

Partnering with First Nations communities in City and Regional Planning

Prepared by the Institute for Regional Futures, and The Wollotuka
Institute at The University of Newcastle

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Partnering with First Nations Communities in City and Regional Planning

An International Review

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Artwork:

Ngarralin marrung (2022)

Artists:

University of Newcastle staff, students and community

Artwork story:

Ngarralin marrung is a collaborative artwork co-created by University of Newcastle's staff, students and community. The name is taken from the Wollotuka Cultural Standards and represents "Respect and Honouring-which is the hallmark of strong relationships and action.

Ngarralin marrung was created on the land of the Pambalong Clan of the Awabakal People at The Wollotuka Institute's Giyi Para Cultural Symposium in November 2022. Giyi Para provided an opportunity to connect with Aboriginal cultures, knowledges and practices through song-making, art-making and language-learning – a pivotal step in the reconciliation journey of many.

This artwork honours the power of working in partnership and combining knowledges – Indigenous and non-Indigenous – to address emerging issues and drive positive impacts for our regions and their communities. Ngarralin marrung is a symbol of the relationship between The Wollotuka Institute and the Institute for Regional Futures; respecting the many cultures and histories which bring us together and holding space for new partners in the future.

Note on terminology: As this is an international review, the term 'Indigenous peoples' has been used to refer collectively to Indigenous peoples of Australia, Canada, Aotearoa/New Zealand and Sápmi. The authors recognise the diversity of peoples and cultures within these groups, the range of terms used within and across nations, and the right of all peoples to claim their cultural inheritance and the names by which they are known.

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Acknowledgement of Country



Country is the land, water, sky and all the living things that occupy those spaces. It also refers to the spiritual connections that exist between all of those things.

For us, Country is our mother. We are Country. It is inseparable from our spirit and the spirit of our ancestors.

We acknowledge Country to pay respect to the wisdom of our Elders past and present.

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which our students and staff live, have come from and are educated on.

The University of Newcastle has a presence on the lands of the Awabakal, Darkinjung, Biripai, Worimi, Wonnarua, and Eora Nations.

Contents

Executive summary	6
Introduction	7
Recommendations	8
Theme one: Growing ourselves	8
Calls to action	8
Theme two: Growing accountability	8
Calls to action	8
Theme three: Growing relationships	9
Calls to action	9
1. High-level overview of Indigenous peoples across four sites	10
1.1. Sites of review	10
1.2. Style notes	10
1.3. Overview	10
1. AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND	10
2. AUSTRALIA	11
3. NORTH TURTLE ISLAND/CANADA	12
4. SÁPMI	13
2. An embedded Indigenous voice in planning: international literature review	14
2.1. The context of this review	14
2.2. Challenges and the elephant in the room	14
What are the challenges that have hampered Indigenous-inclusive planning?	14
What are the elephants in the room?	14
2.3. Limitations of the international review	15

2.4.	Potential pathways to address and redress	15
	Creating a place-based context	16
	Broken promises and mistrust	16
	Who to consult: recognition of Traditional Owners and other Indigenous peoples	17
	Involve community from the outset	20
	Taking time	20
	Consider the ongoing ownership of knowledge in planning	22
	Incorporating Indigenous Knowledge as part of risk assessment	23
	Incorporating Indigenous Knowledge within Western planning systems	23
3.	Overview of case studies: amplifying Indigenous voices	26
3.1.	Empowering partnerships in the co-management of Country: Our Knowledge Our Way in Caring for Country	26
3.2.	Accessing the Indigenous authored body of literature – Professor Hirini Matunga	26
3.3.	Planning agendas from Indigenous bodies: the Sámi Arctic Strategy	27
3.4.	Central Coast First Nations Accord, Australia	27
3.5.	Policy and practice: Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) – Policy on Planning Practice and Reconciliation	27
3.6.	Storing information: digital access to the Sámi Heritage Archives	28
3.7.	Reports for change: linking Indigenous peoples with regional development, Sweden	28
3.8.	Whanganui River, New Zealand	28
3.9.	Naarm/Melbourne, Australia	29
3.10.	Vilhelmina, Sweden	29

Executive summary

The Greater Cities Commission Six Cities Region Discussion Paper includes an embedded Indigenous Voice as a shaping feature of their planning and practice. This report was commissioned by the Commission to develop:

- A literature review outlining international examples of practices, policies and strategies for successful partnerships with Indigenous communities in planning.
- A suite of recommendations for partnering with Indigenous communities to support the planning process for the multi-city region of six cities in New South Wales.

The report has four geographical focus areas: Australia, Aotearoa/New Zealand, Canada and Sápmi (the lands of the Sámi peoples). A literature review and 10 case studies highlight key themes and strength-based examples from the sites of review.

The report outlines challenges that have hampered Indigenous-inclusive planning, such as difficulty knowing who should be approached; time poor models; a lack of cultural capability resulting in offence to Indigenous people and communities; and Indigenous Knowledge used in consultation and planning processes becoming part of the public domain.

It also outlines potential pathways to address challenges and redress historical injustices. For example, creating a place-based context; recognising the legacy of broken promises and mistrust; knowing who should be consulted; and navigating a range of salient issues on the nature of consultation. This includes involving community from the outset; taking time; considering the ongoing ownership of Indigenous Knowledge in planning; following protocols to respect and protect Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property; and recognising Indigenous people's connection and sovereignty to their traditional lands.

In highlighting the diversity of Indigenous peoples and the movement of many to urban centres, the report notes that the international trends to empower Indigenous voices in planning and governance involve formal mechanisms for Indigenous people to contribute to regional governance.

While noting the historical problems with Western planning, the report also makes recommendations on the opportunities to create vibrant new connections between knowledge systems including Indigenous Ecological Knowledges as part of a risk management approach.

Introduction

Indigenous peoples plan – because planning is a human activity.¹

Globally, colonisation not only dispossessed and displaced Indigenous peoples from their lands and waters – it also dismissed their ongoing claims to custodianship for the multigenerational practices of social and environmental sustainability, which provided a framework for the natural and built environment. In place of Indigenous stewardship, the increasingly urbanised settler-colonial landscapes have framed resource extraction, technological development and the cityscape as markers of ‘progress’, ‘advancement’ and ‘in the national interest’.

Currently, attempts are being made to reimagine contemporary city planning, identifying Indigenous Knowledges as a cornerstone of innovation and integral to growth. In responding to this impetus, city planners are entering a contested space, where histories from the margins are being moved back to the centre. Literature clearly and consistently points to cycles of disempowerment and exclusion, to tokenistic inclusions and broken promises. More recently however, initiatives which attempt to both address and redress these difficult pasts have emerged, showing possibilities for meaningful partnership from global to local levels. This international review seeks to encompass the key elements of both these perspectives, synthesising a response which positions

Indigenous peoples and cities as products of both history and modernity. It further seeks to identify models of ‘best practice’, while noting that these works are ‘a journey not a destination’, requiring ongoing reflection and adaptation.

While recognising that Indigenous peoples across the world exceed 470 million people, this review focuses on Indigenous peoples in three nations: Aotearoa/New Zealand, Australia and Canada, as well as the Sámi peoples who exercise stewardship across a range of Arctic nation states. It amplifies Indigenous voices and recognises the wave of systemic change being implemented in policy and by planning practitioners.

The recommendations drawn from this international review call for the adoption of culturally nuanced growth frameworks in city planning that create space for collaboration and change to be built in partnership with Indigenous peoples. There is an opportunity to co-create new stories, stronger futures and socially just societies.

Thematically, the review takes its mandate as *Planning for growth*, and draws three thematic areas:

- Theme one: *Growing ourselves*
- Theme two: *Growing accountability*
- Theme three: *Growing relationships*

¹ H Matunga, *The Concept of Indigenous Planning as a Framework for Social Inclusion*, 2008.

Recommendations

Theme one: Growing ourselves

Recommendation 1:

In planning, uphold Indigenous custodianship of land, sea and sky.

Recommendation 2:

In planning, include Indigenous histories, perspectives and priorities.

Calls to action

- In city and regional plans, recognise Country as having rights and interests in planning and development, noting that under international precedent Indigenous peoples are the stewards of the exercise of these rights and interests.²
- Co-develop scoping papers to identify Indigenous interests within planning bodies' footprints, distinguishing:
 - Traditional Owner groups
 - Cohorts of Indigenous peoples whose Traditional lands are elsewhere
- In city and regional plans, recognise Country and Indigenous peoples as partners across the three domains of Country – land, sea and sky.
- Commit to building the cultural capability³ of all staff working on city and regional planning to ensure cultural safety for Indigenous partners and as measures of reconciliation and social justice.

Theme two: Growing accountability

Recommendation 3:

Inform and engage Indigenous peoples in planning processes and outcomes.

Recommendation 4:

Co-weave Indigenous Knowledges into practice.

Calls to action

- Prepare place-based protocols for city and regional planning based on diverse engagement with Indigenous peoples in planning bodies' footprints. This should include a robust commitment to recognising Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property.
- Co-create place-based structures to enable Indigenous peoples to contribute to planning processes in partnership with staff and elected representatives.
- Resource these structures appropriately, noting:
 - Indigenous peoples should be recompensed for their contribution
 - timeframes should be flexible not arbitrary
 - the terms of reference and membership should be refreshed regularly.
- Embed Indigenous histories, perspectives and priorities in city and regional plans within both natural and built environments through architectural practice, the creative arts, and accessible and healthy land, water and air.

