



Listening series for the development of NSW's Aboriginal Economic Prosperity Outcomes Framework Consultation Report

A report prepared by Inside Policy for
NSW Treasury

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1. Introduction

In April 2021, NSW Treasury engaged Inside Policy to design, facilitate and report on a listening series with key stakeholders to inform the development of the Aboriginal Economic Prosperity Outcomes Framework (the AEPOF).

This document sets out the background of the AEPOF, the method and objective of the consultation, findings, and implications.

1.1 Structure of this report

The remainder of this report is structured according to the table below:

Section	Contents
Background	Overview of AEPOF including its genesis and how it is currently conceived.
Methodology	Overview of the listening series objective, participants, and consultation methods.
Overall findings	Overview of the main findings from survey, interviews, and roundtables.
Detailed findings	Detailed discussion of findings, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● What is Aboriginal economic prosperity?● AEPOF domains and potential measures.● Examples of programs, services and initiatives that are assisting with Aboriginal economic prosperity.
Implications	Discussion of what the findings mean for the AEPOF and its next stage of development.
Appendix A	List of stakeholders engaged in the Listening Series.

2. Background

This section outlines the original draft AEPOF, including its genesis and how it is currently conceived.

2.1 The genesis of the Aboriginal Economic Prosperity Outcomes Framework

The AEPOF was first drafted by NSW Treasury in 2018 in response to recommendations from multiple reviews within the NSW Government, that outcome measures related to economic prosperity of Aboriginal people was lacking.¹

In response to the Productivity Commission's development of an Indigenous Evaluation Strategy, NSW Treasury highlighted identified impediments that include:²

- failure to recognise Aboriginal culture as an integral aspect for social and economic development of Aboriginal communities
- inadequate government oversight and authorisation to initiate work within the sector as a priority
- gaps in methodologies for evaluating programs that impact on Aboriginal communities and the value of culture
- limited reliable instruments for funding decisions and policy making for Aboriginal people and communities.

2.2 The original draft Aboriginal Economic Prosperity Outcomes Framework

The AEPOF's initial draft outcomes were based around the OCHRE Aboriginal economic prosperity policy reform, Human Services Outcome Framework, and existing literature. The OCHRE plan focuses on opportunity, choice, healing, responsibility, and empowerment.³ The principles of the Human Services Outcome Framework emphasise social and community, education and skills, empowerment, economic, health and safety and home.⁴

The first draft focused on two outcome domains:

- Economic domains focus on outcomes that directly create opportunities for economic prosperity. These domains include:
 - **economic** – opportunities for Aboriginal people such as employment and business ownership
 - **empowerment agency** – opportunity for Aboriginal people and communities to contribute to decision making that impacts their lives
 - **social and community** – recognising Aboriginal people's value and participation and being culturally and socially connected
 - **education and skills** – opportunities for Aboriginal people to learn and access educational pathways and develop their skills.
- Foundational domains are not directly related to economic prosperity but are building blocks to assist in achieving economic prosperity. These domains include:
 - **health** – Aboriginal people maintain levels of health that enables participation in other domains and economic prosperity in general
 - **home** – Aboriginal people have access and opportunity for safe, affordable housing that enables a sense of belonging
 - **safety** – Aboriginal people feel spiritually, culturally, emotionally, and physically safe.

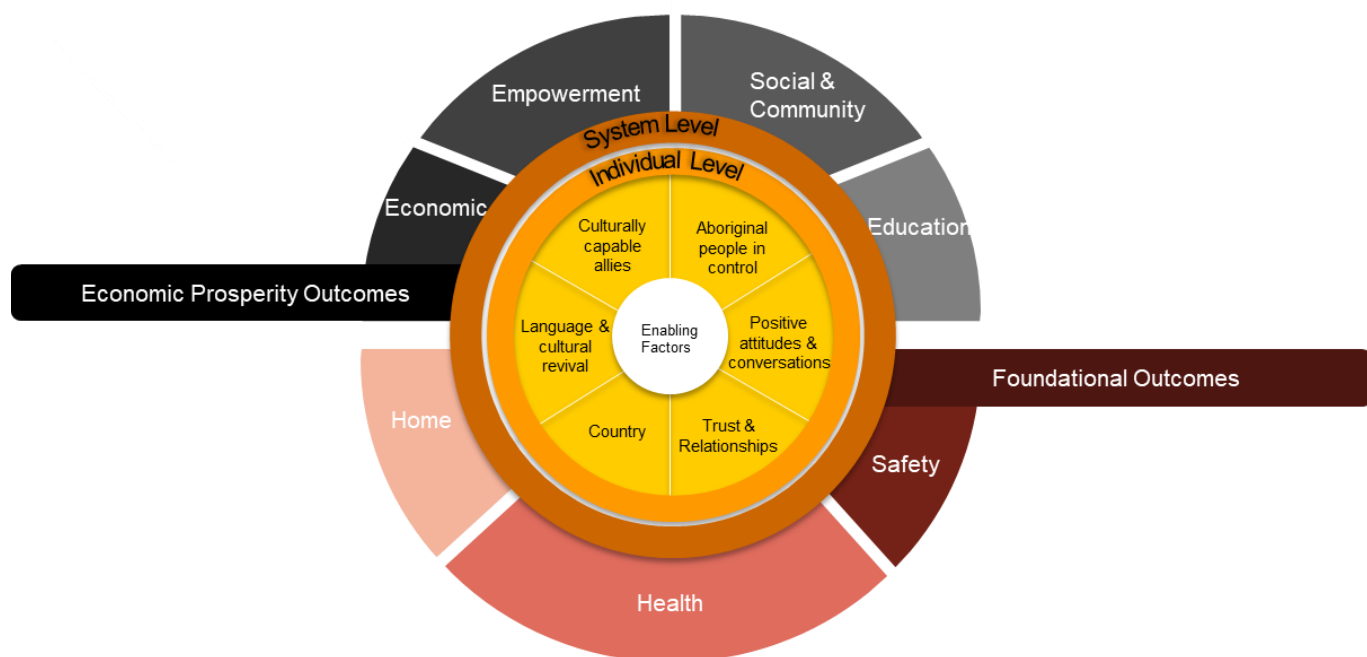
¹ NSW Ombudsman, 'Fostering economic development for Aboriginal people in NSW', 2016, accessed 2 July 2021; NSW Parliament, 'Inquiry into economic development in Aboriginal communities', 2016, accessed 2 July 2021

