



Government of Western Australia
Department of Treasury



Treasury Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy

**Treasury's commitment to embedding the
Western Australian
Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy 2021-2029
and Closing the Gap Priority Reforms**

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Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Treasury (Treasury) respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians throughout Western Australia (WA) and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and sky. We celebrate the diversity and resilience of the world's oldest continuing living culture and the contributions Aboriginal people have made and continue to make to the life of our community and State.

We pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their cultures and to Elders, both past and present.

A note about language

In this document, in line with the WA Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy, the term Aboriginal people is used in preference to 'Indigenous' or 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' people, in recognition that Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of Western Australia. Together, Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders make up the First Nations of Australia. This document is primarily about Aboriginal people in Western Australia (including Aboriginal people who also identify as Torres Strait Islanders). We respectfully recognise the valuable contributions of Torres Strait Islanders people to Western Australia's society, economy and communities.

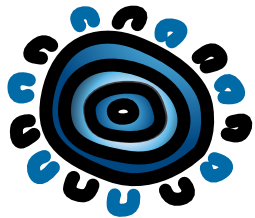


Design acknowledgment

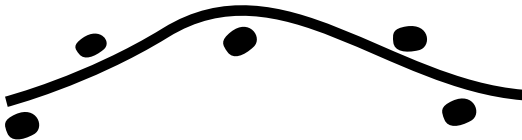
The Aboriginal design within this document was created by Kathleen Musulin, a proud Malgana Yawuru woman from the Gascoyne region, who works as an analyst with Treasury's Aboriginal Affairs Coordination Unit. The design was created through a collaborative process working together to discuss the journey Treasury is on to transform our organisation to build Aboriginal empowerment into the heart of what we do.

The design is a visual representation of Treasury's journey working with and alongside Aboriginal people, communities, and other Government agencies to create meaningful connections to country and communities. Central to the design are the relationships we develop along the way based on building trust, respecting culture, and working transparently to improve outcomes with and for communities in Western Australia.

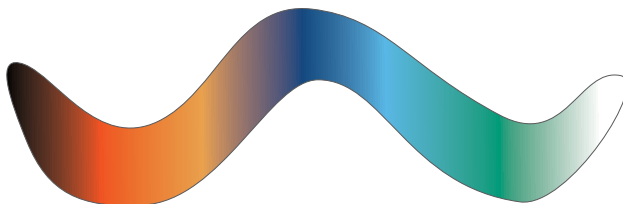
Below is a description of what each of the elements of the design represent:



The circles – represent the many diverse Aboriginal communities and cultures across the State and interconnections coming together with Government and Treasury, yarning, and collaborating to make decisions together that are informed by community needs and aspirations and where appropriate delivered by community.



The interconnecting waves – represent Treasury's journey, walking together alongside Aboriginal people and moving towards an empowered future where Aboriginal people determine their futures working with Government to help them prosper.



The colours within the waves and throughout the document – the colours of black, brown, blue, red, white, ochre and green represent the different areas of Country throughout Western Australia (from the desert to the sea) and the changes in the colours depict changes in the earth, waters and skies capturing the diversity of Aboriginal lands, peoples and culture across our State.

Our Commitment to the WA Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy 2021-2029



Michael Barnes PSM
Under Treasurer

I would like to acknowledge the efforts of the Aboriginal Advisory Council of WA in its collaborative partnership with the State Government in developing the Western Australian Government's Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy 2021-2029 (AES).

We have reflected on this important document and considered how we will commit to making the necessary changes within Treasury to transform our organisation and achieve better

outcomes for Aboriginal people. We will work to ensure our people, systems and processes are aligned to ensure reforms are built around genuine partnership and engagement with Aboriginal people, with strong accountability and culturally responsive ways of working.