² See pages 10 and 15 for discussion of living cultures that recognise Country as a 'sentient landscape' of inter-relationships with both agency and rights.

³ Cultural capability involves continuous learning and encompasses cultural awareness (awareness of and sensitivity to cultural difference), cultural safety (an environment that is safe for Indigenous people, their identities and experiences) and cultural competency (behaviours, attitudes and policies that enable people to work effectively in cross-cultural situations). See Victorian Public Sector Commission, [Aboriginal Cultural Capability](#), 2022.

Theme three: Growing relationships

Recommendation 5:
Develop relationships of value.

Recommendation 6:
Develop and implement new models of interactive governance.

Calls to action

- In planning processes, create coherent links between both policies and practices and the broader contexts operating, including state, national and international Indigenous rights and voice mechanisms and protocols to protect Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property.
- In partnership with Indigenous communities, Include Indigenous languages meaningfully across operations. This includes:
 - reasserting place-based naming
 - reflecting planning philosophies in place-based Indigenous concepts
 - upskilling staff, elected representatives and broader communities to confidently articulate the place-based naming and concepts.
- Commit to Indigenous procurement targets at all levels of planning and development.
- Create a readily accessible database of best practice, processes, protocols and reporting which includes:
 - The protection of Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property
 - activities on Country to promote and disseminate information to multiple community audiences
 - materials available online and in print
 - place-based collaborative artworks and sound pieces to support the resources
 - feedback mechanisms.



1. High-level overview of Indigenous peoples across four sites

1.1. Sites of review

This international review was initially conceived as a Tri-Nations audit across Australia, Canada and Aotearoa New Zealand. The subsequent addition of the Sámi peoples necessitated a move from a nations-based approach in consideration of the multi-national and cross-national positioning of Sámi within and across the nation states of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. As such, the term ‘sites of review’ is used in this document.

1.2. Style notes

Throughout this review, any terms from an Indigenous language will be written in the following format: Indigenous language (English translation). This is to subvert the conventional practice of putting Indigenous languages in italics or apostrophes, which marginalises Indigenous languages by coding them as foreign or ‘out of place’. We categorically assert the ongoing value and necessity of First Languages and wish to challenge the reader to consider the foreign nature of English for Indigenous peoples and recognise the history of violent imposition of English on Indigenous peoples. We include the English translation for the sake of readability but seek to prioritise the use of relevant language terms in place of English.

1.3. Overview

1. Aotearoa/New Zealand

Māori are the Indigenous peoples of Aotearoa/New Zealand and are 16.5% of Aotearoa’s total population.⁴ One of the foundational principles of Teo Ao Māori (the Maori Perspective) is the importance of

maintaining strong spiritual bonds and responsibility to Papatūānuku (the Earth Mother)⁵ and Māori are also referred to as Tangata Whenua (people of the land).⁶

Teo Ao Māori is also grounded in frameworks of relationality, and this is exemplified in the recitation of whakapapa (genealogy) – a classification system that links all animate and inanimate, known and unknown phenomena in the terrestrial and spiritual worlds. When pepeha (an introduction) is delivered, whakapapa typically begins with an ancestral mountain or river.⁷ Establishing where you are from is essential to explaining who you are from, and this forms the core of mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge).⁸

Since invasion, Māori face continuous injustice as settler-colonialism remains an ongoing project in Aotearoa. Many rights, including those under Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi), remain unfulfilled as Tangata Whenua continue to be dispossessed of their lands and waters.⁹ Since 55% of Māori are now residing in Aotearoa’s cities,¹⁰ these challenges are exacerbated in urban environments which impose neoliberal-capitalist frameworks that are antithetical to Māori rangatiratanga (sovereignty).¹¹

Māori continue to fight to assert their rights to apply their own land management systems on their sovereign lands,¹² though have particularly struggled to achieve this in urban environments due to systemic planning structures. Recognising rangatiratanga – Māori authority in governance processes – will be key to achieving contemporary spatial justice across Aotearoa more broadly.

4 IWGIA, [Indigenous Peoples in Aotearoa](#), n.d.

5 Waikato Regional Council, [Māori and the Land](#), 2022.

6 [TE AKA Māori Dictionary](#), 2023.

7 K Opai, [Pepeha for Non-Māori](#), 2022.

8 R Taonui, [‘Whakapapa – genealogy – What is whakapapa?’](#), Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand, n.d.

9 IWGIA, [Indigenous Peoples in Aotearoa](#), n.d.

10 S Marek, [Indigenous Urban Geographies of Empowerment: Māori Urban Geographies of Whakamanatanga](#), 2020.

11 [TE AKA Māori Dictionary](#), 2023.

12 Waikato Regional Council, [Māori and the Land](#), 2022.

2. Australia

First Nations peoples have lived in Australia since time immemorial and have the oldest continuous cultures on Earth.¹³ First Nations people in Australia identify with multiple terms to describe themselves including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, Indigenous, Black/Blak, Zenadth Kes, national affiliations, regional identifiers (e.g. Koori/e) and language groups or clans. First Nations peoples are extremely diverse, with hundreds of languages spoken across the country and distinct cultures and customs.¹⁴

Country is used by First Nations peoples in Australia to describe the lands, waterways, seas and skies they have a connection and responsibility to take care of – this is typically referred to as Caring for Country.¹⁵ Country, while being an English word, identifies a central and integral aspect of First Nations identity, law, governance and spirituality. Country exists beyond the superficial physical landscape to map the relationships between people, place, language, legal and spiritual systems, non-human kin (animals), ancestors, and the intergenerational transmission of knowledge and custom. These relationships necessitate a variety of land management strategies based in responsibility and reciprocity which are also key to living cultures that recognise Country as a ‘sentient landscape’ with both agency and rights.¹⁶

Since British invasion, First Nations peoples have continuously resisted violent colonisation such as attempted genocide through the Frontier Wars, the historical and continuing removal of First Nations children, degradation of Country through mismanagement and extractive industries, mass dispossession of land and waters, and the attempted eradication of First Nations culture such as the banning of language. The ongoing project of settler colonialism continues to deny many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples basic human rights, such as equitable access to health, housing, employment and education.¹⁷ Notably, Australia is the only Commonwealth country to have never signed a Treaty with the First Nations peoples of an occupied territory.¹⁸

Approximately 35% of First Nations peoples live in Australia’s major cities.¹⁹ Like Aotearoa, spatial injustices are particularly exacerbated in urban environments where colonial planning systems actively ignore and continue to disrupt First Nations people’s families and communities. Current Indigenous land management practices, whereby decision-making authority regarding land has been returned to Traditional Owners, operate imperfectly and almost exclusively in regional and remote Australia. This indicates a clear refusal by urban planning bodies to prioritise the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Country and Caring for Country.

¹³ AHRC, [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders: Australia's First Peoples](#), n.d.

¹⁴ AIATSIS, [Australia's First Peoples](#), 2022.

¹⁵ AIATSIS, [Welcome to Country](#), 2022.

¹⁶ M Brigg and M Graham, ‘[The relevance of Aboriginal political concepts](#),’ ABC Religion & Ethics, 2020.

¹⁷ AHRC, [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders: Australia's First Peoples](#), n.d.

¹⁸ BBC, [Why doesn't Australia have an indigenous treaty?](#) 2017.

¹⁹ AHRC, [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders: Australia's First Peoples](#), n.d.

3. North Turtle Island/Canada

Canada's Constitution recognises three distinct communities of Indigenous peoples: First Nations (referred to as Indian in the Canadian Constitution), Inuit and Métis.²⁰ The term Indigenous peoples can be used to refer to these three groups collectively and the term Aboriginal peoples is also used. Approximately 5% of Canada's population identify as Indigenous across these three groups.²¹ There are more than 630 First Nations communities including over 50 nations and language groups; there are 63 Inuit communities across the northern regions of Canada in Inuit Nunangat (the place where Inuit live);²² and Métis peoples belong to a number of communities across the three Prairie Provinces (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta), as well as parts of Ontario, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories, and the Northern United States.²³ Canadian Indigenous peoples are linguistically and culturally diverse, and have different relationships to settler-colonialism.

Land management and stewardship practiced by Indigenous peoples in Canada has nurtured sustainable relationships with land and water since time immemorial.²⁴ Invasion and colonisation continues to adversely impact Indigenous peoples and practices, and the historic role of planning in the mistreatment of Indigenous peoples demands critical reflection and actionable change from the discipline. Indigenous peoples in Canada continue to resist Treaty breaches; the destruction of their homelands by extractive industries; the epidemic of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Children and Two-Spirit people; the intergenerational trauma, forced assimilation and attempted genocide inflicted by residential schools; and the wilful ignorance of government and institutions to neglect Indigenous sovereignty and

governance in management of place. Indigenous planning continues to be dismissed by broader Canadian societies and governments, amplifying ongoing structural racism.²⁵

As in other settler colonial projects, Canadian statehood was achieved by forcibly dispossessing Indigenous peoples from their lands, through both overt genocidal murders and the involuntary removal of groups to designated reserves.²⁶ Reserves were one of the most powerful tools of oppression used by Western settlers to explicitly exclude Indigenous communities from planning systems.²⁷ Beyond territorial dispossession, these strictly regulated spaces enforced violent assimilation policies and have caused irreparable damage to families, communities and cultures.