² Productivity Commission, 'Submission DR180 - NSW Treasury - Indigenous Evaluation Strategy – Project', 2020, accessed 2 July 2021

³ Aboriginal Affairs NSW, The OCHRE Plan, Aboriginal Affairs NSW, 2013, accessed 2 July 2021

⁴ NSW DCJ, The NSW Human Services Outcomes Framework, NSW DCJ, n.d., accessed 2 July 2021

Figure 1: First draft of the AEPOF domain outcomes⁵



2.3 The Aboriginal Economic Wellbeing Branch

The Aboriginal Economic Wellbeing (AEW) Branch within NSW Treasury was established in July 2020 to assist the NSW Government in meeting its commitments under the National Agreement of Closing the Gap. The AEW Branch is informed by OCHRE’s principles of partnerships over paternalism, ‘listening to’ instead of ‘talking at’ and local-based decisions.

The Branch has been assigned with the development of a more refined AEPOF. It is anticipated that when the Framework is complete, it will help create an evidence base to assist the NSW Government identify and prioritise initiatives that work in improving outcomes for Aboriginal people and communities in NSW.

2.4 Policy context for the listening series

While the listening series was being conducted, the NSW state implementation plan for Closing the Gap was being finalised. The listening series was also undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic and NSW was under public health stay-at-home orders during the later stages of consultations.

⁵ NSW Treasury, draft Aboriginal Economic Prosperity Outcomes Framework

3. Methodology

This section details the purpose of the Listening Series, the participants involved, key questions and methods of engagement for the consultations.

3.1 Purpose

The focus of the listening series was to generate external (to NSW Treasury) stakeholder feedback to define Aboriginal economic prosperity and its related domains. Feedback from stakeholders obtained through these consultations aimed to understand:

- How Aboriginal people and communities define economic prosperity and the factors that influence this.
- The outcomes and measures that can represent changes in their wellbeing and economic prosperity.
- The initiatives and reforms they consider crucial to the growth of the First Economy.

The findings and themes that emerged from listening series enabled Inside Policy to provide coherent advice from stakeholders to NSW Treasury on:

- A definition of “economic prosperity” including any alternative terms to describe the concept.
- The facets which make up economic prosperity, how they are defined and what indicators should be measured to track their progress.
- What further work needs to be undertaken to finalise the AEPOF.

3.1.1 Lines of inquiry

Aboriginal, government and academic/evaluation organisation representatives were presented with a series of questions. These included:

1. What does Aboriginal economic prosperity mean to you?
 - Government organisation representatives were asked how each of their agencies have approached Aboriginal economic prosperity and evaluated this.
2. If Aboriginal communities in NSW are prosperous, what does this look like?
 - What are the other words you'd use to describe this?
3. To achieve this future state, what are all the things that need to be focused on now?
4. What is the place of culture and Country in building Aboriginal economic prosperity?

Questions five and six presented to representatives focused on the second draft of the AEPOF, which incorporated similar elements of the first draft but shifted towards a more economic focus. The domains highlighted below were tested with representatives.

- Economic outcome domains of the second draft included:
 - **Employment** – opportunities to contribute and benefit from the economy.
 - **Knowledge and education** – opportunities to receive education, learn and develop skills.
 - **Income and consumption** – opportunities to benefit from employment and participate in the economy.
- Foundational outcome domains of the second draft included:
 - **Time** – satisfaction with leisure time and work life balance.
 - **Home** - opportunities for affordable, safe, and good quality housing that contributes to belonging.
 - **Safety and health** – maintaining levels of health and feeling culturally, emotionally, spiritually, and physically safe to enable economic opportunity and choice.

Figure 2: Second draft of the AEPOF domain outcomes⁶

Economic Prosperity Outcomes

Outcomes that **directly create opportunities** for economic prosperity. For example improved education outcomes which drive a highly productive and effective workforce. These domains have a strong evidence base supporting the direct relationship between outcomes and economic prosperity.



Foundational Outcomes

Outcomes that are **necessary, but not sufficient for economic prosperity**. Without the presence of these outcomes, sustained economic prosperity cannot be achieved. For example, feeling safe at home and throughout the community is a fundamental requirement to actively participate in employment or engage in business activities.

5. From the diagram, what do these words mean to you:
 - Culture and Country?
 - Income and consumption?
 - Employment?
 - Time?
 - Home?
 - Safety and health?
 - Knowledge and education?
6. What might be missing from the above list?
7. What are examples of programs, services, initiatives that you know of that are helping to build Aboriginal economic prosperity and wellbeing?
8. How would you use an Aboriginal Economic Prosperity Outcomes Framework?

3.2 Methods of engagement

Four 45-minute one-on-one interviews with participants from Aboriginal organisations were conducted prior to the roundtables. To enable a diverse range of perspectives, five interviews with Aboriginal organisation representatives were also conducted after the roundtables for representatives that could not attend the roundtables.

The substantial component of engagement occurred through a series of virtual roundtables, a type of group consultation activity, that included:

- Two, two-hour roundtables with Aboriginal organisations.
- One, two-hour roundtable with government representatives.
- One, three-hour workshop with a mix of representatives (i.e. Aboriginal stakeholders, academics, evaluators, and experts in outcomes measurement) designed to explore identify specific measures related to each domain.

Invitees to the roundtables and interviews were also invited to complete a five-question survey on Aboriginal economic prosperity. Thirty-five responses were received to this survey. Its results are reported on in the findings section of this report.