Implementing the AES will require a fundamental shift in the way Government and the public sector have previously operated. Treasury's role, as a central Government agency, increases both our opportunity, and our responsibility to facilitate change. It is important to acknowledge that past policies, practices, and laws caused pain and suffering to Aboriginal people and that the impact of past actions continue to resonate today. We need to hold ourselves accountable and recognise

that unconscious prejudice continues to challenge our society, policy development, and decision-making.

Policy decisions about Aboriginal people cannot be made without Aboriginal people. Lasting improvements will only come from approaches that draw on Aboriginal people's perspectives, priorities, knowledge, experience, and ways of working. These principles need to be front of mind when reviewing agency budget submissions that impact on Aboriginal people.

This inaugural Treasury Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy highlights our commitment to change how we work, and the initial steps we have already commenced through development of our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), establishment of our Aboriginal Affairs Coordination Unit, and leading work on the Aboriginal Expenditure Review (AER). While more work is needed to embed the AES across the department, this plan outlines our commitment and priority actions over the next year.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "M. Barnes".

Michael Barnes PSM
Under Treasurer



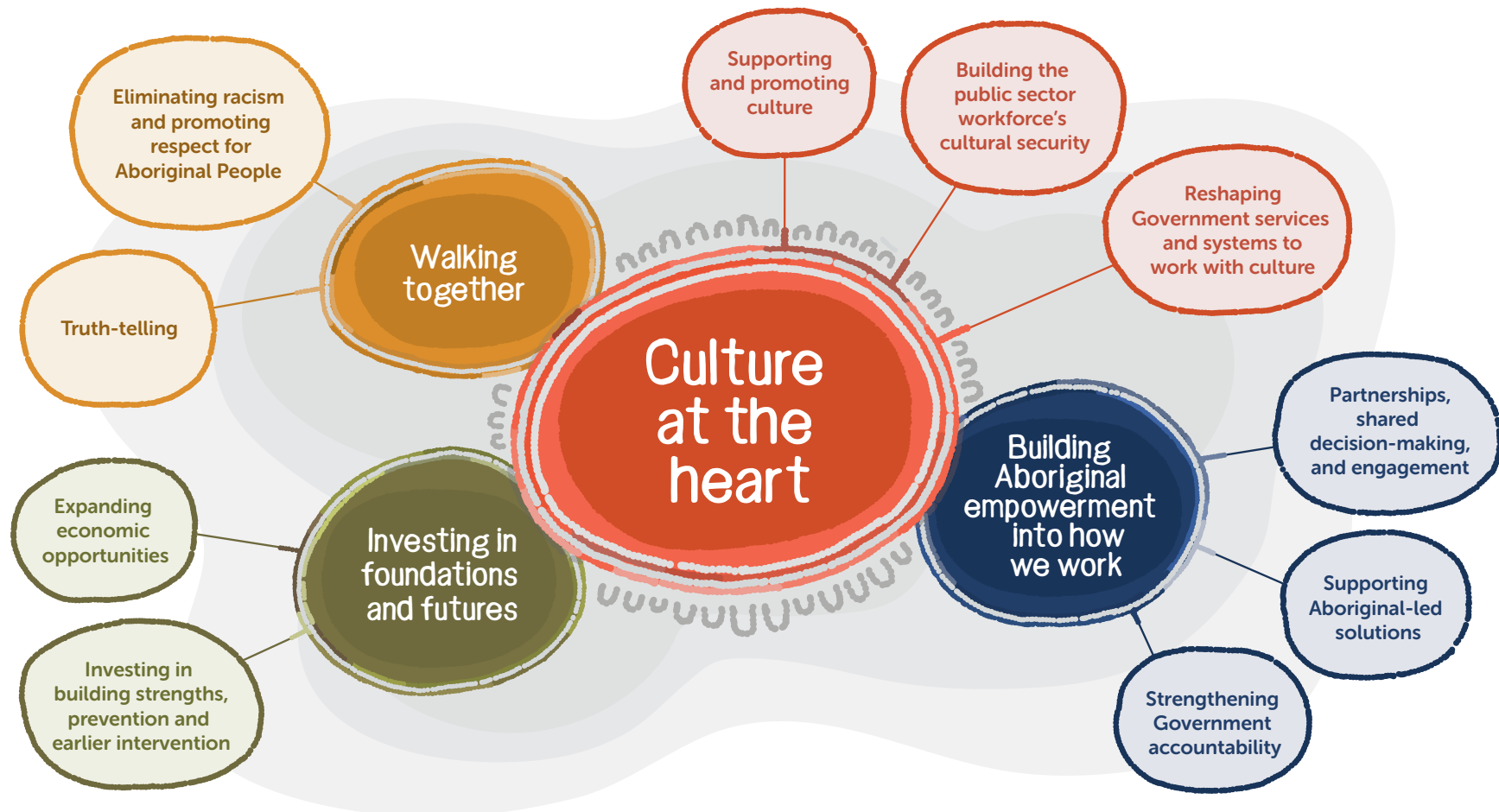


Figure 1: Western Australian Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy 2021-2029

Source: Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy 2021 - 2029 Community Guide September 2021

2021 Closing the Gap

All States and Territories in Australia have signed up to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (CTG) to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and governments to work together to overcome the inequality experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and achieve life outcomes equal to all Australians.

This is the first time governments have developed and negotiated a National Agreement in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