On reserves and residential schools, every element of Indigenous peoples' lives were under settler-colonial surveillance – movement on and off reserves was controlled by an arbitrary pass system and cultural and spiritual practices were prohibited, including land management. Settler-colonialism repeatedly breached and interfered with Indigenous peoples' lives, communities, homelands, and sovereignty. Through banning cultural practices and customs, colonists denied Indigenous peoples food sovereignty, and forced them to engage in Western agricultural practices and consume a diet that harms Indigenous health and wellbeing.²⁸

In Canada, 61% of Indigenous peoples currently live in urban areas and cities, and these urban Indigenous populations have highlighted that they are still seeking recognition of rights as Indigenous peoples within city landscapes.²⁹ There remains a significant gap in access to and availability of services for

20 Government of Canada, [Indigenous Peoples and Communities](#), 2022.

21 Government of Canada, [Annual Report to Parliament 2020](#), 2020.

22 Government of Canada, [Indigenous Peoples and Communities](#), 2022.

23 Métis National Council, [Frequently Asked Questions](#), n.d.

24 Canadian Institute of Planners, [Policy on Planning Practice and Reconciliation](#), 2019.

25 Ibid.

26 SY Prusak, R Walker and R Innes, [Toward Indigenous Planning? First Nation Community Planning in Saskatchewan, Canada](#), 2015.

27 Ontario Professional Planners Institute, [Planning's Relationship with Indigenous Communities: Planning Policy and Slow Progress in Changing Times](#), 2020.

28 SY Prusak, R Walker and R Innes, [Toward Indigenous Planning? First Nation Community Planning in Saskatchewan, Canada](#), 2015.

29 National Association of Friendship Centres, [Urbanization and Indigenous Peoples in Canada](#), 2021.

Indigenous peoples in Canada's cities, with poverty adversely impacting urban communities.³⁰ These lived histories identify that Canadian cities are sites of further marginalisation for Indigenous peoples, and that the need for planning that prioritises Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination with transformative vision is clear.³¹

4. Sápmi

Sámi are the circumpolar Indigenous peoples of Sápmi – the northern part of the Scandinavian Peninsula and the Kola Peninsula that spans Sweden, Norway, Finland and Russia.³² The approximate population of the Sámi is 100,000 with most now residing in Norway.³³ Traditional Sámi livelihoods were centred around reindeer husbandry, hunting, fishing, farming and duodji (Sámi handicrafts).³⁴ While Sámi are a singular Indigenous group, it is important to contextualise Sámi through geopolitics and the impact of having four different national laws imposed on Sámi and their homeland. This leads to complex and diverse Sámi histories and relationships to settler-colonialism, marginalisation and dispossession.³⁵

Since the mid-1700s, nation-states have made accelerated efforts to colonise Sámi territories and undermine Sámi sovereignty in order to exploit natural resources within Sápmi and legitimise imposed state borders by erasing recognition of Sápmi land.³⁶ Sweden and Denmark-Norway both declared parts of Sápmi as Crown land, and structurally dispossessed Sámi of their territory and farmlands by enforcing land-partitioning reforms which exclusively benefitted Norwegian speakers and resident farmers.³⁷ These nation-states then continuously and incrementally

imposed discriminatory policy such as social segregation policies, land ownership ineligibility and assimilation practices, in order to disenfranchise Sámi and their inherent rights as Indigenous peoples.³⁸

Similar to the Indigenous communities of Aotearoa, Australia, and Canada, a considerable amount of Sámi today live in cities and urban areas. However, with Sápmi territories spread across four nation-states, there are challenges in capturing exact totals of urban Sámi populations. Due to the ongoing effects of systemic racism, many Sámi face victimisation and discrimination in urban environments, at both societal and governmental levels.³⁹ Sámi, like many Indigenous peoples, also combat conflation of rural Sámi identity equating to 'authentic' Sámi experiences. From this, Sámi historic presence has often been written out of the history of cities; Sámi culture in the city is often experienced as 'out of place'; and urban governance may produce 'Indigenous invisibility' because official documents, political discourse, and decisions simply do not relate to the urban Sámi past and present.⁴⁰

Within urban environments, Sámi are still overwhelmingly rendered invisible by dominant cultures and institutions. Planning efforts within urban spaces that attempt to collaborate with and/or return authority to Sámi are limited, with the majority occurring in regional and rural communities. There is limited evidence of any systemic planning efforts initiated to benefit Sámi people and this must be rectified through disciplinary un-learning, relationship building and reimagination.

30 Ibid.

31 LC Senese and K Wilson, 'Aboriginal urbanization and rights in Canada: Examining implications for health', *Social Science and Medicine*, 2013, vol. 91, pp. 219-228.

32 IWGIA, *Indigenous Peoples in Sápmi*, n.d.

33 Arctic Council, *Saami Council*, n.d.

34 E Reimerson, *Nature, Culture, Rights: Exploring Space for Indigenous Agency in Protected Area Discourses*, 2015.

35 OECD, *OECD Rural Policy Reviews, Linking the Indigenous Sámi People with Regional Development in Sweden*, 2019, Chapter 1.

36 E Reimerson, *Nature, Culture, Rights: Exploring Space for Indigenous Agency in Protected Area Discourses*, 2015.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

39 M Melhus, B-M Eliassen and A Broderstad, 'From rural to urban living – migration from Sámi core areas to cities in Norway. Study design and sample characteristics', *International Journal of Circumpolar Health*, 2020, vol. 79.

40 M Berg-Nordlie, A Dankertsen and M Winsvold, *An Urban Future for Sápmi?* 2022.



2. An embedded Indigenous voice in planning: international literature review

2.1. The context of this review

The remit for this review was an open-ended call for three interconnecting elements:

1. A literature review examining partnership with Indigenous peoples, particularly as it relates to city and regional planning, including relevant policies and strategies.
2. Identifying best practice case studies, including the creation of ethical relationships between Indigenous peoples and government and non-government actors.
3. Developing recommendations and aligned actions to assist current and future city and regional planning.

The Greater Cities Commission's 'Region Shaper' and vision for 'an embedded First Nations voice' in planning and the associated community aspirations⁴¹ have been elevated as the fundamental framing concepts for the literature review. Further, the six Region Shapers have been reconfigured to provide a matrix of enquiry. Rather than forming a linear list, they are shaped as an interconnected series of objectives linking land as the grounding feature to planning the overall shaping outcome. Recognising that culture is formed by land, the remaining concepts of social wellbeing, environmental and economic aspirations are placed as further elements of building an embedded voice.

2.2. Challenges and the elephant in the room

Theoretically, the literature review takes its task from the desire for the Greater Cities Commission to be thought-leaders, noting the Commission adopts an 'ecosystems' approach.⁴² The literature review begins therefore with identifying a range of challenges that

have hampered the development and implementation of robust, Indigenous-inclusive planning.

Corresponding with the challenges in the Indigenous planning sphere, the international literature review notes that these concerns and the endemic problems which created them are often referred to as 'the elephant in the room'. The review has embraced them as a couplet, framing the problems which are known to exist yet simultaneously remaining unnamed. We argue that the pathway to an embedded Indigenous voice in planning necessitates that problems are not just acknowledged and named but also addressed.

What are the challenges that have hampered Indigenous-inclusive planning?

- There can be difficulty determining who should be approached.
- Consultation and planning are often done in time poor models where highly structured agendas are implemented according to the time frames of the researcher, planner, or funding body and not according to community protocols and needs.
- Research documents the problem, often through a deficit lens, but even where solutions are suggested they are not implemented in planning.^{43,44}
- Consultation benefited the planner or consultant and their profession or institution but not the community.⁴⁵
- Planners and consultants often lack cultural capability, unintentionally causing pain and offence to Indigenous people or communities.⁴⁶
- Indigenous communities often fail to see the benefits of the consultation in planning.

41 Greater Cities Commission, [Discussion Paper: The Six Cities Region](#), 2022.

42 Greater Cities Commission, [Home](#), n.d.

43 J Hunt, [Engaging with Indigenous Australia – Exploring the Conditions for Effective Relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities](#), 2013.

44 National Oceans Office, [Sea Country – An Indigenous Perspective: The South-east Regional Marine Plan Assessment Report](#), 2002.

45 Ontario Professional Planners Institute, [INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES IN PLANNING: Report of the Indigenous Planning Perspectives Task Force](#), 2019.

46 A Cheng, ['Connecting with country in urban planning'](#), Government News, 2022.

- Indigenous Knowledge is taken through the consultation and planning processes and becomes part of the public domain.⁴⁷
- Research and consultation are a ‘tick the box’ exercise where the consultation is itself the goal.
- There is a dearth of trained Indigenous planners and consultants in the areas of inquiry.
- There are multiple disjunctures between Indigenous and Western worldviews, where Western models and interests prevail.⁴⁸
- There is ambiguity on whether it is appropriate for non-Indigenous researchers and consultants to use Indigenous methodologies.
- Processes move forward when there is conflict, not consensus, between Indigenous parties and needing to provide localised approaches.⁴⁹

What are the elephants in the room?