⁶ NSW Treasury, draft Aboriginal Economic Prosperity Outcomes Framework

3.3 Participants

A total of 55 people participated in roundtables and interviews comprising of 22 Aboriginal organisation, four academic/evaluator representatives and 30 government organisation representatives. Out of the 22 Aboriginal organisations that were consulted, 16 were metropolitan based organisations and six were regional/remote based.

NSW Treasury and Inside Policy made an extensive attempt to reach out to numerous organisations, however, response rates from Aboriginal organisations were low. Some organisation representatives noted that the NSW public health stay-at-home orders and closure of organisations/venues were of a high priority and impacted their ability to engage with the listening series. It is also worth noting that the listening series was being conducted close to the end of the financial year and may have also impacted levels of participation.

Appendix A lists all organisations engaged in the listening series.

4. Overall findings

This section outlines the high-level findings that have emerged from the listening series.

4.1 Aboriginal economic prosperity, the focus for the future and initiatives assisting with prosperity

Aboriginal and government organisations discussed the definition of the AEPOF overall. Interviews and roundtables indicated there was strong support for the AEPOF among representatives from mostly NSW-based (and some national) organisations that participated in the listening series.

Responses from Aboriginal organisation and government organisation participants in the listening series indicated that Aboriginal economic prosperity requires several elements. These elements include incorporating Aboriginal culture, self-determination and creating parity through equal access to opportunities. Participants highlighted the strength of Aboriginal culture through reciprocity and gaining independence.

However, achieving prosperity requires enabling choice and opportunity for employment, education, and housing, supported by government funding and policy. This includes opportunities that can arise from having access to land such as cultural connection, home ownership and generational wealth. Discussions with participants also revealed there was a need to address cultural awareness and capability within government to further support Aboriginal self-determination.

Participants also indicated that the AEPOF would require levels of application that would consider local context, individual/organisational context, and generational perception.

Government organisation participants indicated Aboriginal economic prosperity was being assisted through enabling:

- Local decision making and self-determination in communities through defining their own outcomes.
- Aboriginal workforce in government through employment strategies and identified roles.
- Access to employment and educational opportunities and better socio-economic outcomes through policies such as the Indigenous Procurement Policy and targeted education pathways.

The listening series also discussed examples of initiatives and programs that are assisting Aboriginal economic prosperity. Responses from Aboriginal organisation and government organisation participants indicated that there several existing initiatives and programs.

Majority of these included:

- Land development through funded programs and Aboriginal Lands Rights Act 1983 (NSW).
- Aboriginal business development through the Indigenous Procurement Policy.
- Building education and workforce capability through training and tertiary pathways and identified roles.

4.2 Draft domains

Responses from all organisation participants indicated the draft AEPOF domains resonated sufficiently, however, domains require fluidity that acknowledge the interconnectedness of the domains and ensure an Aboriginal lens is applied. Each of the domain's focus includes:

- **Culture and Country** – encouraging and measuring engagement of culture and how culture is incorporated into each domain.
- **Income and consumption** – creating and measuring Aboriginal employment and Aboriginal business opportunities.

- **Employment** – creating and measuring more culturally appropriate, stable, and meaningful employment that involves training and upskilling for more opportunities.
- **Time** – enabling time to reconnect with culture and Country and obligations, supported through flexible employment and annual leave.
- **Home** – creating and measuring affordable housing that is culturally inclusive and safe.
- **Safety and health** – an emphasis on measuring social, cultural, and emotional wellbeing to allow a more holistic approach to health measures.
- **Knowledge and education** – a focus on enabling and measuring more Aboriginal culture in the curriculum and identified Aboriginal roles that respect Aboriginal knowledge.

Location was a domain that most participants from Aboriginal organisations and government organisations felt was missing. There was an emphasis placed on how local context and geographical position of communities and individuals would play a part in the importance of each domain.

5. Detailed findings

This section details the findings from the survey, interviews, and roundtables, on:

- What is Aboriginal economic prosperity?
- What should be the domains that make up Aboriginal economic prosperity and how should they be measured?
- What are the initiatives that are successfully enabling Aboriginal economic prosperity?

5.1 What is Aboriginal economic prosperity?

Overall, all those consulted agreed in the importance of defining, measuring and pursuing Aboriginal economic prosperity for the purposes of informing government policy as well as measuring the effectiveness of government-funded programs.

All those consulted agreed that Aboriginal economic prosperity is multi-faceted, not only with culture at its centre, but also embedded within each of its domains. Culture is a source of prosperity and identity that empowers individuals to participate in its domains. A cultural lens being applied to each of the domains is key to understanding how Aboriginal people and communities can achieve better outcomes. Aboriginal culture is inherently connected to Country, where Aboriginal people can draw strength and acknowledge their responsibility for caring for land.

All participants emphasised that self-determination is the mechanism for achieving prosperity at an individual, community, and organisation level and is determined on Aboriginal terms.

To all participants, Aboriginal economic prosperity conjured up a future where:

- local approaches, that acknowledge the distinctness of groups and regions, are adopted
- the next generations are better off and achieving better outcomes than the generation before
- better outcomes including housing, health, education, work and increased respect for Aboriginal cultures
- the cycle of disadvantage is broken
- intergenerational trauma is understood and the process of healing this has begun
- knowing the truth of our history, healing the trauma that comes from this, then opens up opportunity and a sense of prosperity
- Aboriginal people, communities and organisations are self-determining.

Central to consultation participants' view of Aboriginal economic prosperity (as opposed to economic prosperity generally) were the notions of:

- reciprocity – opportunity and prosperity are shared
- opportunity – prosperity starts with having equal and equitable access to opportunity
- intergenerational wealth and wellbeing – all generations benefit from growth in prosperity
- drawing wealth from Country, community, and family – wealth is measured in terms of social and cultural capital in addition to the financial resources available
- self-determination – Aboriginal economic prosperity can only be achieved when there is economic self-determination.

While there was a strong agreement on how Aboriginal economic prosperity can be achieved through the above elements, Aboriginal organisation and government organisation participants addressed it from different perspectives. Most Aboriginal organisation participants emphasised the focus that must be placed on addressing the barriers that are hindering economic prosperity. Most government organisation participants highlighted the

enablers that assist with economic prosperity and noted the importance of continuing resourcing those enablers. These will be discussed in more detail below.