At the centre of the National Agreement are four Priority Reforms that focus on changing the way governments work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and a suite of 16 targets across the following outcomes areas: education, employment, health and wellbeing, justice, safety, housing, land and waters and languages.

There is an expectation that all government agencies in Western Australia identify how they will support these reforms, to assist in delivering targets under the CTG Agreement. Reporting on these Priority Reforms will occur annually over the life of the CTG Agreement, with details publicly reported in the WA CTG Implementation Plan and Annual Report.

Aboriginal Expenditure Review

Treasury is responsible for implementing an annual review on Aboriginal Expenditure for Western Australia under the CTG National Agreement which is being carried out by our Aboriginal Affairs Coordination Unit. The review has engaged with over 100 public sector agencies to identify and analyse expenditure on programs and services that are targeted to, or are predominantly used by, Aboriginal people. By mapping data to WA's Budget Papers, the review aims to improve the transparency of expenditure effort against outcomes for Aboriginal people. It will provide a tool for collaborative work on future Budget prioritisation processes and the reprioritisation of services to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs).



4 Priority Reforms

At the heart of the National Agreement are four Priority Reforms to change the way governments work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people supported by specific targets.

1 Formal partnerships and shared decision-making

Building and strengthening structures to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to share decision-making with governments.

2 Building the community-controlled sector

Building formal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sectors to deliver services to support Closing the Gap.

3 Transforming government organisations

Systemic and structural transformation of mainstream government organisations to improve accountability and better respond to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

4 Shared Access to Data and Information at a Regional Level

Enable shared access to location specific data and information to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations achieve the first three Priority Reforms.

19 Targets

The National Agreement establishes socio-economic targets* to measure progress across 17 outcome areas experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

