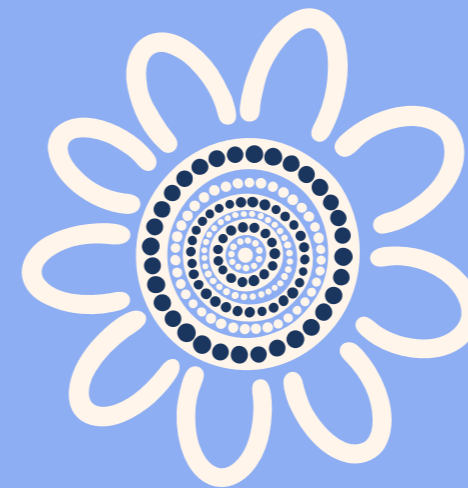
Effective governance is integral to progress, we will ensure we have the right governance modelling to ensure that this work is:

- shared across the business
- effectively managed
- agile in approach and delivery
- scalable over time.

The vision, state and requirement of all work in Aboriginal Affairs requires ongoing and effective oversight to respond to the rapidly changing and evolving state of reality this work exists within.



Strategy model



Our vision

Creating meaningful change, transforming our business, our sector and those we influence by respectfully working with and walking along-side Aboriginal People and Communities.

Lead and champion practice reform

Drive transformative change by embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being, and doing into all aspects of our work. Commit to identifying and eliminating systemic bias within our organisation and setting the standard for best practices across the sector.

Be fearless advocates

Amplify the voices and champion the rights and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on the autism spectrum, ensuring their right to self-determination in shaping and determining their service, support and their futures.

Ensure equitable access to services

Innovate and advocate for service models co-designed with Communities, ensuring safe and inclusive access for all. Guarantee that diagnosis and post-diagnosis support are available to everyone.

Build a culturally responsive workforce

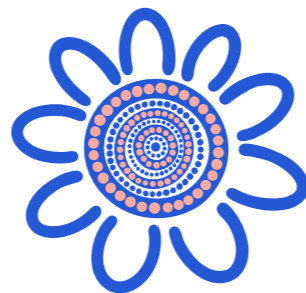
Provide continuous learning and unlearning opportunities, supported by the right tools and systems, to create a workforce that consistently upholds cultural safety and responsiveness.

Aboriginal led co-design

Ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are centred in everything we do in our decision making related to this strategy and our impact over time respecting the voices, experiences and cultural load of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Infographic – Represented in circular way the ongoing nature of the non-ending cycle of growth



Our draft model

Our vision

Creating meaningful change, transforming our business, our sector and those we influence by respectfully working with and walking along-side Aboriginal People and Communities.

Pillars

- Education
- Specialist Autism Supports
ICS, Autism Friendly
- Employment
- Procurement
- Positive Partnerships

Tools for change

What will we be required to develop, build or resource to deliver?

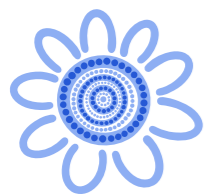
- Cultural capability
- Training
- Resource allocation
- Capability building
- Capacity assessment
- External services
- System reform.



Model, expanded

Our vision

Creating meaningful change, transforming our business, our sector and those we influence by respectfully working with and walking alongside Aboriginal People and Communities.



Delivered through 5 key pillars

1. Education	Developing and growing partnerships locally and nationally to continually enrich our education methods, environments and curriculum ensuring culturally responsive and equitable outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, families and communities.
2. Specialist Autism Supports ICS, Autism Friendly	Ensuring that Aboriginal Peoples, Communities, Families and Kin have equitable access to culturally responsive diagnosis and post-diagnosis supports empowering communities to better understand autism.
3. Employment	Building a workforce that represents the communities we serve through developing a culturally responsive workplace that celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures.
4. Procurement	Actively contribute to the growing Aboriginal business sector by ensuring we have capabilities in equitable supplier diversity and intentionally using our spend with Aboriginal suppliers. Increasing our reach to better support social impact through our spend.
5. Positive Partnerships	Positive Partnerships have developed and implemented their own <u>"First Nations Peoples Framework"</u> .



1. Education

Developing and growing partnerships locally and nationally to continually enrich our education methods, environments and curriculum ensuring culturally responsive and equitable outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, families and communities.