The remainder of this section explores the findings against this question by survey results / stakeholder group.

5.1.1 Survey results

Survey respondents most frequently used the word “[self] determination” to describe Aboriginal economic prosperity.

Figure 2: Word cloud results in response to the question “What word would you use to describe Aboriginal economic prosperity?”⁷



The above results indicate economic prosperity requires Aboriginal people and communities implementing self-determination to be able to choose their own pathways and aspirations.

5.1.2 Perspectives from Aboriginal organisations

Representatives from Aboriginal organisations talked about important pre-conditions for Aboriginal economic prosperity i.e. the things that need to be in place in order for Aboriginal people and communities to achieve economic prosperity. These important pre-conditions are:

- access to opportunity – in order to fulfil one’s aspirations and to have / grow prosperity, access to elements such as education, employment, land and all of the things that drive prosperity must be available
- self-determination – individuals, families and communities being able to determine and fulfil their aspirations and ambitions for the future
- culture – understanding, practising, celebrating and being connected to culture central to Aboriginal peoples’ wellbeing and in turn prosperity

⁷ Due to platform features, words in the word cloud cannot be capitalised. It is implied that words like Aboriginal are meant to be capitalised.

- individual, family, organisational and community levels – prosperity must exist at multiple levels for Aboriginal economic prosperity to exist overall. For individuals to be prosperous, families, organisations and communities must be, and vice versa.

These are discussed in detail below.

5.1.2.1 Access to opportunity

Most participants emphasised that creating parity is key to achieving equal opportunity and increasing standards of wellbeing to become equal to mainstream. Participants highlighted that the government must recognise that Aboriginal people and communities have limited equitable access to land ownership, education, and employment opportunities. As indicated above through self-determination, having choice and opportunities is critical to enabling economic prosperity.

'I think the word that I kind of keep coming back to is self-determination, I think it's that sort of ability to choose what you want. But obviously, you know, having the ability to choose, you need to have that equal opportunity, as well.' - Aboriginal organisation participant.

To create parity, participants emphasised the focus on growing the Aboriginal business sector, continuing circulating wealth in Aboriginal communities and pathways for employment.

Some participants highlighted that there are previous policies and policies in place that create barriers to achieving economic prosperity. The first was focused on previous policies that created land dispossession of Aboriginal people, impacting current Aboriginal generations to have access to home or land ownership. This has contributed to the disadvantage that Aboriginal people may face in relation to engaging in culture and having access to generational wealth.

Although these policies may not still be in place, participants noted that there needs to be a focus on returning land back to Aboriginal communities through strategies such as the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 (NSW) and the Land Negotiation Program.

The second focused on how government policies can emphasise short-term and pilot funding models. These policies can impact how Aboriginal communities can achieve self-governance and self-determination as they sometimes cannot determine their own outcomes.

Finally, participants emphasised that racism creates barriers towards achieving economic prosperity as it can impact on Aboriginal people and communities accessing opportunities. Racism also can be connected to institutional racism and participants emphasised that achieving prosperity requires increasing cultural awareness and capability in government and non-government organisations.

Participants also noted the generational and locational factors that impact on access to opportunity.

Most participants indicated that different generations of Aboriginal people are likely to perceive economic prosperity differently, with young people having access to a greater set of opportunity and therefore having a different set of aspirations to the older generation. Participants attributed these different perspectives specifically to the increased economic and educational opportunities younger people have today.

Participants also noted an intergenerational impact of a lack of access to opportunity over the centuries since colonisation. This has contributed to a compounding of disproportionate disadvantage experienced by many Aboriginal communities. Some participants emphasised that until Aboriginal generations start from an equal socio-economic level, it may take years for outcomes to be observed.

'And I think there needs to be recognition of the historical policies, which have basically denied many Aboriginal, older Aboriginal Australians from actually having an education and being able to go to university and so on. So that systematic kind of racism that's affected, the fact that it wasn't till the late 1960s when the first Aboriginal person went to university and graduated from university.'
- Aboriginal organisation participant.

On location, the majority of participants acknowledged that the number and types of opportunities you have access to was largely due to location. Participants noted increased opportunities for metropolitan communities compared to regional or rural communities. Most participants highlighted limited opportunities for education and employment in these that can impact regional or rural Aboriginal communities' ability to achieve prosperity. These participants noted a need for creating more opportunity and choice to enable prosperity in these communities.

'I think there's more opportunities for Aboriginal people in the cities where there's more employment opportunities, and more education opportunities as well.'
Aboriginal organisation participant.

Location can also impact how much individuals and communities emphasise each of AEPOF's draft domains. For example, access to housing in remote communities may be more of a focus than 'Income and Consumption'. Therefore, participants emphasised the need to ensure the AEPOF is agile and fit for purpose. This is due to different communities perceiving economic prosperity differently and having different needs. Communities may also be limited to their access to community resources due to their location.

5.1.2.2 Self-determination

Most participants indicated self-determination, driven by Aboriginal communities on their own land, is key to achieving Aboriginal economic prosperity. Aboriginal people and communities must be independent and choose their own pathways to prosperity. Such pathways are informed by understanding the richness of Aboriginal lands, cultures, and languages and how it provides strength to Aboriginal communities. Languages and cultures are a source of strong self-identity and empowerment for individuals.

'It means the ability to engage across every other sphere that every other human person on this planet is able to do. Allows me the freedom to make choices around my own personal identity and my own personal family belongings, whether or not you know you want to own a business, or whether or not it's about owning a home, whether or not it's about in terms of going and accessing equitable education and accessing jobs.' - Aboriginal organisation participant.

5.1.2.3 Culture

Shared wealth and reciprocity are also important practices within Aboriginal communities. Aboriginal culture and communities often look at what they can give to each other, utilising this strengths-based approach to enable resilience and perseverance.

