



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commitment and Action Plan

July 2025 to June 2026



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Hydro Tasmania pays respect to the rich, long and ongoing history of the Traditional Owners and Custodians and their connections to land, waters and community.

The mountains, lakes and rivers that capture and channel water for hydropower are rich in Aboriginal history, culture and tradition. We acknowledge the ongoing connection to culture and custodianship of the land and waters of places we share.

We acknowledge the use of Palawa kani within this document when referring to Lutruwita. Palawa kani is the reconstructed language of Tasmanian Aboriginal people.



Healing Country by Bianca Templar
Truwulway and Bunurong woman

The artwork pictured was inspired by my time on country in areas Hydro Tasmania occupies, particularly Trevallyn Dam and Cape Portland, as well as my conversations with community members.

The bottom part of the image represents water Country, the colours going from light to dark represent the ongoing knowledge that has been passed down through story telling since the ice age to the contemporary knowledge we have today. The lighter colour embedded in the darker colour represents the connection between ancient and modern knowledge systems and how those knowledges inform our day to day practice.

The middle and top pieces represent land and sky country. The map of Lutruwita shows the growth of Hydro Tasmania since its beginning, while Hydro is on its learning journey to connect with community, it unknowingly caused damage in the past through destruction of Country and disruption of wildlife, with the machinery disrupting the local animals such as snakes and wombats, as well as environmental destruction through disrupting land and its elements such as rocks and trees. The dark green lines represent the hurt to Country, while the light green represents the work and growth Hydro Tasmania has done over the years to learn from community on how to go about its business while respecting land, culture and community.

Hence the title “Healing Country” as that is what Hydro Tasmania group is doing, to acknowledge its mistakes and commits to work with Aboriginal people to undo that damage and heal Country. The blue within Lutruwita represents the continual connection to water Country.

The top image with the wedge tailed eagle represents the issues of the impact to sky Country, with the eagle flying free, representing that change and growth Hydro Tasmania group has made over the years as it gained education on how to best care for Country. The blue in the eagle shows that ongoing connection to water Country and the connectedness of Country.



CEO Foreword

The Tasmanian Aboriginal people are the world's southernmost and oldest continuous culture, and they've cared for the waterways and land on which we work and live for thousands of generations.

Hydro Tasmania group seeks to be a leading custodian of assets, water, environment and heritage in a changing climate. A vital step in achieving this is our Commitment to foster connection, conversation, and mutual learning and understanding with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Alongside our Commitment is the Action Plan which translates our Commitment into meaningful on-ground projects, collaborations and initiatives.

This document has been guided by Tasmanian Aboriginal people and shaped through meaningful engagement to ensure Aboriginal priorities are heard, respected and embedded in our approach. We acknowledge the Tasmanian Aboriginal people's deep and ongoing connection to the land that our lakes and power stations operate on.

Our inaugural Commitment and first year of actions will focus on Lutruwita/Tasmania and honour this connection. As we move forward, we will continue to build and strengthen our connections with Aboriginal people across all the lands and waterways on which we operate throughout Australia.

This Commitment requires us to develop genuine and meaningful long-term relationships. We need to reflect on power and privilege, challenge assumptions, and acknowledge the injustices and systemic barriers that have impacted—and continue to impact—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We are deeply committed to the actions outlined in this document and embedding cultural safety across our organisation. My commitment, and the Commitment of Hydro Tasmania group, is to build respectful, trusting and enduring connections with Tasmanian Aboriginal people and foster a culture of working together to care for Country and create a more inclusive future.