Our strategies will include two key areas of focus:

Education

1. Cultural recognition

To create school environments that are culturally safe and inclusive, where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's histories, values, languages and cultures are acknowledged and celebrated, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, students, family and community feel known, respected, supported, and valued.

2. Cultural responsiveness

To ensure our students are known and taught by skilled and reflective educators who set high expectations for learning that incorporates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective and ensures understanding of diverse learning styles.

Actions:

- To establish and grow relationships with local communities that enrich staff and students regarding local history, culture and Country
- To create physical environments that are culturally safe and responsive for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and families
- To support all students and teachers to develop an understanding, awareness and respect for Aboriginal languages, histories and cultures and to recognise, learn from and value existing skills in the community to support children
- To embed Aboriginal perspectives and knowledge systems into our curriculum and ensure the way we teach and support learners is culturally inclusive and responsive for all students.



2. Autism specific supports

Ensuring that Aboriginal Peoples, Communities, Families and Kin have equitable access to culturally responsive diagnosis and post-diagnosis supports empowering communities to better understand autism.



Autism Friendly	ICS
<p>Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate how we may embed Aboriginal perspectives into our current work in designing spaces and supporting policy and practice reform for our clients Partnering effectively to ensure Autism Friendly is the connector, not the owner. 	<p>Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate ways we can scale access for fee-free or subsidised autism diagnosis across Australia with a special focus on regional and remote communities Ensure our assessment tools, resources and systems are culturally responsive ensuring locality of concept and cultural implications Pilot collaborative programming of diagnosis and post-diagnosis support and infrastructure in regional and remote communities.
<p>Implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify potential Aboriginal partners to support delivery in designing environments with our clients Partner to develop the value proposition for expanded service delivery in spatial design, policy and practice reform Develop implementation model (including marketing) for the service inclusive of the extended practice. 	<p>Implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify potential channels for funding to enable funded or subsidised access to diagnosis Develop pilot programs to be rolled out in regional and remote communities factoring infrastructure requirements (funding dependant) Undertake a partnered review with Aboriginal stakeholders of our assessment tools, resources and systems for implementation.

3. Employment

Building a workforce that represents the communities we serve through developing a culturally responsive workplace that celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures.



To achieve our aspirations in providing meaningful employment opportunities for Aboriginal People, our approach will be a phased model enabling us to implement, learn, reflect and adapt our delivery to meet needs as we learn and grow our capability.

Organisational preparedness	The Employee Experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake an internal review, supported by Aboriginal experts, to identify potential barriers in our systems, policies and practices Review previous evaluation of our policies to ensure recommendations have been adopted Undertake updated review to ensure our advice and recommendations are at current standard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement systems and structures of support to ensure Aspect provides a culturally responsive workplace in line with the developed AEVP Develop and implement Aboriginal specific method of capturing employee experience Based on the development of the AEVP develop and implement all systems of support i.e. Aboriginal Employee Network (AEN), cultural supervision etc. Develop and implement a considered approach to safely capturing the experience of Aboriginal employees in line with current employee satisfaction practices.
Attraction and recruitment	Growing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander talent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop our Aboriginal Employee Value Proposition (AEVP) Re-align our recruitment and attraction practices to ensure prospective Aboriginal employees see our roles and choose Aspect as a place to work Undertake necessary training to ensure all points of our hiring process offer a culturally considered recruitment experience Engage Aboriginal led co-design to develop Aspect's AEVP Develop and implement all required systems and models required to meet the AEVP Undertake "Indigenised Recruitment" Training for people and culture, talent acquisition teams and hiring managers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement specific talent management programs for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Employees to increase equitable representation at all levels of our organisation Develop and implement Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander exit survey process to capture critical insights upon exit Based on the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workforce, develop talent management models to offer tailored professional development Investigate best practice to ensure Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees have access to a culturally safe exit survey process.

4. Procurement

Actively contribute to the growing Aboriginal business sector by ensuring we have capabilities in equitable supplier diversity and intentionally using our spend with Aboriginal suppliers.