Some participants noted the importance of government recognising and respecting the strength of Aboriginal culture. These participants also encouraged the government implementing reciprocity and supporting Aboriginal communities to achieve prosperity through strategic funding models and acknowledgement of previous systemic disadvantage.

5.1.2.4 Individual, family, organisational and community levels

Participants drew the connection between individual and organisational economic prosperity. At an individual level, participants described the importance of being able to care for yourself, family, and community. At an organisational level, participants referred to being independent from government funding and being able to independently support communities in achieving economic prosperity.

'But for our organisation, it (Aboriginal economic prosperity) definitely is about growth. It's about independence. And it's about the government really looking at reframing the way that they give out money to organisations, to enable us to do that (gain independence) and to build sustainability and to grow the prosperity of our community members without putting in pilot programmes.' - Aboriginal organisation participant.

5.1.3 Perspectives from government representatives

Like Aboriginal organisations, government organisation representatives identified that Aboriginal economic prosperity and self-determination and local decision making were interconnected. This is further demonstrated through the survey word cloud responses, as the word best described Aboriginal economic prosperity was self-determination.

Figure 3: Word cloud results in response from government representatives to the question “What word would you use to describe Aboriginal economic prosperity?”



Most participants also focused on encouraging and enabling Aboriginal business growth through the Indigenous Procurement Policy (IPP) and increasing the NSW Government Aboriginal workforce. Government organisations have approached and evaluated Aboriginal economic prosperity, as is discussed in detail further below.

5.1.3.1 Self-determination and local decision making

Government organisation representatives enable Aboriginal economic prosperity by encouraging self-determination and local decision making. Particular government departments enable self-governance by engaging with Aboriginal communities and emphasising that communities determine their own outcomes.

'If we look at data sovereignty and governance, I think that was the biggest thing, Aboriginal people determining what that means. And I think the start of that is actually self-determination and governance.' – NSW Government organisation participant.

Government organisation representatives highlighted a focus on Aboriginal local decision making, connecting to Country and access to land. Some clusters focus on creating opportunities for communities through access to land and culture, supported by the Aboriginal Lands Rights Act 1983 (NSW) and the NSW Aboriginal Heritage Reforms. Participants also noted one government department has an internal Aboriginal outcomes evaluation framework that focuses on internal economic outcomes, targets for employment and procurement.

'I think it is independence and self-determination. It is really, really important to a lot of the Aboriginal communities that the staff in (NSW Government organisation) understand the clear vision of what community want to do in regard to economic prosperity.' – Government organisation participant.

However, some participants from government organisations highlighted that Western practices could hinder Aboriginal communities from participating in growth and prosperity. This is due to some differences in practices and values between Aboriginal and Western culture. One example provided was differences between land management practices.

'If you look at that issue of prosperity, a lot of those staff are then engaged in land management practice that run contrary to cultural desire or cultural aspirations, I guess. So, you know, you're employed to do Western land management processes, and that can counterbalance that sort of economic prosperity that you're feeling.' – NSW Government organisation participant.

Another example highlighted how Aboriginal culture emphasises obligations of care roles in family and volunteer roles that are key to Aboriginal communities but may not contribute towards employment statistics.

'I wonder if using employment as a measure of economic participation can present its own problems. There is data to show, and we know, from working with Aboriginal communities that Aboriginal people do a lot of unpaid work, that doesn't count as employment in the statistics. Aboriginal people look after family members at a higher rate. They also volunteer in the community in unpaid roles to a greater extent than many other people. These are meaningful jobs, they are important things to do, but they are not counted as economic activity when formal employment is the measure of success.' – NSW Government organisation participant.

5.1.3.2 Increase of Aboriginal positions and workforce

Most participants highlighted that their clusters engaged with Aboriginal economic prosperity through encouraging an increase in Aboriginal workforce through Aboriginal identified positions and specified pathways. Some participants also emphasised that hiring Aboriginal people supports embedding culture into government policy and enabling Aboriginal people to have a voice within government departments. These strategies are supported by Aboriginal strategy and outcome teams within agencies. NSW government organisation representatives also highlighted that they are a large employer of Aboriginal people.

5.1.3.3 Enabling access in certain domains as a pathway towards prosperity

Participants indicated that they attempt to support Aboriginal economic prosperity through enabling access. Each cluster attempts to address prosperity holistically and provides opportunities to alleviate the disadvantage Aboriginal communities face. Some clusters focus on encouraging and enabling Aboriginal people to engage proactively in their physical, social, and emotional wellbeing. Other clusters attempt to address economic prosperity through positive Aboriginal participation in school, enabling access to housing, training, and employment.

'We have a very strong focus on working with Aboriginal communities to improve the health of children and young people. And by doing that, I guess we contribute to those children and adolescents thriving, particularly as they move into adulthood and being, you know, productive participants within communities and in society more broadly, leading to economic well-being in that way.' – NSW Government participant.

5.2 What should be the domains that make up Aboriginal economic prosperity and how should they be measured?

All participants agreed with the current domains, including the importance of culture and Country to Aboriginal economic prosperity. On culture, many participants noted that each domain should also be viewed through the lens of culture in addition to culture and Country being its own domain.

Self-determination is a key enabler for achieving prosperity as it allows for Aboriginal people and communities to determine their own outcomes on their own terms.

'Connecting to Country is about me, my identity and who I am. And where I know, my sense of belonging is and where I sit and where it's my happy place. And that's just me personally, when I go off Country, no matter where I am, I acknowledge it, I take my shoes off, I connect with Country, I connect with the sand and I call to the ancestors. They keep me safe while I'm here.' – Aboriginal organisation participant.

There were slight differences of perceptions around Country and its relation to Aboriginal economic prosperity. While government organisation and Aboriginal organisation participants believed Country was central to economic prosperity, some Aboriginal organisation participants believed that Country may not be central. This was explained as some Aboriginal organisations not operating from their traditional custodian land and servicing many different Aboriginal groups, therefore, there was less of a focus on Country.