Rachel Watson Chief
Executive Officer Hydro
Tasmania group



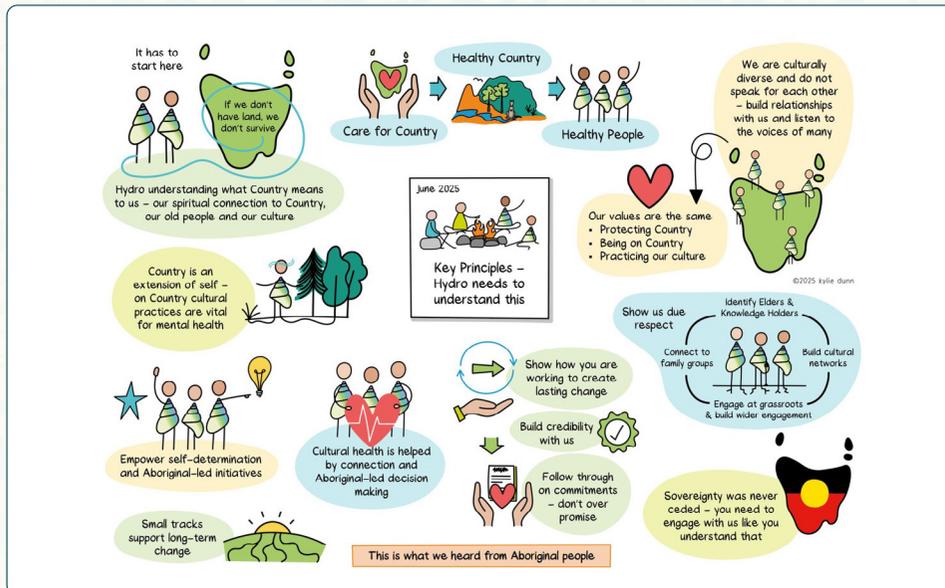
What we heard through our engagement

Listening to the lived experiences and feedback of Aboriginal people and organisations across Lutruwita/Tasmania, we have developed an enduring commitment that aims to foster connection and mutual learning with Aboriginal people.

We have prioritised three focus areas for action that will emphasise the building of trust-based relationships, the protection and care for Country, investment in social and economic opportunities and fostering cultural safety.

We listened We heard

- > The key principles illustrated in the image are the foundational elements that we need to understand to build relationships and engage within Lutruwita.
- > We are guided by these principles as we build relationships and deliver on the commitment and action plan.
- > We heard that when Hydro Tasmania group listens deeply and seeks to understand the barriers that need to be overcome, we can take action that prioritises the voices and lived experiences of Aboriginal people and cultivates cultural safety and cultural understanding.
- > The feedback provides a valuable foundation for understanding and will continue to guide our commitment and action plan into the future. Five engagement feedback posters capture the feedback from our listening. (see Appendices for full suite of feedback summaries).



Our enduring **Commitment** is to strengthen connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people grounded in respect, trust, and shared understanding.

We aim to build long-term, meaningful relationships with a focus on:

Protection and care for Country

We will seek partnerships to support Tasmanian Aboriginal people to be on Country and collaboratively protect Aboriginal heritage and cultural values.

Social and economic opportunities

We will provide opportunities for social and economic participation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Fostering cultural safety and inclusion

We will foster cultural safety and respect through improved cultural safety within the Hydro Tasmania group.



Elements of 'Healing Country' artwork by Bianca Templar, Truwulway and Bunurong woman



Action Plan for July 2025 to June 2026

Hydro Tasmania group's commitment is built from listening to the voices and lived experiences of Aboriginal people.

Like the waterways of Lutruwita/Tasmania, the actions will move and take shape over time as we embed our understanding and continue to listen to the feedback of Aboriginal people.

The actions within the three focus areas include:

- > Three-year goals that we are working towards, as we reflect and deepen our understanding; and
- > actions to deliver within the next twelve months that empower the voices of Aboriginal people and actively support cultural understanding within the workplace.

Protection and care for Country

Guided by our enduring commitment we will seek partnerships to support Tasmanian Aboriginal people to be on Country and collaboratively protect Aboriginal heritage and cultural values.

Cultural connection to Country

3-year goal

Seek partnerships with Tasmanian Aboriginal people to be on Country and visit cultural sites on Hydro Tasmania land.

12-month action

Partner with an Aboriginal-led consultant to understand the barriers to being on Country.

Return of land

3-year goal

Resolve Lagoon of Islands land ownership.

Establish a process for future land returns and associated requests.

12-month action

Commence engagement with stakeholders and the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania on the possible return of Lagoon of Islands land.

Cultural values

3-year goal

Deepen our understanding of cultural values.

12-month action

Partner with an Aboriginal-led consultant to shape the way we understand and assess the cultural values.

Share the findings of the Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for Major Projects with Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

Protection and care for Country

Guided by our enduring commitment we will seek partnerships to support Tasmanian Aboriginal people to be on Country and collaboratively protect Aboriginal heritage and cultural values.

Healthy Country

3-year goal

Seek partnerships to learn from Aboriginal knowledge holders to build mutual capability in land management.

12-month action

Engage Aboriginal rangers to provide services on Hydro Tasmania land.

Support and collaborate with Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania trainee placements and future Aboriginal Heritage Trainee training programs.