- Planning is occurring on unceded Indigenous lands.⁵⁰
- There is persistence of Indigenous disadvantage.⁵¹
- Planning is being done for bodies whose original premise was to erase Indigenous memory and practices of land stewardship.
- There is still marked silence from planning bodies on Indigenous issues in planning.⁵²
- Indigenous peoples are often asked to reimagine sites they were prohibited from or forcibly detained in.⁵³
- Non-Indigenous planners may fear causing offence.
- Stereotypes about Indigeneity position authenticity as antithetical to urban living.

- Stereotypes limit the scope of Indigenous planning interest to the natural environment.
- Many Indigenous people mistrust government.
- Indigenous environmental stewardship is often positioned as anti-progress.

2.3. Limitations of the international review

This document provides high level consideration of the four sites of review (Aotearoa/New Zealand, Australia, Canada and Sápmi) and acknowledges that each site may contain nuances and alternate representations which may not be captured here. The authors request that this review be considered a contribution to an ongoing dialogue and welcome the opportunity to revisit the concepts and examples in respectful partnership in the future.

2.4. Potential pathways to address and redress

Creating a place-based context

Overseeing Australia’s first multi-city region, the Greater Cities Commission is a hub for innovation, making meaning of the desire to ‘not do business as usual’. The multi-city region covers the initial sites of the colonisation of Australia – from the First Fleet, the limits of location, and the movements north and south in search of raw materials, alternate harbours and expanding the imperial footprint.

In undertaking to partner with Indigenous peoples, the Greater Cities Commission creates the possibility of new narratives that transform intention to practice.

47 T Janke, Z Cumpston, R Hill, E Woodward, P Harkness S von Gavel and J Morrison J, [Australia state of the environment 2021: Indigenous, independent report to the Australian Government Minister for the Environment](#), 2021.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.

50 Primary Colours Couleurs Primaires, [Decolonizing and Reimagining Urban Public Spaces](#), n.d.

51 AHURI, [Incorporating Indigenous Knowledge and Perspectives into the Development of Australian Cities](#), 2020.

52 L Porter, [Coexistence in Cities: The Challenge of Indigenous Urban Planning in the Twenty-First Century](#), 2013.

53 E Wensing and L Porter, [‘Unsettling planning’s paradigms: towards a just accommodation of Indigenous rights and interests in Australian urban planning?’](#) Australian Planner, 2015, vol. 53(2), pp. 1-12.

Contained in the titles of the six cities are the markers of place – coast, harbour, river, parkland, and the built environment of the city. These places, despite what is built on or over them, are still Aboriginal land and the Traditional Owners continue to exercise their rights to Care for Country. Additionally, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from across Australia also live in the multi-city region, bringing their cultures, languages and knowledges to be on the lands and waters where they build futures.

In the Australian context, Caring for Country and Caring as Country provide broad umbrella terms for practices which seek to nurture environments and development according to underlying cultural, spiritual, and sustainable ethics. Although these terms have gained traction in academic, public service and broader public discourse, they are often implicitly focussed on stereotyped notions of ‘traditional Aboriginal cultures’, remote geographies and past-oriented philosophies. These stereotypes are replicated across Indigenous experiences globally.⁵⁴ In contrast, best practice examples challenge these normative beliefs, highlighting the significant proportion of Indigenous peoples who live in urban settings and uplifting their practices. These include examples from the Greater Cities Commission’s footprint itself and each of the other sites. For example:

- Yanama budyari gumada is a Darug-based framing of Caring as Country in Western Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. Of extra note in this example, Darug Ngurra (Darug Country) is listed as first author in a journal article detailing this process.⁵⁵ Similarly, in Aotearoa/New Zealand, the granting of personhood to the Whanganui River fundamentally shifts lands and waters to being legitimate stakeholders in planning process, invested with rights which must be upheld.⁵⁶

- Meacchi refers to the Norwegian Sámi concept of interacting with, being, and knowing the landscape. It transcends dichotomies between nature and culture, wilderness and cultivated land. Country as author or river as person, meacchi is a provocative challenge posing the questions:

What would happen, for instance, if we started to think of Meacchi instead of nature? What if Meacchi was made into an analytical and legal term, or a common way of conceptualizing land? How would that change everything?⁵⁷

Broken promises and mistrust

Future planning endeavours need to be cognisant of this history and the environment of distrust that a litany of ‘broken promises’ and disappointments have created. Communities may be less likely to see newly formed bodies, agendas and policy as a fresh start but instead assume there will be a ‘more of the same’ approach – particularly where this is connected to ‘government’. The question, therefore, is whether research and consultation can transcend these concerns and provide possibilities for stronger futures, noting that for Indigenous peoples, city and regional planning is seen as an intrinsically colonial endeavour.⁵⁸ In Canada, The Stolen Lands, Broken Promises Researching the Indian Land Question in British Columbia,⁵⁹ released by the Union of British Columbia Chiefs takes a proactive approach to addressing this issue, providing Indigenous communities with a manual for conducting lands related research projects that includes histories and contemporary contexts.

54 H Dorries, ‘INDIGENOUS URBANISM AS AN ANALYTIC: Towards Indigenous Urban Theory,’ International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 2022, vol. 47, pp. 110–118.

55 Ngurra et al, ‘Yanama budyari gumada: reframing the urban to care as Darug Country in western Sydney’, Australian Geographer, 2019, vol. 50, pp. 279–293.

56 New Zealand Legislation, *Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Act 2017*, 2017.

57 CAS Oslo, *Where Does Nature End and Culture Begin?* 2016.

58 RB Fawcett, R Walker and J Greene, ‘Indigenizing city planning processes in Saskatoon, Canada’, Canadian Journal of Urban Research, 2015, vol. 24(2), pp. 158–175.

59 Union of BC Indian Chiefs, *Stolen Lands, Broken Promises – Researching the Indian Land Question in British Columbia* (Second Edition), 2005.

Importantly, planners will also need to understand that the mistrust, suspicion and dismissal they sense in community interactions can be a product of multigenerational disappointment. A respondent to the Ontario Indigenous Planning Perspectives Taskforce reinforced that planners should note:

Indigenous people have always had to step out of our comfort zones, since contact. Grow a thick skin and understand that the anger, disappointment, resentment is justifiable and righteous. This doesn't mean you need to bear the weight of centuries of colonial shame. It does mean you form an understanding and accept that you are part of a doctrine that has robbed many Nations of their basic human dignity.⁶⁰

Who to consult: recognition of Traditional Owners and other Indigenous peoples

Each region should have easily accessible briefs identifying who the Traditional Owners are, the key community organisations, a brief historical background to the area – particularly pertaining to what are often 'uncomfortable' histories of colonisation – and local events to engage community.

The 'Matters of Significance to Māori' section of the Waikato Regional Plan⁶¹ provides one example of how this can be included as a foundational element of plans. This section acknowledges the main iwi groups of the Waikato Region, detailing their differentiated histories, geographies and areas of concern. In doing so, the plan concisely acknowledges place-based priorities and philosophies.

Similar approaches could be useful in structuring the varied agendas with Traditional Owners of the New South Wales multi-city region, noting that the Awabakal, Bediagal, Birrabirrigal, Borogegal, Burramattagal, Darkinjung, Darramurragal, Dharawal, Dharug, Gadigal, Gahbrogal, Gamaragal, Garigal and Gayamaygal, Gundungarra, Gweagal, Wallumedegal, Wandj Wandian, Wangal, Watagoro, Weymaly, Wodi Wodi, Wonnarua, Worimi and Yuin peoples⁶² will have different histories and experiences of colonisation and urban development. It should also be noted that some of the "boundaries" and naming of Country and Peoples are contested within Aboriginal communities. This requires ongoing respectful dialogue.

It is further noted that Indigenous people can comprise Traditional Owners as well as those waves on internal migration. In Australia, this distinction is best recognised in the Northern Territory Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1976 which created a tiered system, where Traditional Owners are the key decision makers, although all Aboriginal peoples affected by development should be consulted.⁶³ In contrast, the New South Wales *Aboriginal Land Rights Act (1983)* does not differentiate rights based on Traditional Land affiliation. This has shaped the Land Rights movement in the Greater Cities Commission footprint quite differently. Indeed, as noted by Norman et.al,⁶⁴ their case studies noted the development of an Aboriginal polity based on 'shared connections, belonging and community accountability'. Within this, they further note that Local Aboriginal Land Councils exercise place-based priorities to 'improve, protect, and foster the best interests of all Aboriginal persons within the Council's area and other persons who are members of the Council'.

As the key Aboriginal Representative body, with over 23,000 members state-wide, the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council⁶⁵ must be factored into Greater Cities Commission planning through formal mechanisms, noting that this does not preclude the inclusion of other peak or representative Aboriginal bodies nor individual engagement. While there is

60 Ontario Professional Planners Institute, [INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES IN PLANNING: Report of the Indigenous Planning Perspectives Task Force](#), June 2019.

61 Waikato Regional Council, [Matters of Significance to Maori](#), 2021.

62 Greater Cities Commission, [An Embedded First Nations Voice](#), 2022.

63 Central Land Council, [The Aboriginal Land Rights Act](#), n.d.

64 H Norman, T Apolonio and M Parker, 'Mapping local and regional governance: Reimagining the New South Wales Aboriginal sector', *Cosmopolitan Civil Societies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* vol. 13, pp. 1–14.