Location is a domain participant's felt was missing. Participants from Aboriginal organisations, government organisations and academia indicated that location should be implemented as a lens that can prioritise how each domain determines access to resources and opportunity. Therefore, the AEPOF should be fit for purpose and recognises and identifies needs of each community.

Finally, in discussing how the AEPOF itself might be measured, participants emphasised the need for guiding principles to govern how data is collected, accessed, used and owned. An important feature of this, is recognising Aboriginal data for the data Aboriginal organisations collect on behalf of government. Participants also noted the need for Aboriginal organisations to decide their own measures and outcomes.

Participants placed a second focus on government and non-government organisations becoming accountable to demonstrating that funding provided to these organisations, benefits Aboriginal communities. This will ensure funds are appropriately allocated depending on community outcomes and impact.

The remainder of this section details how participants defined each domain and how each domain should be measured.

5.2.1 Culture and Country

Most participants emphasised that culture and Country is the centrality of the draft domains as it often integrates and enables the participation in other domains. Participants noted engaging with culture and Country was linked to developing a sense of identity and empowerment. Language also plays a significant role in identity and empowerment for individuals. Indicators and measurement of culture and Country are discussed through each of its surrounding domains below.

However, some participants highlighted that some individuals may struggle to positively engage with culture. This can be due to the complex nature of intergenerational trauma and racism towards Aboriginal culture, creating negative experiences for some individuals. Therefore, these participants emphasise a focus on healing to enable positive engagement with culture and Country and to utilise it as a strength.

Most participants highlighted that the domains are reliant on each other, with some domains being difficult to achieve without simultaneously successfully participating in each one. Participants also cited some domains having more of an emphasis than others. It was indicated domains such as home are key to be able to participate in income and consumption and employment.

5.2.1.1 Measurement of culture and Country

Engagement with culture and Country relies on access to land. Participants highlighted measures of engagement as percentage of Aboriginal people owning and controlling land or preserving cultural heritage. Engagement can also be measured through the domains. These elements are discussed in more detail in each domain further below. Participants emphasised that engagement in culture and Country should be supported by policies that enable access.

5.2.2 Income and consumption domain

Most participants highlighted income and consumption is often integrated with employment. Participants noted that participation in income and consumption requires access to employment and business opportunities. The requirement of a home was also noted as key to participate in this domain. Therefore, participation in income and consumption may be dependent on household roles and access to resources such as private transport or housing.

5.2.2.1 Measurement of income and consumption

Measurement for income and consumption related to a general increase in Aboriginal businesses, however there was a focus on examples that incorporated Aboriginal culture and knowledge. This was through measuring the amount of Aboriginal people generating income from culture through tourism, cultural awareness and harvesting native foods. This can also enable a circular economy and intergenerational wealth, where Aboriginal communities are encouraged to engage with other Aboriginal businesses.

'To me, it's all about, like, if we're gonna invest in Aboriginal prosperity, then we need to invest in Aboriginal communities. And have those communities actually drive your prosperity within themselves.' - Aboriginal organisation participant.

5.2.3 Employment domain

Most participants noted that employment often relates to income and consumption, however, there is a focus on creating employment opportunities and pathways through increasing Aboriginal business sector and government departments. Participants highlighted that to achieve prosperity, it requires creating employment opportunities that are stable and meaningful roles that contribute to long-term benefit.

'Those (Aboriginal) businesses are generally creating, you know, culturally appropriate spaces for, you know, for new employees to flourish and move on and, you know, great, greatest strengths and, you know, advance up the chain.' – Aboriginal organisation participant.

Some participants indicated that culture is sometimes forgotten through the economy and that Aboriginal people can participate without losing their cultural identity. This should be

supported by businesses and workplaces encouraging cultural respect and awareness and developing more pathways to meaningful employment.

'We talked about how culture in this context is important. So, culture is not forgotten. So, I guess from an employment point of view, hiring, when you're hiring people, respecting their cultural needs and their cultural responsibilities, that's part of it from an employment point of view.' – NSW Government organisation participant.

5.2.3.1 Measurement of employment

Measurements of employment focused on elements such as employment rates and availability of work, noting that location would play a significant part in enabling access to employment. Participants focused on employment that would produce long-term outcomes, citing longitudinal measurement that targets training and upskilling that can lead to stable employment and income.

5.2.4 Time domain

Time resonated with most participants differently than the domain's definition of work life balance and satisfaction of leisure time. Most participants highlighted that engaging positively with time meant having the opportunities to engage in culture and land. Time was related to employment and participants emphasised the need for work environments to recognise the need to connect with culture and address cultural obligations.

Some participants noted that Western constructs of time are different to Aboriginal culture as Aboriginal culture recognises time as conceptually circular rather than linear.

'Western notions of time are very different to Aboriginal notions of time. The western notion is all about measuring and metrics and breaking down time to seconds, minutes, days, weeks, months, and years. But we heard that for Aboriginal people, time can also be a different concept, and that in deep time, the past and future are different notions to that of western ideas of linear metrical time.' – NSW Government organisation participant.

5.2.4.1 Measurement of time

Measurement of time focused on ensuring individuals had time and opportunity to connect with Country and culture. Participants highlighted how engagement with culture and cultural obligations could be supported by work environments and employers. Examples of measuring time could be through more flexible work environments and paid leave that allow Aboriginal people to reconnect to culture and address their obligations.

5.2.5 Home domain

Most participants indicated home are integrated with income and consumption, employment and safety and health. Participation in home was related to being able to access affordable housing. This was illustrated through social housing, private rental, and home ownership. Home ownership was associated with being self-sustaining and enables the creation of generational wealth. There was also an emphasis on having housing that was culturally safe.

Most participants highlighted that affordable housing and home ownership aspirations are significantly dependent on the location that individuals purchase within. Metropolitan cities were provided as examples to barriers that are impacting Aboriginal aspirations in accessing affordable housing.

Some participants highlighted that social housing being perceived as a solution to affordable housing was problematic. This was due to social housing often resulting in moving away from choice and self-determination as you are reliant on housing providers.