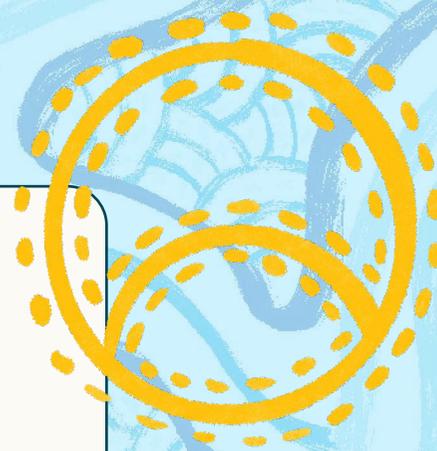
Cultural water

3-year goal

Contribute to cultural water policy development through listening and seek to understand cultural water values.

12-month action

Actively engage in State and Federal policy consultations.



Social and economic opportunities

Guided by our enduring commitment we will provide opportunities for social and economic participation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Partnerships and Grants

12-month action

Review the current approach to funding for community grants and partnerships to allocate specific budget for partnerships/grants with Aboriginal people/organisations.

Work with the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania to progress the assessment of power options at the Wybalenna site.

Invest in Aboriginal people

12-month action

Implement a guide for social procurement that aligns to the commitment and action plan.

Implement a remuneration guideline for external Aboriginal engagement.

Implement contractor/s requirements for major projects to invest in Aboriginal people.

Employment and education

12-month action

Investigate partnerships to support Aboriginal education and training opportunities.

Support education institutions with practical work experiences for Aboriginal people.

Investigate the development of a culturally safe and inclusive employee life-cycle experience.

Implement contractor/s requirements for major projects that support Aboriginal employment and education opportunities.

Foster cultural safety and inclusion

Guided by our enduring commitment we will foster cultural safety and respect through improved cultural safety within the Hydro Tasmania group.

Respect and understanding

12-month action

Develop and commence implementation of cultural safety training.

Participate in celebration of events and recognise Aboriginal history and culture within the workplace through sharing Aboriginal history and perspectives of historical events.

Implement contractor/s requirements for Major Projects that create a culturally safe working environment.

Cultural safety and inclusion

12-month action

Implement a plan for culturally safe spaces in our office locations.

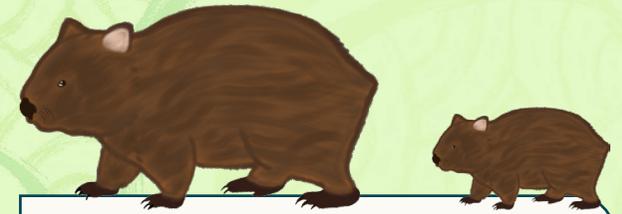
Improve our inclusive practices and how we engage with Aboriginal people, through listening and respecting the stories of Aboriginal people and their lived experiences.

Set clear expectations and create shared understanding with contractor/s on major projects in our working relationships with industry on our Commitment and Action Plan.

Recognition

12-month action

Share the story of the Aboriginal artwork for the commitment and action plan.



Action plan lifecycle

This Commitment will be evaluated in three years and the action plan will be evaluated annually. The outcomes will be made publicly available to foster transparency, accountability and truth-telling. An update on progress will be provided regularly through sharing stories on the [Hydro Yarns in Lutruwita](#).

To ensure Hydro Tasmania group is accountable and reviews its progress, we will implement an action plan lifecycle as outlined. Each financial year, we will set and implement priority actions to drive progress across the three focus areas. These priority actions will be reviewed and adjusted annually to ensure continuous improvement.

This will enable Hydro Tasmania group to be resilient and adaptable as we walk the path of the enduring commitment.



What we have done

Stories on actions we have taken can be found on [Hydro Yarns in Lutruwita](#).

This is designed as a space to yarn, share stories, opportunities and activities of interest, like the progress on the action plan, and the protection and care for Country at Lake Mackenzie.



Appendix
Engagement
feedback
summaries



It has to start here



If we don't have land, we don't survive

Hydro understanding what Country means to us – our spiritual connection to Country, our old people and our culture



Care for Country

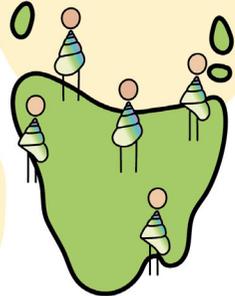


Healthy Country



Healthy People

We are culturally diverse and do not speak for each other – build relationships with us and listen to the voices of many



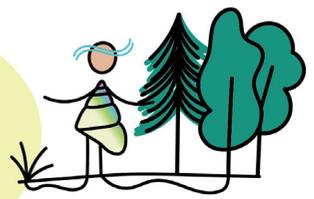
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Our values are the same