65 NSW Aboriginal Land Council, [Our Organisation](#), n.d.

merit in the criticism that creating relationships through legislation and preferencing incorporated Indigenous organisations in planning can lead to over-bureaucratised models which exclude grassroots or dissident cohorts, this is balanced by the need for a structured and rigorous process with clear lines of accountability at multiple levels. Additionally, differences and even conflicts within Indigenous communities should not necessarily stifle action, but rather should be recognised as a sign of robust debate and participation.

In fact, the creation of structured approaches to capturing diverse Indigenous groups with varied priorities and agendas is clear in the international review sites. A key example is the Waikato Regional Plan which identifies five iwi and addresses their ‘matters of concern’ as individual groups and as an overarching group of Tangata Whenua.⁶⁶ In providing this inclusion, Waikato Regional Council has generated a frame which:

- uplifts and publicly records diverse Māori input while noting that this does not imply that the plan will be a resolution to these concerns
- identifies the specific iwi, their terms of self-identification, and connections to land, water and air as domains of cultural authority
- provides the opportunity for self-determination of iwi concerns, without prescribing the scope of these concerns
- identifies and proposes a means to address uncertainties in operationalising the relationship between Tangata Whenua and resources
- moves beyond acknowledgement and aspiration to provide process, outcomes, and reporting measures.

In contrast to the Waikato Regional Plan which could be characterised as a place-based and grounded approach, global to place-based planning can also be useful, particularly when benchmarking across regions. The Canadian use of The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) is an example which is not replicated in the other review sites.

Despite not being a binding agreement, the UNDRIP should be assessed for its viability as a measure in creating Indigenous inclusion, policy and practice across all areas, including planning. The UNDRIP had a difficult trajectory, taking twenty years of negotiation before being implemented. Of note, the four countries which voted against it were Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States, a stance which their respective Indigenous peoples and external parties were critical of. Across the nation states being considered in this review, the operationalisation of the UNDRIP remains uneven: Russia has not ratified the UNDRIP;⁶⁷ Australia’s Social Justice Commissioner has called Australia’s response to the UNDRIP ‘largely cosmetic’;⁶⁸ and New Zealand’s, He Puapua,⁶⁹ a report considering how the UNDRIP could be operationalised, has been markedly controversial. In contrast, Canada has made significant progress in operationalising the UNDRIP from federal to local levels, with complimentary translational pieces emerging from various professional bodies.

66 Waikato Regional Council, [Matters of Significance to Maori](#), 2021.

67 D Newman, ‘International Indigenous Rights Law and Contextualized Decolonization of the Arctic’, *The Palgrave Handbook of Arctic policy and Politics*, 2019, pp. 427–437.

68 J Oscar, [‘Incorporating UNDRIP into Australian law would kickstart important progress’](#), AHRC, 2021.

69 C Buchanan, [‘Claire Charters: He Puapua is a path to unity not division’](#), E-tangata, 2022.

Table 1: UNDRIP implementation examples – Canada

Level	Implementation example
Federal legislation	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act ⁷⁰
Local plan (Ontario)	The Urban Indigenous Action Plan ⁷¹
Local strategy (Vancouver)	City of Vancouver's UNDRIP Strategy ⁷²
Practitioner policy	Policy on Planning Practice and Reconciliation ⁷³

The incorporation of the UNDRIP into Canadian legislation is grounded in the 'Calls to Action' of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.⁷⁴ This process was grounded in a significant shift in government practice, moving from hearing Indigenous voices to uplifting the messages and creating a renewed nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous peoples based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation and partnership.⁷⁵

This directly addresses the often-mentioned critique across the political rhetoric and goodwill in Indigenous affairs which promotes rights-based inclusion, while in practice there is a 'trickery used to marginalise and silence Indigenous voice'.⁷⁶ This Canadian model of partnership does not position Indigenous people as stakeholders or invitees to the process, but rather legitimates Indigenous sovereignty and authority

leading to a 'seat at the table'⁷⁷ as decision makers –not aspirational petitioners. This shift directly correlates to Professor Bob Morgan's petition that Indigenous Australians should not be treated as 'guests'.⁷⁸

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission 'Calls to Action' include the UNDRIP in every category, envisioning it as a holistic tool across sectors and jurisdictions which is reflected in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act. The impacts on the Planning and Development sector of this approach are profound as evidenced by The City of Vancouver's UNDRIP Strategy: Report of the UNDRIP Task Force to the City of Vancouver Mayor & Council.⁷⁹

Like the Waikato Regional Plan, Vancouver's UNDRIP strategy report recognises the plurality of Indigenous affiliations in their area. It uses both the umbrella term of urban Indigenous peoples and specifically acknowledges the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Peoples as the original stewards of the lands known as the City of Vancouver, and that they have throughout history and to this day lived in relationship with their lands and waters with their own distinct cultures, governance systems, laws and ways of life.⁸⁰

This statement moves beyond acknowledgement to measurable targets developed by the UNDRIP Task Force comprising representatives of the three steward groups and City of Vancouver councillors and staff.

70 AHRC, [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#), 2021.

71 City of Toronto, [The Urban Indigenous Action Plan](#), 2018.

72 City of Vancouver, [City of Vancouver's UNDRIP Strategy: Report of the UNDRIP Task Force to the City of Vancouver Mayor & Council](#), 2022.

73 Canadian Institute of Planners, [Policy on Planning, Practice and Reconciliation](#), 2019.

74 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#), 2015.

75 Government of Canada, [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](#), 2022.

76 M Hogarth, [The Trickery Used to Marginalise and Silence Indigenous Voice in Education](#), 2018.

77 Y Belanger, D Newhouse and KD Fitzmaurice, 'Creating a seat at the table: A retrospective study of Aboriginal programming at Canadian Heritage', *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 2008, vol. 28, pp. 33–70.

78 B Morgan, 'Beyond the Guest Paradigm: Eurocentric Education and Aboriginal Peoples in NSW', *Handbook of Indigenous Education*, 2017, pp. 1–18.

79 City of Vancouver, [City of Vancouver's UNDRIP Strategy: Report of the UNDRIP Task Force to the City of Vancouver Mayor & Council](#), 2022.

80 Ibid.

Involve community from the outset

Too often, consultation has already determined the scope and the questions. These may not be areas of significance to those who are emplaced where planning and development will take place. This view is reinforced by the Canadian Institute of Planners who propose: “A ‘nothing about us without us’ or ‘don’t start without’ approach, which entails that Indigenous communities should be engaged before any activity that affects them or their rights are undertaken.”⁸¹

In the Australian context, Chris Hampson claims planning and engagement should come first, “Collaborating with design and community can happen even before they start to pick people for it.”⁸²

Taking time

Western-industrial logics are reflected in the saying ‘time is money’. In contrast, all Indigenous peoples have terminology for the practice of fluid and flexible timing. This is not a marker of disrespect, laziness or unprofessionalism, but a deeply rooted cultural orientation characterised as ‘event time’ not ‘clock time’.⁸³ This has profound implications for planning. For instance: Western planning is generally centred around the Gregorian calendar with culturally based seasons applied automatically according to date (summer, autumn, spring, winter).⁸⁴ In contrast, Indigenous calendars are responsive to natural markers – 13 months based on the lunar cycle, and seasons being heralded by natural events such as the migration of whales, the blooming of plants or the positioning of the stars.

Kassam et al.⁸⁵ note that in Europe there are processes to develop new ‘ecological calendars’ based on diaries and oral histories of farmers and others for whom land use is integral to practice. The creation of community of practice and communities of inquiry

are central to this process. This model privileges co-generating knowledge between knowledge systems and knowledge holders and practitioners. This creates interconnection between the parties rather than dialogue (parties speaking at each other) – there is a sense of the interconnection of ways of being, knowing and doing.

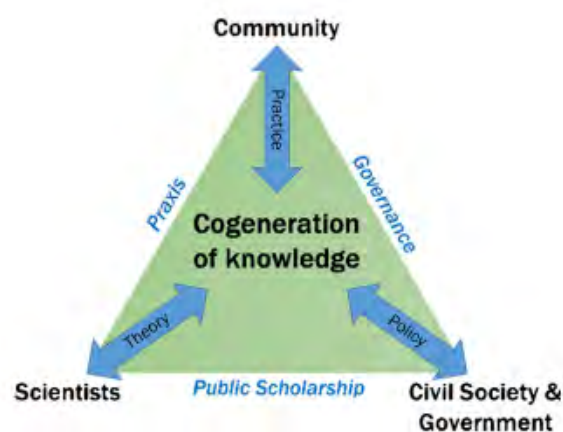


Figure 1: Cogeneration of knowledge in practice⁸⁶

Applying this in the context of city and regional planning, this model could have multiple applications which could include:

- i. The creation of communities of practice, drawing together Indigenous people, planners, environmental scientists, industry and others.

One of the sites of review provides potential options for how this can be operationalised. The Ontario Professional Planners Institute’s 2019 Indigenous Perspectives in Planning: Report of the Indigenous Planning Perspectives Task Force, suggests consideration of a nationwide Indigenous Planners Circle, local Indigenous Perspectives Circle aligned with the Ontario Professional Planners Institute Conference and the recognition of Indigenous planners.⁸⁷

81 Canadian Institute of Planners, [Policy on Planning, Practice and Reconciliation](#), 2019, p. 7.

82 A Cheng, ‘[Connecting with country in urban planning](#)’, Government News, 2022.

83 KD Lo and C Houkamau, [Exploring the Cultural Origins of Differences in Time Orientation between European New Zealanders and Māori](#), 2012.