1 People enjoy long and healthy lives

2 Children are born healthy and strong

3 Early childhood education is high quality and culturally appropriate

4 Children thrive in their early years

5 Students achieve their full learning potential

6 Students reach further education pathways

7 Youth are engaged in education or employment

8 Strong economic participation and development

9* People can secure appropriate and affordable housing

10 Adults are not overrepresented in incarceration

11 Young people are not overrepresented in detention

12 Children are not overrepresented in out-of-home care

13 Families and households are safe

14 Social and emotional wellbeing

15* People maintain distinctive relationships with land and waters

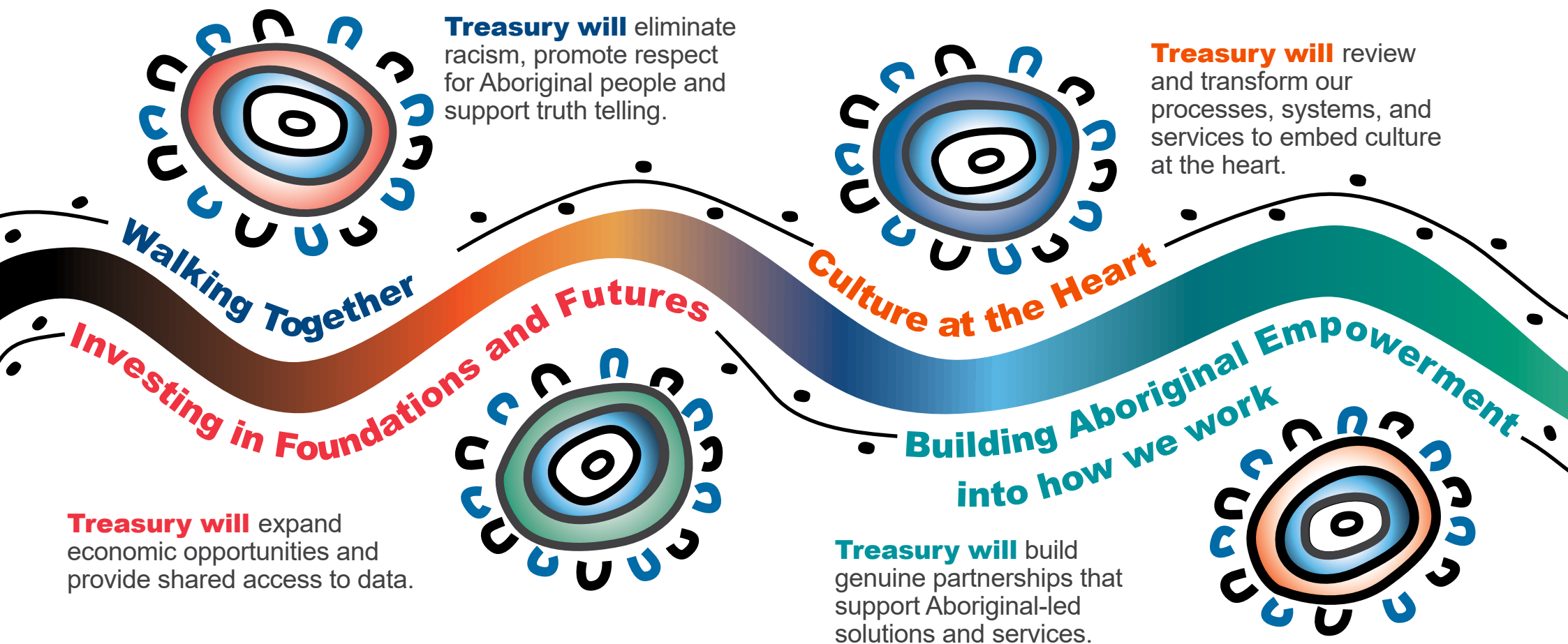
16 Cultures and languages are strong

17 People have access to information and services enabling participation in informed decision-making regarding their own lives

* 2 targets in these outcome areas

Treasury's commitment to Aboriginal Empowerment

Below is our commitment to implementing and embedding the principles of the WA Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy and CTG Reforms. Over 2023, Treasury will implement early actions from our first Reflect RAP and our Treasury AES to lay down the foundation to transition to an Innovate RAP. Beyond 2023, we will work on a longer-term approach to embed the key foundation of the AES into our business as usual, driven through the RAP refresh. The commitments under this Strategy will be supported by our values of being solutions focused and committed, through working collaboratively and, most importantly, making a difference to the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Walking Together

Treasury will eliminate racism, promote respect for Aboriginal people and support truth telling.