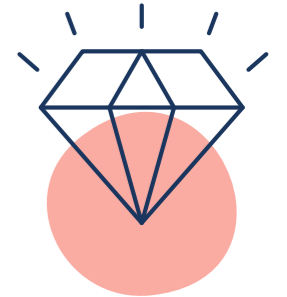


Finance
<p>Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake evaluation to better understand our 'current state' in procurement, including our systems, processes and spend Implement updated systems, policies and practices that will support and enable our work in enhancing supplier diversity Establish targets to ensure that supplier sourcing and engagement is an organisational wide responsibility Communicate our commitment effectively across the organisation to ensure our people understand the value of supplier diversity and are capable and willing to engage nationally and locally.
<p>Implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake evaluation of our current procurement systems, policies and practices (including our current supplier profiles) to identify <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current and past Aboriginal suppliers and our spend with them Barriers in our current systems, policies and practices Undertake a review of our spend profile to identify priority areas with relevant spend to identify and promote to potential Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander suppliers Establish spend targets against total spend for priority categories under supplier diversity principles (inclusive of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander business and Autistic owned businesses).



Organisation wide

Ensuring all of our organisation has the same access to effectively and meaningfully engaging in our work in Aboriginal Affairs, whilst creating consistency across the organisation in our learning, practice and delivery changes as we learn and grow through this strategy.



Growing our people through learning, Cultural Capability of our practices
<p>Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-design development or contracting of Cultural Capability Training / Cultural Responsiveness Training to be rolled out to all staff (consider the unique needs and service provision of each business unit).
<p>Implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and source Cultural Capability Training providers suited to Aspect and determine national rollout methods across all business units Determine further learning needs under 'Cultural learning' framework to equip our people with the right learning, capability and capacity to deliver.

Aboriginal Advisory Group/Board
<p>Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and re-establish Aboriginal Advisory group/board to support Aspect's work and delivery over time.
<p>Implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine Aspect's need for an Advisory Group/ Board and investigate how this intersects with current governance considering known gaps and opportunities.

Governance
<p>Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement new governance and oversight committee for the delivery of this strategy.
<p>Implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement, monitor and review the governance model set for oversight of this strategy Review effectiveness of the model and make adjustments over time (review period).



Governance

In this strategy, our commitments are clear, to execute and deliver we are implementing governance that ensures clear lines of communication through delivery and review.



- Enable senior leader oversight to leverage decision making and delegation capabilities
- Provide a top down management, bottom up leadership model centralising the work in the places it matters without losing visibility at a senior level
- Centralise the conversation to focus on impact, learnings whilst enhancing the ability for a responsive strategy to grow and change over time, as we attempt, reflect and review to meet the same goals, possibly in different ways.

Aboriginal Advisory Group

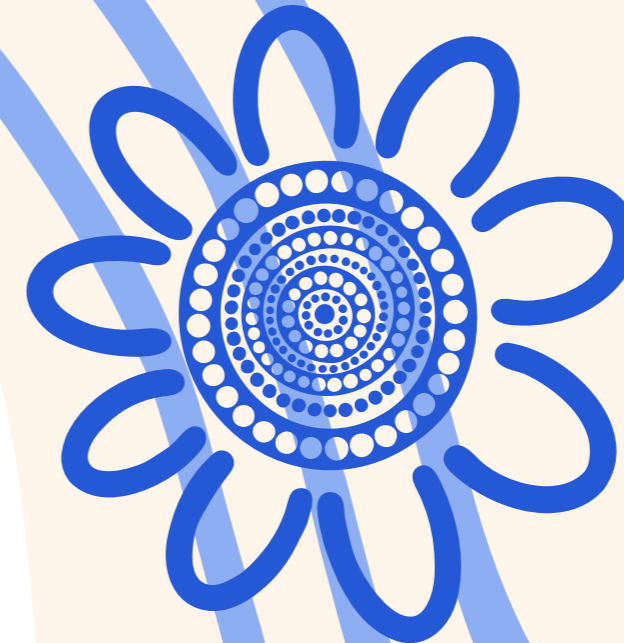
External Aboriginal advisors with expertise matched to the needs of our organisation over time.

Executive Steering Committee

Executive representation of all functions with commitments and senior leaders with relevant delivery requirements or value-add Chair/Co-Chairs of the working group and relevant employees.

Strategy Working Group

Representative people who are doing the doing, across the organisation with direct channels to the Executive Steering Committee and Advisory Group.



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Developed in partnership
with Leroy Maher,
Managing director of Dhiira

