



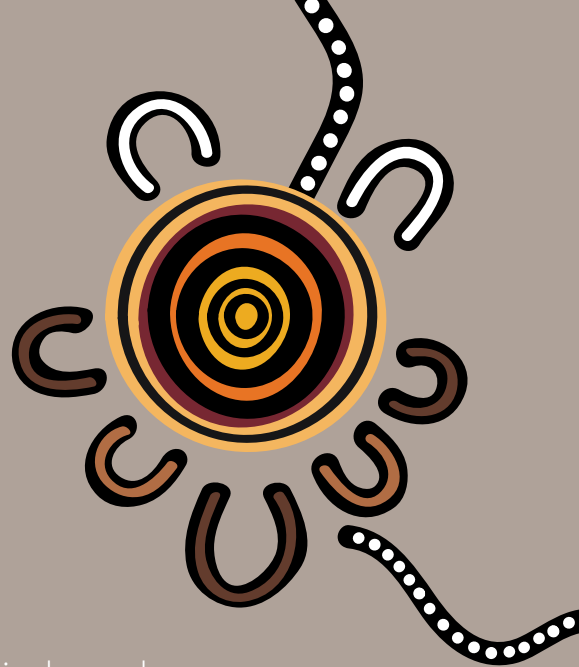
SOUTH AUSTRALIAN **Aboriginal Regional Authority Policy**

A regional approach to Aboriginal governance in South Australia.



Government
of South Australia
Department of
State Development

“Strong governance is the cornerstone of representation, advocacy, and coordination of service delivery for Aboriginal people and communities across this State.”



The South Australian Government acknowledges Aboriginal people as the first peoples and nations of South Australia.

We recognise and respect the cultural connections that Aboriginal people have as the traditional owners and occupants of South Australia and that Aboriginal people have made and continue to make a unique and irreplaceable contribution to this State.

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Foreword



We are proud to present the first South Australian Aboriginal Regional Authority Policy.

We recognise the importance of supporting Aboriginal leadership and governance, and ensuring Aboriginal people are the decision-makers in matters that affect their lives.

The evidence shows that better social, health and economic outcomes are achieved when Aboriginal people play an active part in the design and delivery of services.

This is why in 2013 we invited Aboriginal South Australians to work with us to design a new policy to support a new model for regional governance, a policy that would redefine the interaction between government and Aboriginal people.

Following an extensive consultation process undertaken from 2013-2015, we now proudly present the State's first Aboriginal Regional Authority Policy.

This policy, unique to South Australia, seeks to create a network of Aboriginal governing bodies charged with representing and advocating for their communities, and driving regional priorities and economic growth.

It establishes Leader to Leader relationships between State Government and Aboriginal leaders: a relationship that is marked with respect; and is underpinned by the recognition of Aboriginal people not just as custodians, but as agents of change.

Through this policy, we look forward to building strong and innovative partnerships with Aboriginal Regional Authorities and to developing a mutually beneficial relationship with Aboriginal people and organisations across South Australia.

Kyam Maher

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation

March 2016





1. Purpose

The Aboriginal Regional Authority Policy ('the Policy') seeks to:

- formally recognise the authority¹ of Aboriginal governance structures
- introduce a Leader to Leader relationship between the South Australian Government and Aboriginal governance structures
- strengthen and expand opportunities for Aboriginal representation, self-governance and self-determination through a Nation Rebuilding approach
- ensure maximum participation of Aboriginal people in the development and implementation of government policies, programs and services.

Through this Policy, the government will recognise Aboriginal governance structures as Aboriginal Regional Authorities (ARA) and commit to consulting, negotiating and engaging with ARAs in policy, programs and service delivery.

2. Underpinning principles

The Policy is based on:

- collaboration, partnership and mutual respect
- flexibility and place-based action
- investment and productivity
- Aboriginal self-determination, self-governance and Nation Rebuilding
- Reconciliation and recognition
- capacity building
- sustainability.

3. Definition of an Aboriginal Regional Authority

An ARA is an Aboriginal governance structure, operating within a defined boundary that has been formally recognised as an ARA by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation ('the Minister') under this Policy.

3.1 Representation

An ARA will clearly define who it represents. This will be formalised in the Recognition Agreement.

3.2 Boundary

An ARA will clearly define its boundary. This will be formalised in the Recognition Agreement.

¹ Note that 'authority' may come from:

- 'Cultural Authority' of Aboriginal persons who, in accordance with Aboriginal tradition, have social and spiritual affiliations with, and responsibilities for, the boundary and people they represent; or
- 'Community endorsement' from the group of people the Aboriginal Regional Authority represents.



4. Recognition as an Aboriginal Regional Authority under this Policy

4.1 Process

The Minister will formally recognise an Aboriginal governance structure as an ARA under this Policy through an Expression of Interest process.

The Minister will call for Expressions of Interest and appoint up to two ARAs each year.

Formal recognition under the Policy will be provided through a Recognition Agreement, which will set out the areas of partnership and the mechanisms for working together.

