# Strengthening self-determination in Jervis Bay Territory

The Australian Government has worked with the Wreck Bay community over a number of years to co‑design a Bill that will strengthen local governance and decision making and help to facilitate home ownership style leases on Aboriginal Land in the Jervis Bay Territory.

The Aboriginal Land Grant (Jervis Bay Territory) Amendment (Strengthening Land and Governance Provisions) Bill 2022 (the Bill) will reform the *Aboriginal Land Grant (Jervis Bay Territory) Act 1986* (the Land Grant Act) to reflect these shared outcomes.

## Home ownership

The Bill will help to facilitate arrangements under which Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community Council (WBACC) registered members can enter into home ownership style leases over properties in Wreck Bay Village, if they choose to do so.

## Strengthen local decision-making

The Bill will increase the payment amount at which WBACC is required to obtain the approval from the Minister for Indigenous Australians before entering into a contract, from $100,000 to $1 million. This will give WBACC greater control over its own affairs and reduce administrative burdens.

## Improve governance and corporate operations

The Bill strengthens WBACC’s governance structures and will clarify that WBACC’s powers are vested in the WBACC executive committee (the Board). It will also introduce an additional accountability mechanism to allow registered members to pass a motion at a special general meeting resulting in a new election for the Board.

The Board and the Chief Executive Officer will be explicitly empowered to delegate functions and powers to staff and subcommittees so that WBACC can function effectively. The Bill also ensures that only fit and proper persons may serve on the Board.

The Bill also confers powers on WBACC’s Registrar for dispute resolution, including to investigate whether a Board member (or prospective Board member) is a ‘fit and proper person’.

To ensure the Land Grant Act will be able to adapt to increases in overall WBACC membership, the Bill will change quorum requirements for WBACC meetings from set numbers to a set percentage of overall members.

## Amend or remove outdated or unclear provisions

The Bill will change the title of the Land Grant Act to the *Aboriginal Land and Waters (Jervis Bay Territory) Act 1986.* This more accurately reflects WBACC’s ownership of land and waters.

The Bill will clarify that WBACC serves WBACC registered members rather than the Wreck Bay community more generally, to reduce confusion. This will not affect WBACC’s ability provide services for children with a connection to the community.