Priority actions (2022-2023)

- Implement mandatory Aboriginal cultural competency training for all staff that incorporates the key principles within the Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy and Closing the Gap.*
- Work with the Reconciliation Action Committee to identify strategies to embed the Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy and CTG Reforms.*
- Continue to support employees to participate annually on the Jawun secondment program to build partnerships and cultural competency.*
- Contribute to truth-telling and eliminate racism through promoting a greater understanding of the State's history and cultures of Aboriginal people.*

3) Transforming government organisations

* Aligns with Treasury's RAP

Culture at the Heart

Treasury will review and transform our processes and systems to embed culture at the heart.

Priority actions (2022-2023)

- Conduct a review of our processes and systems, including the State Budget process, to identify opportunities to embed CTG Priority Reforms and Aboriginal Empowerment into the way we work and to elevate the representation of Aboriginal peoples' needs and viewpoints in decision-making.
- Develop an Aboriginal Empowerment Analyst Guide that builds understanding and ensures CTG Priority Reforms and the AES are central to our work with agencies and the advice we provide to Government.
- Engage and educate our people on the AES and CTG to build awareness and understanding.
- Lead by example and build broader public sector awareness through utilising external forums and communications (e.g. Budget communications, Chief Financial Officer and Economic Forums) to promote CTG priority reforms and AES principles, and share information and analysis to support agencies improving outcomes for Aboriginal people.

3) Transforming government organisations



Investing in Foundations and Futures

Treasury will expand economic opportunities and provide shared access to data.

Priority actions (2022-2023)

- Develop and publish an annual AER to facilitate a shared data resource for Aboriginal stakeholders to inform decision-making.
- Continuing to develop and build an Aboriginal employment program and ensure Aboriginal employees are well represented and supported at all levels of the organisation.*
- Support the Government, and agencies, primarily the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, with advice to support agreement making to settle the State's Native Title compensation liability and promote economic opportunities, sustainable outcomes, and truth-telling/healing for Traditional Owner groups.
- Continue to raise awareness of the WA Aboriginal Procurement Policy as a vehicle to increase economic participation by Aboriginal people.*
- Explore opportunities for other Treasury analysis, specific to Aboriginal outcomes, to be shared publicly.
- Provide a briefing to the Aboriginal Advisory Council of Western Australia (AACWA), and other stakeholders, on the outcomes of the annual State Budget process and build awareness, understanding, and transparency of Government decision-making processes as appropriate.

4 Shared Access to Data and information at a Regional Level

* Aligns with Treasury's RAP

Building Aboriginal Empowerment into How we Work

Treasury will build genuine partnerships that support Aboriginal-led solutions and services.

Priority actions (2022-2023)

- Regularly engage with the AACWA and Aboriginal Affairs Coordinating Committee to seek their views and input where appropriate.*
- Develop an Aboriginal stakeholder engagement framework to provide a culturally informed approach to building relationships and partnerships.*
- Continue to build our stakeholder networks and our understanding and exposure to the diversity of issues impacting communities across Western Australia through visits and meetings on country.
- Support building of the ACCO sector and reprioritisation to ACCO's through annual implementation of the AER and implementation of the State Commissioning Strategy.*
- Actively promote and establish reciprocal secondments with Aboriginal organisations and other public sector agencies to encourage two-way learning and partnerships.*

1 Formal partnerships and shared decision-making

2 Building the community-controlled sector

Next steps – Actions beyond 2023

The Treasury AES is intended to complement our RAP and Diversity Plans and to provide a framework and principles to embed within new and existing documents and programs in a phased approach.

This plan also contains targeted initiatives, not covered in other plans, focusing on a review of Treasury's key business processes and products to ensure they are aligned with the Western Australian Government's AES and CTG Priority Reforms.

We will work closely with the Reconciliation Action Committee to implement the actions within this plan and to align future plans and programs with the key elements of the Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy.

Staff will participate in education sessions designed to embed the AES and we will seek their input and feedback in the development and implementation of current and future plans.

The Treasury Executive will champion and lead progress of the AES and will seek feedback from the Aboriginal Advisory Council to ensure we are achieving outcomes in line with the intentions laid out in the WA Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy 2021-2029.