A Panel will assess Expressions of Interest received and make a recommendation to the Minister as to the recognition of ARAs under the Policy.

4.2 Criteria

Expressions of Interest will be assessed against the following criteria:

- demonstrated broad-based support from the Aboriginal people and organisations it proposes to represent
- strong governance arrangements, including relating to accountability and internal and external communications
- clear rules of operation and a statement of purpose setting out the scope of the ARA
- clear rules of representation
- clear and supported identification of boundaries
- authority to speak for and represent the Aboriginal people and organisations it represents within its scope of activities
- clear internal dispute resolution procedures
- demonstrated gender representation on the governing body
- incorporation as a legal entity
- a commitment to business planning, including developing future leaders and attaining organisational sustainability.

4.3 Overlapping applications

The Minister will take into account the existence of other ARAs within a boundary.

Where there is potential overlap, the Minister will require the ARAs to either come together under one ARA, or clarify how the ARAs will work together in areas of overlapping scope.

4.4 Optional recognition under this Policy

Recognition as an ARA under this Policy is optional. However, if an ARA is a party to a funding or service agreement with government, both parties will be bound by the terms of that agreement.

The government will maintain existing arrangements with those Aboriginal organisations or people that choose not to pursue recognition as ARAs under the Policy. The new relationship with ARAs will not replace broader community engagement or consultation.



5. Obligations

The Policy outlines obligations for State Government agencies and ARAs. Additional obligations may be agreed and formalised by agreement.

5.1 State Government obligations

State Government agencies are required to:

- engage ARAs openly and transparently in matters relating to the scope of the ARA
- have regard to the priorities and advice of an ARA on matters within the scope of the ARA
- enter into good faith negotiations with ARAs regarding program funding, joint activities and other support, which are to be formalised through agreements and reflected in departmental strategies and business plans
- support Ministers in Leader to Leader meetings
- support ARA governance.

5.2 Aboriginal Regional Authority obligations

An ARA is required to:

- advocate for the people and organisations it represents
- engage with represented people and organisations to identify regional priorities
- engage with government in areas of identified priority
- advance the interests of Aboriginal people in its boundary where it enters into service agreements or makes representations on matters that relate to or may impact the broader Aboriginal population
- maintain good governance.

6. Policy ownership and administration

The Policy is the responsibility of the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation. The Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation Division within the Department of State Development will support the Minister in administering the Policy.

The Policy commits all South Australian Ministers to engage in Leader to Leader meetings with ARAs on matters relevant to the Ministers' portfolios. The details of this relationship will be defined by agreement.

7. Government support

Assistance may be negotiated with individual departments from time to time and formalised by agreement.

8. Supporting documents

The following documents will support the implementation of the Policy:

- South Australian Aboriginal Regional Authority Policy Administration Guidelines
- South Australian Aboriginal Regional Authority Expression of Interest Form

9. Review

Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation will review this Policy, the Administration Guidelines and Expression of Interest Form before the end of December 2016, and then on a yearly basis.



Government Ministers

These symbols represent Aboriginal Leaders and Government Ministers sitting at the table in Leader to Leader meetings.

Aboriginal Communities

This symbol represents the many surrounding Aboriginal communities that feed into the Aboriginal Regional Authorities, creating a united voice for all Aboriginal people across the state.



Working Together

This symbol represents Aboriginal Regional Authorities working collaboratively with the three tiers of Government.

Colours & Dots

The colours in the artwork reflect the countryside of South Australia. Beautiful coastlines with vast contrasts of the land throughout South Australia.



Connecting Travel Lines

The connecting travel lines show how Aboriginal communities are connected and feed into the Aboriginal Regional Authorities.



Aboriginal Regional Authorities

This symbol represents the Aboriginal Regional Authorities which represent Aboriginal people and drive regional priorities and growth.

Hands

The hands represent the strength of Aboriginal people coming together in unity to make decisions. They also represent the hands of Aboriginal communities providing direction and guidance to Governments in relation to Aboriginal affairs.



Landscapes

These symbols represent the different landscapes of South Australia from the Adelaide Hills right through to the Flinders Ranges and beyond.

Aboriginal People

These symbols represent Aboriginal people coming together with a united voice.



Cover and Policy Artwork

The Aboriginal Regional Authority Policy Cover artwork by Allan Sumner has been commissioned by Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation to visually represent the Aboriginal Regional Authority principles and process.

Born in 1975, Allan Sumner is a decedent of the Ngarrindjeri people who come from the lower Murray and the lakes of the Murray River along the Coorong of South Australia. He is also decedent of the Kaurna people from Adelaide the plains region and the Yankunytjatjara people from central Australia.



Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation

**Address:**

Level 7, 11 Waymouth Street, Adelaide

**Post:**

Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation
GPO Box 320
ADELAIDE SA 5001

**Call:**

Telephone 8226 8900
Toll Free 1800 127 001

**Website:**

www.statedevelopment.sa.gov.au/aboriginal-affairs

www.statedevelopment.sa.gov.au/aboriginal-affairs



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