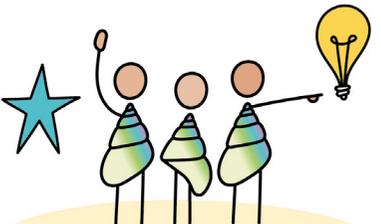
- Protecting Country
- Being on Country
- Practicing our culture

Country is an extension of self – on Country cultural practices are vital for mental health



June 2025

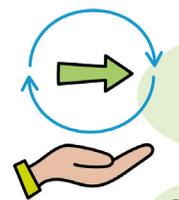
Key Principles – Hydro needs to understand this



Empower self-determination and Aboriginal-led initiatives



Cultural health is helped by connection and Aboriginal-led decision making



Show how you are working to create lasting change

Build credibility with us



Follow through on commitments – don't over promise

Show us due respect

Identify Elders & Knowledge Holders

Connect to family groups



Build cultural networks

Engage at grassroots & build wider engagement

Small tracks support long-term change



This is what we heard from Aboriginal people

Sovereignty was never ceded – you need to engage with us like you understand that



 Genuine, ongoing conversations

 No tokenistic engagement

 Design actions and work WITH us

 Ongoing collaboration with Knowledge Holders

 We want to be involved in events and present – not just come for the Welcome

Develop 'Hydro Yarns' with us 

Public sharing is a concern for some – limit website access to some content

 Clear communication

 Communicate stories

 Be careful about social media – turn comments off!

 Build cultural safety slowly

Take small steps 

 Aboriginal facilitators made it feel safer to open up

 Be authentic, acknowledge learning & mistakes

meaningful conversation

follow up

Read the Key Principles Poster first

June 2025



Yarning about Building Relationships

Culturally safe & trusted relationship to develop engagement approach



We consult by talking 

Engagement Model

People
Culture
Country

Relational engagement 

Not extractive consultation 

Field day inclusion in your work 

Regular key stakeholder meetings 

 Community information sessions on policies and practices

Quality over Quantity 

Strengths-based perspective 

 We cannot forget the past

 Provide the context we need – don't make us work for it

 Respect us!

 Work at our pace

Encourage more people to talk 

Prioritise & grow what's important to people – include diverse voices

 We want you to be successful

Understand needs of each Community 

Share past discussions & knowledge from us 

Share vulnerabilities to build trust

 Diverse Perspectives

Give adequate time 

Pay us appropriately 

 Use Aboriginal organisations to help get messages out

Make it a personal experience for us

 Consistent contact to support and coordinate

Practice trauma informed consultation 

Generational impacts – be careful with storytelling 

Committee to oversee the Action Plan 

Include interested Aboriginal people

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This is what we heard from Aboriginal people

HEALTHY COUNTRY

Explore more culturally aligned practices



Improve water quality

Understand the impacts on our ecosystems

Fire management essential for environmental sustainability



Land regeneration and heritage – understand impact of loss and destruction of land on us!



Support projects protecting and conserving places

Elders and knowledge holders have a vital role to play



Embed Care for Country practices in Hydro



Learn from good partnerships – tunapri luna



Tap into our Ranger programs – they're building knowledge you need

Form genuine partnerships – we can inform, build skills and participate in your projects

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CULTURAL LANDSCAPE VALUES

Understand cultural value of landscape when planning



Map edges of the Great Lake



Aboriginal-led interpretations on site – Palawa stories and Aboriginal lore

Aboriginal-led mapping of cultural sites – inform mgmt plans to reflect cultural perspectives



Layer walking tracks over land to tell the full story

Freedom to Practice

Better comms so we know where we can go

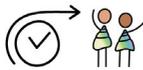
Free places to camp

Where the wildlife are



Ability to interact with things on site

Work with us to protect our heritage and culture



Rangers can feed into safety plans



Don't mix community time on Country with your work

We gave you lots of ideas to make this easier, safer and more open



We want to be on Country when water levels are low – see what was there before

Read the Key Principles Poster first

June 2025



Yarning about Protecting and Caring for Country

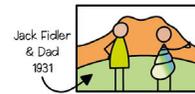


Hear our stories – learn and respect our law too

Be open! Show and tell what you've learnt and what you can do better

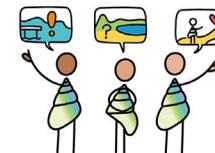


Share your good stories too – Lake Mackenzie

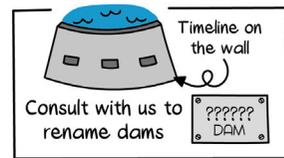


Jack Fidler & Dad 1931

Include our working history with you



Include us in heritage activities – we have a LOT to share



Consult with us to rename dams

Timeline on the wall

?????? DAM

You could gain so much from our perspectives – e.g. Meadowbank and jetties

LAND RETURN

Lagoon of Islands is a priority for return



Hand back healthy Country – focus on restoration using our Ranger programs



Being on Country is our priority



Take small steps but keep going



The north east region is sacred to us



We shouldn't have to 'lease' land – hand it back

Return must include water rights



Land returned to people or organisations can create disadvantage for the rest of the community



