

First Nations Access and Engagement Strategy

Intention

The Australian Land Conservation Alliance (ALCA) seeks to continue to improve the way it engages First Nations participants through its events, ensuring that they are accessible, beneficial, and culturally safe. ALCA's First Nations Access and Engagement Strategy aims to ensure that ALCA's events enable and maximise access, inclusivity and knowledge sharing, and are beneficial for both First Nations and non-Indigenous participants.

Purpose and Context

This Strategy sets out ALCA's commitment to building respectful, culturally safe, and enduring relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and First Nations peoples in other countries across ALCA's major events. It moves beyond facilitating access and participation alone, positioning First Nations peoples as partners in leadership, knowledge-sharing, and cultural stewardship.

This revised Strategy incorporates findings and recommendations from the 2024 and 2025 ALCA Conference First Nations Reports. The evaluation of these conferences identified opportunities to strengthen governance, communication, cultural safety, and long-term engagement with First Nations peoples. Collectively, these recommendations informed a substantive revision of the Strategy to ensure it reflects contemporary best practice, community feedback, and ALCA's evolving leadership role in the conservation sector.

This Strategy is a living document that is regularly reviewed, evaluated and evolved as needed.

Scope of Strategy

This Strategy applies to all ALCA's major events - classified as face-to-face events that are of one to multiple days in duration. These include the annual ALCA Conference, Conservation Finance Intensive and landholder forums. Relevant actions in this Strategy are also considered during the planning and running of smaller events.

Strategy Aims:

1. ALCA's events are accessible, beneficial, and culturally safe for First Nations participants.
2. First Nations peoples attend, actively participate in and benefit from ALCA's events.
3. Non-Indigenous participants appreciate, enjoy and learn from the full participation of First Nations participants.

In order to achieve these goals, ALCA seeks to continuously improve the way it delivers its events year-on-year. To do so, the alliance sets the following objectives and actions that it will consider in the planning and delivery of all events, giving regard to resources, budget, space and feasibility.

As much as possible agreed and essential actions should be built into event budgets. ALCA may also identify opportunities for targeted sponsorship to supplement budgeted and unbudgeted First Nations access and engagement.

1. Objective: ALCA builds internal capacity to implement and improve this Strategy

Actions for consideration:

- 1.1 First Nations cultural competency of ALCA staff, board and event planning colleagues developed.
- 1.2 Ensure there is ongoing First Nations representation to guide Strategy implementation and evaluation.
- 1.3 Annual review of Strategy completed and improvements made based on findings of evaluations.

2. Objective: The events programs deliver beneficial, relevant and inclusive content.

Actions for consideration:

- 2.1 First Nations peoples participate on ALCA events program planning groups.
- 2.2 Engage local Traditional Owners and Traditional Custodians of Country where events will be held early and appropriately, providing opportunities for meaningful participation (including participating in program planning that is relevant to First Nations communities).
- 2.3 Support participants to communicate and use language that maximises understanding and participation by First Nations peoples. Maximise opportunities for knowledge sharing and Story Telling.
- 2.4 Ensure First Nations speakers are spread throughout every major event program; and enable closed/focused sessions developed, and in some instances led by, First Nations participants to progress First Nations matters, leadership and sharing of knowledge.
- 2.5 Provision of First Nations focused resources, books and posters.
- 2.6 A visual one-page summary or infographic will be produced to communicate the intention and purpose of the Strategy in a simple and accessible way.

3. Objective: Strive for cultural safety in major event, site, and program delivery.

Actions for consideration:

- 3.1 Provide support for participation and preparation.
- 3.2 Include a meeting space and participants event for First Nations peoples of some form at or leading up to major events. Ensure there is time and space in programs for “yarning” to enhance peer to peer networking and support.
- 3.3 Providing at least one dedicated First Nations connection or meeting place session per day.
- 3.4 Ensure respectful and inclusive language, appropriate cultural terminology and imagery used throughout all events. Apply traditional language where appropriate.
- 3.5 Targeted procurement of First Nations peoples, organisations and services. ALCA remains committed to strengthening First Nations procurement by creating opportunities for relationship-building and economic inclusion and prioritising Indigenous businesses and suppliers.
- 3.6 Consider and explore providing culturally appropriate food offerings.

- 3.7 Recognising that complex policy and governance topics can be difficult to navigate, ALCA will use plain language across programs and materials, and, where appropriate, incorporate First Nations languages.
- 3.8 Ensure there is First Nations leadership across event planning, advisory structures, and decision-making processes where possible. This includes increased First Nations representation on planning and advisory groups, early and meaningful engagement with local Traditional Owners and knowledge holders, and embedding cultural authority into program design and delivery.

4. Objective: ALCA is engaging, attracting and supporting in person access

Actions for consideration:

- 4.1 Engage and communicate with First Nations peoples throughout planning, delivery and reporting.
- 4.2 Make budget available (or secure in-kind sponsorship support) to facilitate speaker and/or participant attendance (covering ticketing and transport, accommodation) where possible.
- 4.3 Where possible, ensure some events are delivered in person in regional areas.
- 4.4 Where practical, tailor logistical support based on event location and scale.
- 4.5 A separate First Nations marketing and communications plan will be developed (or integrated into the overarching marketing and communications strategy) as part of the pre-launch for every major event.
- 4.6 The Strategy will be visibly published across ALCA's website, event registration pages, and pre-event communications.

5. Objective: To ensure efficient Post-Event Engagement and Year-Round Connection after the ALCA Conference, ALCA will:

- 5.1 Develop a First Nations alumni network and offer post-event yarning sessions.
- 5.2 Publish a First Nations post-event summary report on the website to bring awareness and increase engagement for First Nations delegates. This can be incorporated into ALCA's general publications (e.g. ALCA's post-conference publications).
- 5.3 Implement an evaluation framework that at a minimum includes annual review and reporting through digital surveys and post yarning circle feedback and every three years seek to undertake a deeper review.
- 5.4 Review and refine the strategy annually, ensuring it remains responsive, culturally grounded, and aligned with First Nations priorities and aspirations.