



# Why change the CATSI Act?

The *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006*—the CATSI Act—is similar to the *Corporations Act 2001* but has specific provisions to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations.

Many of these corporations are in remote areas and provide essential services to remote communities—such as housing, health, education and employment—or hold land.

The CATSI Act began in 2007 as a ‘special measure’ to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to the same opportunities to form and manage corporations as everyone else.

After 13 years, it is time to see if this special measure is still meeting its purpose and how it might be updated to continue to serve the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations.

## The 2017 Review

A previous review (called the Technical Review) in 2017 made a large number of recommendations. Many of these recommendations will be considered in this review. The Technical Review found, for example, that:

- Indigenous corporations play a unique role in Indigenous communities and in providing services to Indigenous peoples
- the corporations are not all the same—one size does not fit all
- smaller corporations need extra support and shouldn’t have to fulfil as many regulations as bigger ones.

## This Review

This review will consider:

- whether the CATSI Act is meeting its objectives to allow Indigenous people equal opportunity to form corporations as others in the community
- if the functions and powers of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations are working effectively
- if the CATSI Act should be changed so that it supports CATSI corporations better
- how the CATSI Act fits in with other laws such as the Corporations Act, the Native Title Act and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act.



The National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) will lead the review. A Steering Committee will oversee it—with officials from the NIAA, Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC) and other Commonwealth organisations. Key stakeholders will also give advice and input.

## The stages of the Review

**Stage 1—planning and establishment**—began in December 2019 and finished at the end of February 2020. It included an online survey on the NIAA’s website. The NIAA received 60 responses to the survey and eight submissions via email. Governance was identified as important to most respondents.

**Stage 2—review and consultation**—began in February 2020. The draft report, *CATSI Act Review*, is an important part of this stage.

It considers previous reviews and feedback, as well as recent and proposed changes to relevant legislation. It also includes suggestions and ideas from the online survey and consultation with ORIC staff and contractors.

The NIAA will seek feedback on the draft report from the widest possible range of stakeholders including CATSI corporations and their members. People can provide input by:

- completing the surveys on the NIAA’s website: <https://www.niaa.gov.au/news-centre/indigenous-affairs/update-catsi-act-review>
- writing a submission and emailing it to: [CATSIActReview@niaa.gov.au](mailto:CATSIActReview@niaa.gov.au)
- registering for an online consultation session

If you can’t access these options, you can also contact your local NIAA or ORIC office to discuss how you can give feedback.

The consultation period will run from early August 2020 to 21 September 2020.

**Stage 3—Report to government and implementation**—will depend on the final recommendations and the government’s response.

### Contact the CATSI Act Team

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