84 Kassam et al, ‘Anticipating climatic variability: The potential of ecological calendars’, *Human Ecology*, 2018, vol. 46, pp. 249–257.

85 Ibid.

86 Ibid.

87 Ontario Professional Planners Institute, [INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES IN PLANNING: Report of the Indigenous Planning Perspectives Task Force](#), June 2019, p. 15.



Figure 2: Bogong Moth Migration⁸⁸

- ii. Consultation with Traditional Owners about the appropriateness/potential to develop ecological calendars across the six cities in the New South Wales multi-city region, synthesising Dreaming stories, ecological knowledge, environmental stewardship, place-based terminologies in local languages, traditional trade and ceremonial patterns. These could assist as a framing in the overarching planning. It should be noted that there is a 15-year process which has been undertaken by the CSIRO co-developing calendars with Traditional Owners and Knowledge holders. The Earth Systems and Climate Change Hub Report No. 30 provides a specific example on the process of developing a seasonal calendar with the Malanga people.⁸⁹ Additionally, the Torres Strait Regional Authority recommended Stronger Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) programs including the development of seasonal calendars to be used in Indigenous Protected Area Plans and governance.⁹⁰ Across all examples, the protection of Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property is seen as a fundamental element of this process.⁹¹

These seasonal knowledges can also be reflected in public art installations, an example being the Bogong Moth Migration steel piece by Ruth Davys and installed by Albury Council in the Yindiamarra Sculpture Walk.

⁸⁸ Albury City, [Bogong Moth Migration](#), n.d.

⁸⁹ I Lyons, N Harkness, Raisbeck-Brown and Malgana, Aboriginal Corporation Board, Rangers, and Malgana Elders. Indigenous perspectives of risk – Learning and sharing knowledge for climate change, 2021.

⁹⁰ TSRA, [Masig Elders present Seasonal Calendar as traditional knowledge gift to Thursday Island students](#), 2019.

⁹¹ T Janke et al, [Australia state of the environment 2021: Indigenous, independent report to the Australian Government Minister for the Environment](#), 2021.

Consider the ongoing ownership of knowledge in planning

Indigenous Knowledge is part of Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) which is often misappropriated and is not adequately protected under the Australian legal system. ICIP rights include the right to free, prior informed consent; integrity; attribution; and benefit sharing.⁹² When working with Indigenous Knowledges, principles such as respect, self-determination, secrecy, recognition and protection are vital.⁹³ Indigenous lawyer Terri Janke advocates for 'making protocols the norm' as they 'encourage ethical conduct and promote interaction based on good faith and mutual respect'.⁹⁴

To ensure protection of Indigenous Knowledge in planning, the development of databases which collect, centralise and store knowledge consistent with best-practice ethics is needed. This could include what is referred to as 'freeing the archives' which involves repatriating Indigenous Knowledge held in libraries, museums and universities to their communities of origin.

This repatriation can contribute to the reinvigoration of environmental stewardship and traditional practices, filling in the 'missing pieces' from oral histories which were stifled through colonisation.

The work of Aboriginal archivist Kirsten Thorpe is illuminative here as she champions Indigenous archive reform. In the planning context, this has the potential to be a meaningful way of creating relationships and facilitating reparations for the intersection of wellbeing and sovereignty. For planners, the repatriation of archival material to Indigenous communities could be a way of meaningfully creating relationships with Indigenous peoples as well as being possible sources for historical underpinnings of planning.⁹⁵ Additionally, those materials which are gathered as part of current and future planning should be done with a clear agreement on how that data will be used and stored. Ngā Tikanga Paihere provides an example of how this is being implemented in a Maori context, which provides 10 principles to consider in data gathering and management.⁹⁶

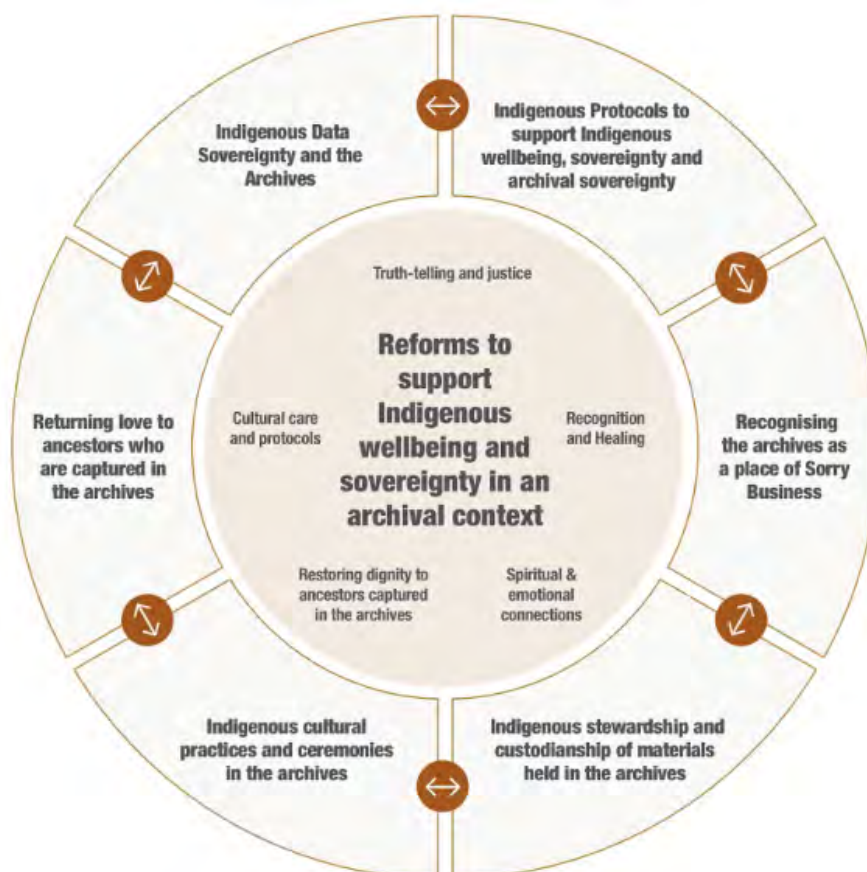


Figure 3: Reforms to support Indigenous wellbeing and sovereignty in an archival context⁹⁷

92 T Janke, [True Tracks: Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Principles for putting self-determination into practice](#), 2019, pv.

93 T Janke, [True Tracks: Respecting Indigenous Knowledge and Culture](#), 2021, pp. 15–16.

94 Ibid, p27.

95 Ibid.

96 NZ Government, [Ngā Tikanga Paihere](#), n.d.

97 Monash University, [Reclaiming and Refiguring the Archives to Support Indigenous Wellbeing and Sovereignty](#), 2022.

Incorporating Indigenous Knowledge as part of risk assessment

There is a clear need for planning to be responsive to community-based knowledges on environmental risk. This follows the lead of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change which acknowledges both local knowledge and Indigenous Knowledge which has been operationalised through ‘community-based’, ‘participatory’, ‘multi-stakeholder’, ‘grassroots-level’ and ‘people-centred’ approaches.⁹⁸ For example, in some of the communities most effected by the 2020 Australian bushfires, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples had noted the likelihood of catastrophic fire based on the repression of Indigenous fire management practices. Similar discourses also circulate on other forms of natural disaster through other land management practices.⁹⁹

Planning should respond to global trends in which Indigenous Knowledge is being moved to the centre of developing climate change resilience strategies which incorporate the:

- ongoing environmental monitoring contained in Indigenous oral histories
- adaptive capacity of Indigenous peoples to contribute to efforts such as reforestation and land repatriation following extractive industries
- traditional patterns of natural resource management
- development of frameworks for collective action, co-management, and co-governance between Indigenous peoples and all levels of government.¹⁰⁰

It is further suggested that planning should be considered as a site of future international contestation if inadequate policy can be shown to directly impact on the right to culture and the viability of ongoing land occupation and traditional activity.

Incorporating Indigenous Knowledge within Western planning systems

It is critical that planning also incorporate other stakeholder contributions in this field, with this literature review noting that there is a growing body of work that has already synthesised the field. One example is the cross-institutional paper, “Two-Eyed Seeing”: An Indigenous Framework to Transform Fisheries Research and Management.¹⁰¹ This documents possibilities in Canada for an approach developed through deep, ongoing engagement with Mi’kmaw Elder Dr Albert Marshall. This is expressed as Etuaptmumk (Two-eyed seeing) which is:

learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of mainstream knowledges and ways of knowing, and to use both these eyes together, for the benefit of all.¹⁰²

While demonstrating place-based implications for management and planning on the Saskatchewan River Delta, the paper also synthesises a range of Indigenous approaches globally which are useful for this review (see Table 2). This framework has gained significant traction in varied fields including climate change planning,¹⁰³ health and wellbeing,¹⁰⁴ and workforce development.¹⁰⁵

Two-eyed seeing is investigated as comparable to other Indigenous methods in the following table reproduced from Reid et al.¹⁰⁶

98 A Hadlos, A Opydyke and SA Hadigheh, ‘Where does local and indigenous knowledge in disaster risk reduction go from here? A systematic literature review’, International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction, 2022, vol. 79.