5.2.5.1 Measurement of home

Measurement of home was focused on measuring access to affordable housing and home ownership that assists in self-determination and generating wealth. Participants highlighted measuring the volume of Aboriginal families leaving social housing due to gaining other forms of housing and the reduction of social housing waitlist.

However, some participants emphasised that home ownership should not be the only measurement of prosperity as some individuals may choose not to own a home. Therefore, measurement should focus on choice and access to affordable housing.

5.2.6 Safety and health domain

Most participants indicated that home domain and safety and health domain are integrated together and are reliant on each other. Participants noted being physically and culturally safe and healthy requires having access to affordable and culturally safe housing. There was also a focus on how social and emotional wellbeing should be more emphasised, although it is more difficult to measure.

Some participants emphasised achieving safety and health in communities enables people to live longer, especially elders, to pass on information and knowledge. Other participants also noted that safety means being free from police harassment.

'So, safety could refer to the home domain. For example, it could be about having secure housing, being safe within the home, it could be about walking down the street and feeling safe within your own community, or not being subject to police attention every time you walk down the street. So that could be what safety relates to.' – NSW Government organisation participant.

5.2.6.1 Measurement of safety and health

Most participants indicated that measurement health outcomes were currently instated and being measured through physical and primary health. However, participants also noted that there should be a focus on measuring qualitative data that focuses on social, emotional, and cultural wellbeing. Participants cited the strength of positive cultural engagement as it can provide a sense of belonging and identity. This will enable a more holistic approach to address issues regarding health and safety together.

5.2.7 Knowledge and education domain

Most Aboriginal organisation participants indicated that access to knowledge and education was key to achieving prosperity, as it enables better employment and training opportunities. Participation in knowledge and education is also required for participation in other domains as it enables self-determination.

Both Aboriginal and government organisation participants placed a focus on the education system recognising Aboriginal culture and how it ties into positive outcomes. This is supported through Aboriginal leadership and pathways for Aboriginal teachers to embed culture within the curriculum.

'It's around cultural knowledge and strength of the cultural knowledge. And Aboriginal people being able to have their own schools and teaching languages and culture, but also for the wider Australian society to actually value that as well. And to see the benefit of it.' - Aboriginal organisation participant.

5.2.7.1 Measurement of knowledge and education

Most participants highlighted that measurement of knowledge and education should focus more on acknowledging and valuing Aboriginal cultural knowledge. This can be implemented through measuring number of Aboriginal roles in education systems and roles that incorporate Aboriginal knowledge. Other measures were cited as increased representation

of Aboriginal culture in the curriculum and increased number of Aboriginal controlled organisations that lead education outcomes.

‘The role that education plays and allowing, like, through contracting like Aboriginal controlled organisations to lead that culture and language in schools, kind of giving that control back and allowing them to lead those discussions as well and building prosperity through culture in the future.’ – NSW Government organisation participant.

5.3 What are the initiatives that are successfully enabling Aboriginal economic prosperity?

Most Aboriginal organisation participants highlighted the key to building and implementing programs, services and initiatives for Aboriginal prosperity was being Aboriginal led and having fundamental principles of culture and self-determination. They also emphasised that the government should support these programs through effective funding models and enabling Aboriginal leadership.

Most Government organisation participants focused on emphasising empowering communities and funding them to be able to deliver their own outcomes. Examples of programs assisting in building Aboriginal prosperity were generally grouped into three categories that are detailed below.

5.3.1 Land development

Participants highlighted DPIE and NSW Aboriginal Land Council (ALC) are building the capacity of Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs) through assistance with activating the land for development. NSW ALC assists Aboriginal economic prosperity through circling back revenue produced from LALCs developing their land to new LALCs participating in the process. DPIE’s Roads to Home Program funds LALCs to engage with the infrastructure upgrade process and enable Aboriginal people to lead the initiative.

5.3.2 Aboriginal business development

Participants resonated examples of prosperity with the increase of Aboriginal businesses and Aboriginal people using their culture to become entrepreneurs and generate wealth. These pathways of business development are supported by the Indigenous Procurement Policy (IPP) that has contributed to increasing the Aboriginal business sector. However, some participants highlighted that the IPP is not utilised to its full potential and requires better engagement with Aboriginal businesses to attract more.

5.3.3 Building educational and workforce capability

Most participants from government organisations indicated that Aboriginal specialised employment and education pathways are also contributing to better outcomes. TAFE and university pathways into tertiary education is enabling Aboriginal individuals and communities to upskill and participate in the workforce. Aboriginal workforce strategies in NSW Government are also allowing for higher Aboriginal representation and Aboriginal leadership.

Some other specific programs and initiatives mentioned were:

- Justice Reinvest initiatives in Moree and Bourke.
- Empowered Communities organisation in Redfern, La Perouse, and Central Coast.
- Aboriginal Medical and Health Services.
- Gamay Rangers in Botany Bay.
- Opportunity hubs.

6. Implications

This section outlines the implications of the findings for the AEPOF and its next stage of development.

6.1 Defining Aboriginal Economic Prosperity

The findings of the listening series suggest Aboriginal economic prosperity could be defined as:

Aboriginal economic prosperity is about everyone having enough and there being enough for everyone.

This concept draws on the commonly cited notions of reciprocity, community and the overall sense that one's prosperity is linked to the prosperity of their family, community and culture. The things to "have enough of" included:

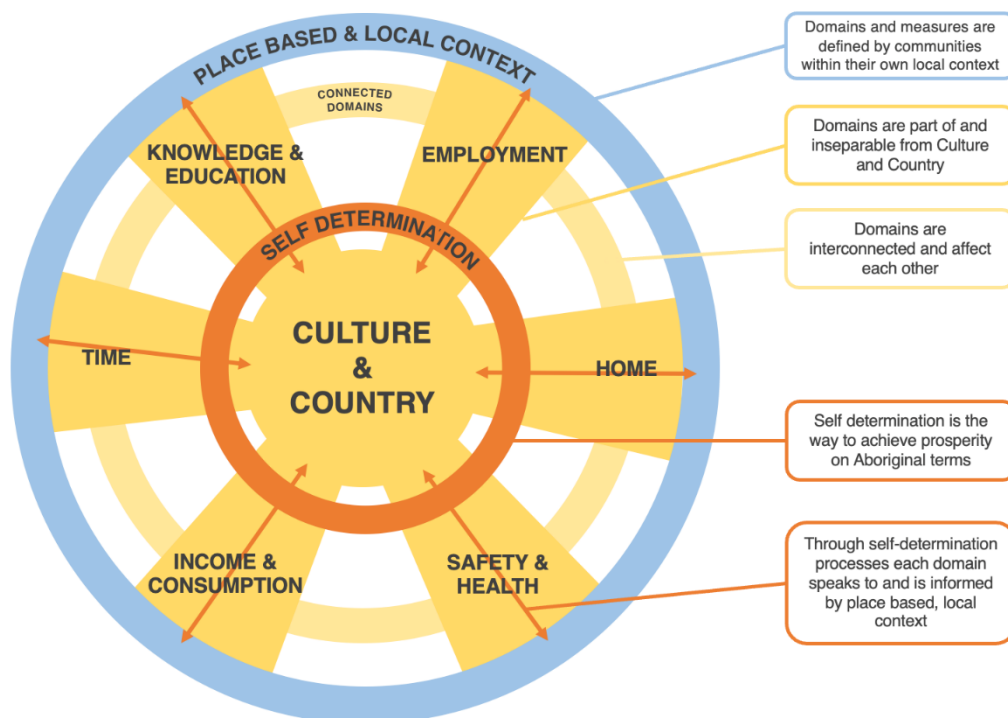
- opportunity
- financial means
- access to support, services and knowledge
- an enduring connection to culture
- the ability to exercise choice which relates to self-determination.

6.2 Refining the illustration of the Framework

The feedback from the listening series suggests the AEPOF's content and schematic should be further refined in the following ways – the AEPOF's content should focus on the following:

- culture and Country are central, and the domains are inseparable to culture and Country, while also being interconnected to each other
- communities defining their own domains and measures by their own local context
- self-determination being the way that Aboriginal people achieve prosperity on their own terms.

How this looks in terms of an updated schematic is outlined below.



6.3 Refining other aspects of the Framework

The findings suggest the following refinements could be considered in the next version of the AEPOF:

Enhancing the definition of Aboriginal economic prosperity

Further testing should be done to build on the definition of Aboriginal economic prosperity proposed above. Drawing on the notions of reciprocity, strength from culture, self-determination and access to opportunity will further inform what economic prosperity means to Aboriginal people and communities.

A clear definition of Aboriginal economic prosperity will help anchor its related domains. Further when read together with its domain and measures the AEPOF will create a coherent narrative on what is Aboriginal economic prosperity as opposed to economic prosperity in general terms.

Embedding culture in all domains

This requires identifying the specific cultural nuance that exists within each domain and how this is measured. For example, what are the cultural perspectives on the domain of income and consumption? And how might a cultural perspective on this domain result in new or different measures of income and consumption?

Setting the right measures

In addition to applying a cultural lens to determine measures for each domain, measures should also be quantitative and qualitative in nature.

Developing guiding principles

Including guiding principles will help frame the interpretation and application of the AEPOF. Such principles could include the concepts of self-determination, fit-for-purpose, culture as a source of strength, wellbeing is the source of wealth and prosperity, and data sovereignty.

Considering how it will be applied

This requires consideration of how the AEPOF can be applied to different communities, different generations, different locations and at different levels (i.e. individual, family, organisation and community) as well as how it will be applied within government.

6.4 Next steps for finalising the AEPOF

Given the proposed changes to the AEPOF and further work required to finalise it, there is a need to consult further with Aboriginal communities to:

- test and further refine the definition of Aboriginal economic prosperity
- test and confirm the updated diagram which explains Aboriginal economic prosperity
- understand how they would implement the AEPOF
- understand how it should be governed and monitored overtime
- identify Aboriginal perspectives on how each domain should be measured, in particular the cultural perspectives on measures for each domain
- identify and produce case studies of local examples of Aboriginal economic prosperity, including how and why they have succeeded.

Further engagement within the NSW government will be required to determine how:

- individual clusters and agencies would implement the AEPOF
- the AEPOF should be governed and monitored
- the AEPOF is implemented, governed and monitored in an ethical way.

7. Appendix A: List of organisations engaged in the Listening Series

No. of participants	Organisation	Consultation type
1	Rekindling the Spirit	Interview
1	Creative 33	Interview
1	AbSec	Interview
1	Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME)	Interview
1	The Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council (AH&MRC)	Interview and roundtable
1	First Australians Capital Ltd	Interview
1	Nguluway DesignInc	Interview
1	University of Newcastle	Interview
1	Indigenous Business Consultants Australia	Interview
1	Terri Janke and Company	Interview
2	NSW Bungree Aboriginal Association	Roundtable
2	NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG)	Roundtable
2	NSW Aboriginal Land Council (NSW ALC)	Roundtable
1	Supply Nation	Roundtable
1	University of Technology Sydney (UTS)	Roundtable
1	Coomealla Health Aboriginal Corporation	Roundtable
1	Healing Foundation	Roundtable
1	Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly (MPRA)	Roundtable
1	Just Reinvest NSW Inc	Roundtable
1	Aboriginal Legal Service (ALS)	Roundtable
1	NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce	Roundtable
1	University of Melbourne	Roundtable
1	University of New South Wales	Roundtable
4	NSW Regional	Roundtable
3	NSW DPIE	Roundtable
6	NSW DCJ	Roundtable
1	NSW DoE	Roundtable
1	City of Sydney	Roundtable
2	NSW Health	Roundtable
1	NSW Customer Service	Roundtable
2	NSW Aboriginal Affairs	Roundtable
1	NSW Local Land Services	Roundtable
1	National Indigenous Australian Agency (NIAA)	Roundtable
2	NSW DPC	Roundtable

1	Productivity Commission	Roundtable
4	NSW Transport	Roundtable