Using statutory bodies to hold it for the community – ensures greater equality

RECOGNITION

Recognise our heritage and share back what you find



Truth Telling

Signpost sites of cultural significance – even the difficult ones



Video interpretations from us accessed through QR codes

This is what we heard from Aboriginal people

ABORIGINAL BUSINESSES



Aboriginal-led land management programs – long-term, resourced and respected as an equal part of Hydro's land care strategy

Aboriginal-led culturally safe engagement that shows care for Aboriginal Heritage



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Work with Aboriginal social enterprises



Support our Arts & Culture – buying it increases confidence and identity

Invest in Aboriginal people

Support fire workshops and training

Build capacity and knowledge sharing opportunities



Support capability uplift of Aboriginal owned businesses through partnerships



Engage existing Aboriginal owned businesses for cultural experiences

Simple, Accessible and Relevant



Smooth out the procurement process



Provide procurement opportunities

Implement policy and procedure to do that

Build Your Fire Pit

Don't constrain it – decolonise

To yarn on-Country and share our knowledge

June 2025

Yarning about Creating Social and Economic Opportunities

Read the Key Principles Poster first

Pool of funds for on-Country management



Renewable development projects need to benefit Aboriginal people



Percentage of power tariff back into Healthy Country and Management



Written applications aren't approachable or accessible

Make it easier to apply for funding



Also, verbal feedback and complaints process

Allow narrative application and "tell us a story" reporting



Especially \$3K and under



Improve involvement and communication on how to apply for funding for community members

Grant funding or partnership funding to get projects going



Let us know what exists and how we can apply

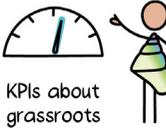


Land return includes money to set up employment, amenities, utilities, transport, equipment etc.



Supporting consistent, possibly permanent employment

GRANTS & PARTNERSHIPS



KPIs about grassroots outcomes not for you as a business



Key point of contact for us to go to

A support coordinator who is cultural safety trained



Allocation for Aboriginal businesses and people



Cape Barren Island needs a better and more reliable power supply

- health care
- water & sanitation
- wellbeing
- education & digital access
- economic development
- culture & community

This is what we heard from Aboriginal people

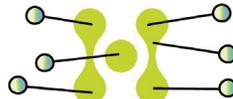
Bring in Aboriginal leadership and expertise



Aboriginal Heritage consultants to oversee projects



Community recognised



Security of employment – not short term engagement



Provide growth and development support

Call out racist behaviour

Manage racism & disrespectful behaviour online

More inclusive recruitment – actively encourage us to apply



Build organisational safety and capability first

Create real opportunities for roles in heritage management, economic development and other employment options



Embed safety within roles – have agency and not controlled by hierarchy

Not placed in roles that conflict with cultural principles

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Read the Key Principles Poster first

June 2025

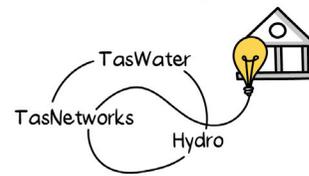
Yarning about Culturally Safe & Inclusive Workplace

Own your past actions and future missteps

Internal forums for discussions – raise awareness & commitment

Employment strategy that is culturally safe and understands us

Understand our cultural values first



Work as a collective and inform government

Expand school programs supporting organisations that help children through training and education

Supportive structures like

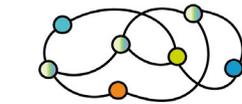
- Role models
- Mentors
- Backing

Invest in educating kids – taking our kids on-Country to connect with their culture



All employees need to do cultural awareness training

Honest history



Employee network important for inclusion & engagement

Bereavement leave for extended family

A loss of oral history



Aboriginal employees need flexible approach "community first"



Show Aboriginal kids the opportunities available

Training first

Days on Country

If you know more you can be more mindful of impacts

Improve workplace experience/employee value proposition

Support community days – celebrate important ones

Go to NAIDOC events

Include cultural days in agreements

Five additional paid leave days for cultural ceremonies, study leave and extra supports

Offer scholarships, traineeships and apprenticeships for Aboriginal people

Lead into structured career pathways

This is what we heard from Aboriginal people