99 Australian Government, [Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements – Chapter 18: Indigenous land and fire management](#), 2020.

100 JD Ford et al, ‘The resilience of Indigenous peoples to environmental change’, One Earth, 2020, vol. 2(6), pp. 532–543.

101 A Reid et al, “Two-Eyed Seeing”: An Indigenous framework to transform fisheries research and management, Fish and Fisheries, 2020.

102 Ibid.

103 R Macfarlane et al, ‘Two-Eyed Seeing: Seeking Indigenous Knowledge to strengthen climate change adaptation planning in public health’, Environmental Health Review, 2022, vol. 65(3).

104 T Jeffery, DLM Kurtz and CA Jones, ‘Two-Eyed Seeing: Current approaches, and discussion of medical applications’, BC Medical Journal, 2021, vol. 63(8), pp. 321–325.

105 DCN-JOC News Services, ‘Two-Eyed Seeing’ Approach Coming to B.C. Workforce Development, 2021.

106 A Reid et al, “Two-Eyed Seeing”: An Indigenous framework to transform fisheries research and management, Fish and Fisheries, 2020.

Table 2: Indigenous methods comparable to ‘Two-eyed seeing’

Method	Origin	Description
Double-Canoe	Waka-Taurua (Māori; Aotearoa/ New Zealand)	A conceptual framework formalised in 2018 for unifying knowledges and ways of knowing, especially Western and Māori. It is described as ‘two canoes... lashed together... each canoe represents the worldview and values of the people who are coming together to achieve a common purpose... each group is inherently different, and the knowledge, values and actions of each, are not made to fit into the other’ (from Maxwell et al., 2019).
Indigenous Knowledge (IK) or Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)		A cumulative body of knowledge, practice and belief evolving by adaptive processes and handed down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with their environment (from Berkes, 2018). It is not separable from the knowledge holders/keepers or the environment in which it is embedded (McGregor, 2004a)
Māori Guardianship	Kaitiakitanga (Māori; Aotearoa/ New Zealand)	‘Reciprocal care between Indigenous-Māori people and their territorial environment’ — ‘Kaitiaki’ means guardian, and ‘tanga’ is a common suffix akin to ‘ship’ (as in ‘kinship’ or ‘relationship’; from Maxwell et al., 2019; Roberts et al., 1995)
Mi’kmaq Sustainability	Netukulimk (Mi’kmaq; Eastern Canada)	‘Achieving adequate standards of community nutrition and well-being today without jeopardizing the integrity, diversity, or productivity of the environment for the future’ — for seven generations to come (from McMillan & Prosper, 2016; Prosper et al., 2011)
Plural Coexistence		‘A model of cross-cultural relations that acknowledges and respects Indigenous ontologies, or ways of being, and at the same time is attentive to the historical and current dominance of Eurocentric thinking within natural resource management’ (from Howitt and Suchet-Pearson, 2006; Zanotti and Palomino-Schalscha, 2016).
Two-Eyed Seeing	Etuaptmumk (Mi’kmaq; Eastern Canada)	The gift of multiple perspectives; a conceptual framework coined by Mi’kmaq Elder Albert Marshall in 2004 for unifying knowledge systems. It is described as ‘learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western knowledges and ways of knowing, and to use both these eyes together, for the benefit of all’ (from Bartlett et al., 2012)
Two Row Wampum	Kaswentha (Haudenosaunee; Central Canada)	A 17th-century treaty belt to record an agreement between the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and Dutch settlers. ‘It consists of two rows of purple beads separated by rows of white beads. The purple rows represent the different vessels of the Dutch (a ship) and the Haudenosaunee (a canoe) travelling side-by-side down the “river” of existence (the white beads). While the two vessels remain separate (i.e., the cultures remain distinct), the people from each vessel are meant to interact and assist each other as need be.’ (From McGregor, 2004b).

Two Way	Ganma (Yolngu; Northern Territory, Australia)	A metaphorical concept of how to mix knowledges equitably and achieve meaningful two-way collaborations. 'It relates to the separateness of fresh water and salt water knowledge even at the point where they meet and mix. It is like what some [non-Indigenous people] call a "dialectical" relationship, in which two opposed patterns of ideas complement, interact, and relate to one another, but never lose their distinctiveness as separate and opposed parts of one whole.' (from Muller, 2012)
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Another example is New Zealand Landcare's Gareth Harmsworth's consideration of the role of Māori values in Low-impact Urban Design and Development¹⁰⁷ which provides a highly synthesised table which cogently links Māori concepts to simplified definitions and possible alignments with Western and scientific use (see Table 3).

Table 3: Role of Māori values in low-impact urban design and development

Key traditional concepts and terms	Definitions, modern explanations	Alignment with Western and scientific thinking
Whakapapa	Creation stories, ancestral lineage, sequence, atua, genealogical sequence, Papatuanuku, Ranginui, taonga	Inter-relatedness between humans and ecosystems, inter-connection, integration, holistic approaches, genetic assemblage, relationships, flora and fauna
Mana Whenua	Relationship and ancestral links to land through whakapapa and occupation, rights of self-governance, rights to authority over traditional tribal land and resources	Strong established relationship or links to a defined geographic area
Mātauranga Māori	Traditional Knowledge, wisdom, in the domain of Tohunga, understanding human-environmental relationships, understanding the world and universe from an Indigenous perspective	All forms of knowledge used by a wide range of practitioners, traditional ecological knowledge, traditional, environmental, health, historical knowledge
Kaitiakitanga	Practice of spiritual and physical guardianship of the environment based on tikanga active guardianship, custodianship, stewardship, sustainable management of resources, healing the land, environmental responsibility	Sustainable management of natural resources, sustainable development, integration, ecosystems, inter-connection of ecosystems, holism, intergenerational equity
Tikanga	Custom, lore, cultural practice the correct way of doing something	Protocols, standards, procedures
Whenua	The land, the earth mother Papatuanuku	The land, the biosphere, terrestrial and coastal ecosystems
Ritenga	The area of customs, protocols, laws that regulate actions and behaviours related to the physical environment and people. Includes tapu, rahui, and noa –everything was balanced between regulated and where tapu was sacred	Regulations, regulatory framework, rules, practical rules to sustain the wellbeing of people, communities and natural resources. Permitted activities versus restricted and prohibited activities

107 G Harmsworth, [The role of Māori values in Low-impact Urban Design and Development \(LIUDD\): Discussion paper](#), n.d.



3. Overview of case studies: amplifying Indigenous voices

While this may not capture all of the nuances of Māori axiologies, it is an example of a genuine attempt to engage cross-culturally. This review notes that attempts such as these are significant because they demonstrate the capacity of non-Indigenous stakeholders to commit to changing action, having what are sometimes referred to as difficult or courageous conversations.¹⁰⁸ It is possible for planners to begin to educate themselves by engaging with literature by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous authors, attending community events, and creating authentic relationships, rather than placing expectations on cultural capability training or community-based peoples to upskill them.

Many conventional case study models only provide placed based examples on a ‘what works’ approach. Using a holistic Indigenous worldview, this review broadens the nature of what a ‘case’ comprises. As such, the case studies begin with Indigenous-authored works, drawing on resources developed to support Northern Territory Land and Sea Management, a small body of literature from a well-cited Indigenous Planning academic, and a multinational strategy developed by the Sámi Council.

Amplifying Indigenous voices needs to be incorporated into practice across all fields. As such, the case study overview begins with examples that are authored by Indigenous peoples and bodies. This choice is a political assertion in solidarity with the sovereignty of Indigenous authors to the ownership of their concepts. We encourage that the voices of Indigenous peoples be cited directly from their outputs and not from secondary sources.

This review notes the many sites where governments and industry are attempting to create meaningful engagement, partnership and transformational change with Indigenous peoples. The case studies in this section represent the emergence of these themes globally. They are drawn from a planning professional body, an innovation based digital archive, and a development report from the Organization for Economic and Cooperation and Development (OECD).

3.1. Empowering partnerships in the co-management of Country: Our Knowledge Our Way in Caring for Country

Our Knowledge Our Way in Caring for Country¹⁰⁹ (2020) provides an overview of Indigenous-led models to strengthen knowledge for land and sea management. As an Indigenous-led project, it is shaped from the perspective of the Indigenous voice, thus the resources use of Our is situated from the point-of-view of the Traditional Owners, not the institutional partners in the project which include The Australian Government, The CSIRO and the National Environmental Science Program.

Using weaving as both metaphor and practice, the project promotes the interconnection of diverse knowledge systems including Indigenous, Western, and other forms as relevant and useful. This model involves communication, sharing, learning and the gathering of data as means which, coupled with good governance and ethics, can lead to strong planning and outcomes. Privileging On Country access, organisational strengthening and innovation, Both Ways Law processes and the development of formal Land Use Agreements, Our Knowledge Our Way in Caring for Country is a valuable contribution to understanding how the nexus between tradition and innovation can be bridged.

¹⁰⁸ E Wensing, ‘Reclaiming Indigenous Planning’, Urban Policy and Research, 2014, vol. 32(3), pp. 386–390.

¹⁰⁹ Resilient Landscapes, *Our Knowledge Our Way in Caring for Country*, 2021.

3.2. Accessing the Indigenous authored body of literature – Professor Hirini Matunga

The works of Māori Professor Hirini Matunga, who is of Ngai Tahu (hapū Ngai Te Ruahikihiki, Ngai Tuahuriri, Ngati Huirapa), Ngati Porou, Rongowhakaata, Ngati Kahungunu, Ngati Paerangi (Atiu, Cook Islands) descent, include:

- Reclaiming Indigenous Planning ¹¹⁰
- The Concept of Indigenous Planning as a Framework for Social Inclusion ¹¹¹
- Strategic Indigenous Impact Assessment: A Case for Extending Beyond CIA ¹¹²

A key point of difference is that Matunga combines his decades of experience in planning with an experientially based incorporation of Indigenous ontologies, epistemologies and axiologies. Among his many contributions to the field of Indigenous planning, his work is notable for its assertion that Indigenous planning recentre these 'ologies'.¹¹³ He notes that Indigenous planning has been practiced since 'time immemorial' and asserts that while planning is not 'owned' by the West, it has certainly been used as a tool of exclusion and colonial processes of dispossession and marginalisation. He argues that planners should use the scholarship of Indigenous planners and academics as well as community engagement as a foundation for building cultural capability.

3.3. Planning agendas from Indigenous bodies: the Sámi Arctic Strategy ¹¹⁴

The Sámi Arctic Strategy provides an integrated approach to empowering the rights of Sámi peoples in practical measures with nation states, and in consideration of international law. The strategy prioritises Sámi free and informed consent on developments on Sámi lands which should aim to be culturally affirming and environmentally sustainable. The document includes a Sámi-led raft of research needs which include the importance of mapping historical land usage, a toolkit to empower communities on natural resource management, and the development of digital dissemination and online public awareness via #UniteSápmi. Working with members from varied Sámi organisations, the strategy creates the platform for strong community foundations to engage in planning and development. For planners and developers, it is a provocative standard for appropriate engagement and practice.

3.4. Central Coast First Nations Accord, Australia

The 2022 Central Coast Council First Nations Accord¹¹⁵ extends on a Memorandum of Understanding between Council and the Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC). While both acknowledging Darkinjung LALC as 'the largest non-government land holder on the Central Coast', and specifying their authority on matters of land, culture and community, the Accord also highlights the Barang Region Alliance, a local decision-making body. Additionally, the creation of an Aboriginal Advisory Committee provides the opportunity for Aboriginal voices outside of these organisations to develop relationships with the Central Coast Council.¹¹⁶ As the key Aboriginal representative body, with over 23,000 members state-wide, The New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council¹¹⁷ and its local arms must be factored into planning through formal mechanisms, noting that this does not preclude the inclusion of other peak or representative Aboriginal bodies nor individual engagement.

¹¹⁰ R Walker, T Jojola and D Natcher, *Reclaiming Indigenous Planning*, 2013, McGill-Queen's University Press.

¹¹¹ Quality Planning, *The Concept of Indigenous Planning as a Framework for Social Inclusion*, 2006.

¹¹² H Matunga, 'Strategic Indigenous impact assessment: A case for extending beyond CIA', NZAIA, n.d.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Saami Council, *The Sámi Arctic Strategy*, 2019.

¹¹⁵ Central Coast Council, *First Nations Accord*, 2022.

¹¹⁶ Central Coast Council, *Coastal Open Space System (COSS) Committee Terms of Reference*, 2022.

¹¹⁷ NSW Aboriginal Land Council, *Our Organisation*, n.d.

3.5. Policy and practice: Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) – Policy on Planning Practice and Reconciliation

The CIP Policy on Planning Practice and Reconciliation proceeds on the foundational understanding that all planning takes place on land connected to Indigenous peoples, asserting the unique role which planners play in achieving reconciliation – a perspective which is endorsed by this review. The CIP recognise good planning is the key to healthy relationships and to providing evidence for solutions to long standing problems, particularly those which have historically marginalised Indigenous stewardship.

The policy provides recommended approaches, policy objectives, professional and community-based capacity building and principles for community engagement, developed through the intersection of community consultation and academic sources. Additionally, the policy is grounded on the findings of the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the impetus to implement the UNDRIP. The document makes a significant contribution to the transformation of aspiration to action in the area of Indigenous planning.

3.6. Storing information: digital access to the Sámi Heritage Archives ¹¹⁸

The Sámi Heritage Archives are a resource that has multiple purposes and is foundationally concerned with allowing Sámi peoples to access their genealogical and culture and heritage materials. It is based on a long-term commitment to relationship building, open-ended consultation and nuanced storage. Thus, Sámi peoples can specify in uploading information who they want to be able to view the materials. Based on a double sensitivity model, which reflects both cultural and design sensitivity, the resource also provide an accessible data base of publicly available materials which can be accessed by planners, industry, government and community more broadly.¹¹⁹

3.7. Reports for change: linking Indigenous peoples with regional development, Sweden ¹²⁰

The OECD is an important body for facilitating inclusion for Sámi peoples across northern Europe. The report, Linking Indigenous Peoples with Regional Development: Sweden, provides a solid consideration of actionable recommendations to facilitate formal mechanisms for including Indigenous peoples in development agendas, noting that Sámi culture is recognised as a key asset in regional development. The report also notes the trend for well-educated Sámi in Sweden to emigrate to Norway, creating a loss to the national cultural sector. It highlights that the lack of infrastructure is a key factor with only three institutions to promote Sámi culture in Sweden, compared to over 30 in Norway. This raises the important consideration that skills-based migration will take place where there is a lack of opportunity for practical support and financial recompense.

¹¹⁸ Digital Access to Sámi Heritage Archives, [Accessible Archives](#), n.d.

¹¹⁹ F Moradi et al, 'Designing a digital archive for Indigenous people: Understanding the double sensitivity of design', *Proceedings of the 11th Nordic Conference on Human-Computer Interaction: Shaping Experiences, Shaping Society*, 2020, no. 26, pp. 1–11.

¹²⁰ OECD Rural Policy Reviews, [Linking the Indigenous Sámi People with Regional Development in Sweden](#), 2019.

3.8. Whanganui River, New Zealand

The Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Act 2017¹²¹ implements provisions of the Whanganui River Deed of Settlement, and assigns the river the ‘rights, powers, duties, and liabilities of a legal person’. Two guardians are responsible for maintaining the river’s health and wellbeing: one a representative of the New Zealand Government, and one a representative of the Whanganui iwi. It is argued that the implementation of the dual guardianship is hampered by the failure to provide an accompanying normative framework. However, the recognition of personhood does move closer to Indigenous ontologies which hold the land as having sentience, embodying creation histories, cultures and linked to the broader health and wellbeing of Indigenous peoples.¹²² If planning proceeded from the assumption that land, water and air are ‘ancestors’, this could radically change the ethical basis and accountability of planning and development.

3.9. Naarm/Melbourne, Australia

Naarm (Melbourne) is Australia’s second largest city. Melbourne City Council have a number of formal mechanisms for shaping their engagement with Traditional Owners and other Indigenous people in the Melbourne region. These mechanisms include an Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan¹²³ which sets goals for dual-naming, urban design, sustainability, parks and gardens, and public art. Central to this agenda is the philosophy of Caring for Country which has been initially scoped in a range of other projects.^{124,125} The collaboration between the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Traditional Owners and Melbourne Water at Yan Yean Reservoir supports cultural land practices, On Country partnerships, and revitalisation of the Yan Yean ecosystem.¹²⁶

3.10. Vilhelmina, Sweden

The municipality of Vilhelmina used a participatory planning method to facilitate opportunities for two reindeer herding districts and Sámi bodies to provide input prior to a draft municipal comprehensive plan being compiled. The Sámi ability to meaningfully participate at a municipal level is generally much weaker in Sweden than in Norway. However, later plans are improving on the process and inclusion for Sámi in planning. For example, one focus group only considered Sámi interests. While celebrating some successes in the project, the team noted that they had underestimated the time required for collaborative planning and recommended that planning involve stakeholders from inception. Additionally, Sámi interests are less likely to be guaranteed and therefore more dependent on whether Sámi interests are judged as being consistent with national interests.^{127,128}

121 New Zealand Legislation, [Te Awa Tupua \(Whanganui River Claims Settlement\) Act 2017](#), 2017.

122 M Kramm, ‘[When a river becomes a person](#)’, *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 2020, vol. 21(4), pp. 307–319.

123 City of Melbourne, [City of Melbourne \(Innovate\) Reconciliation Action Plan](#), 2021.

124 City of Melbourne and Monash University, [Caring for Country: An Urban Application – The possibilities for Melbourne](#), 2016.

125 Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council, [Caring for Country](#), 2020.

126 Melbourne Water, [Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Traditional Owners caring for Country at Yan Yean](#), 2022.

127 T Bjarstig et al, ‘[Implementing collaborative planning in the Swedish mountains – The case of Vilhelmina](#)’, *Sustainable Development and Planning*, 2019, vol. 217, pp. 781–795.

128 T Bjarstig et al, ‘[The institutionalisation of Sámi interest in municipal comprehensive planning: A comparison between Norway and Sweden](#)’, *The International Indigenous Policy Journal*, 2020, vol. 11(2), pp. 1–24.

