



AIATSIS

Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBCs): Where are they now?

The 2019 PBC survey sought to establish the roles, capabilities, challenges and ambitions of PBCs and how governments and legislation can best support PBCs in managing their rights and interests. AIATSIS, CSIRO and the National Native Title Council teamed up to build a new benchmark for survey coverage and participation. As a result 58 PBCs from across the country completed the survey. This snapshot is based on the survey results and illustrates the incredible work that PBCs are doing and what supports are needed to fully realise their potential.

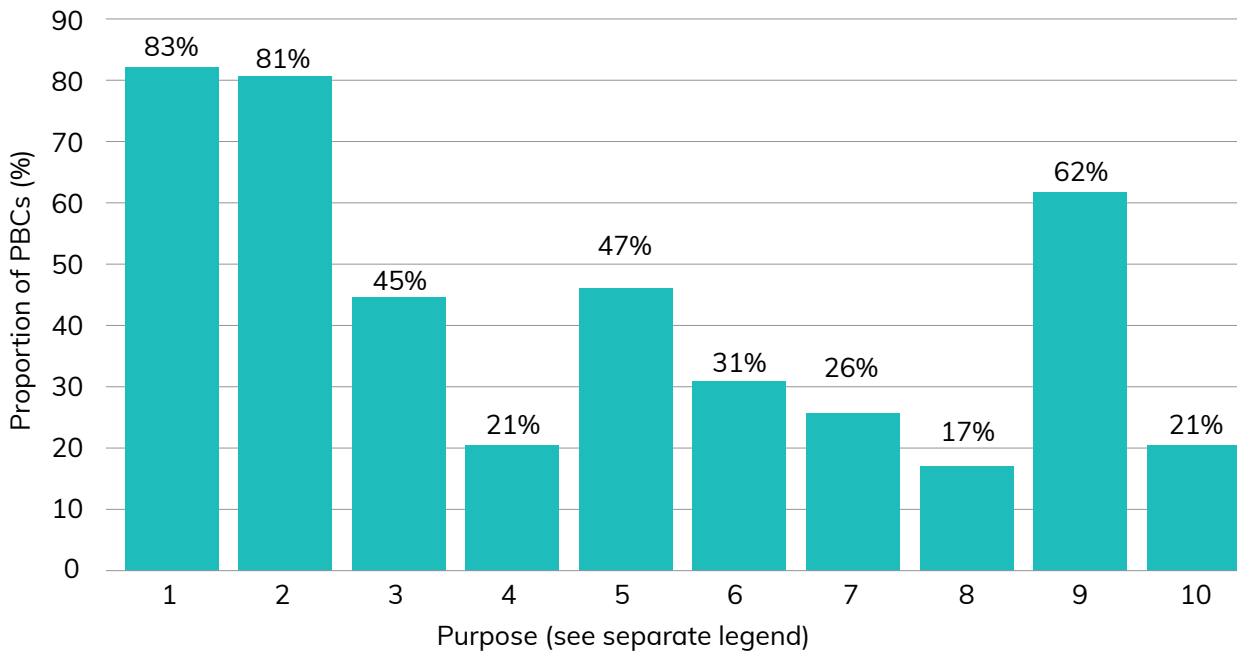
What are PBCs doing?

PBCs operate under varied cultural and legal frameworks. As PBCs hold native title on behalf of traditional owners, PBCs must manage their land and water rights, compensation and investments, and negotiate agreements relative to issues. In doing so the PBC represents the wishes of their traditional owners and their community. This is a large role that can often go uncompensated, with 31% of PBCs stating they provide services under the *Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)*, without charging fees. The services rendered can be broadly categorised as cultural, environmental, farming and fishing, mining, transport and construction, hospitality, social and financial services and investments.

Looking after country

81% of PBCs place high value on looking after and managing country and 64% of PBCs reported having provided environmental services on country in the previous 12 months. Sub-entities can be important in the delivery of these services, with 20% reporting that they run a ranger program and land management service as part of their operations. This shows a doubling in the number of ranger and land management programs established by PBCs (as additional entities) since 2013.

Graph 1: Combined responses covering the three most important purposes of PBCs¹



Legend: PBC purposes

1. Fulfil responsibilities under Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)
2. Look after and manage country
3. Be a strong representative voice
4. Pursue further native title claims
5. Create wealth and business opportunities
6. Create employment
7. Provide education and training
8. Provide community services
9. Strengthen culture
10. Manage activities by non-native title holders on country

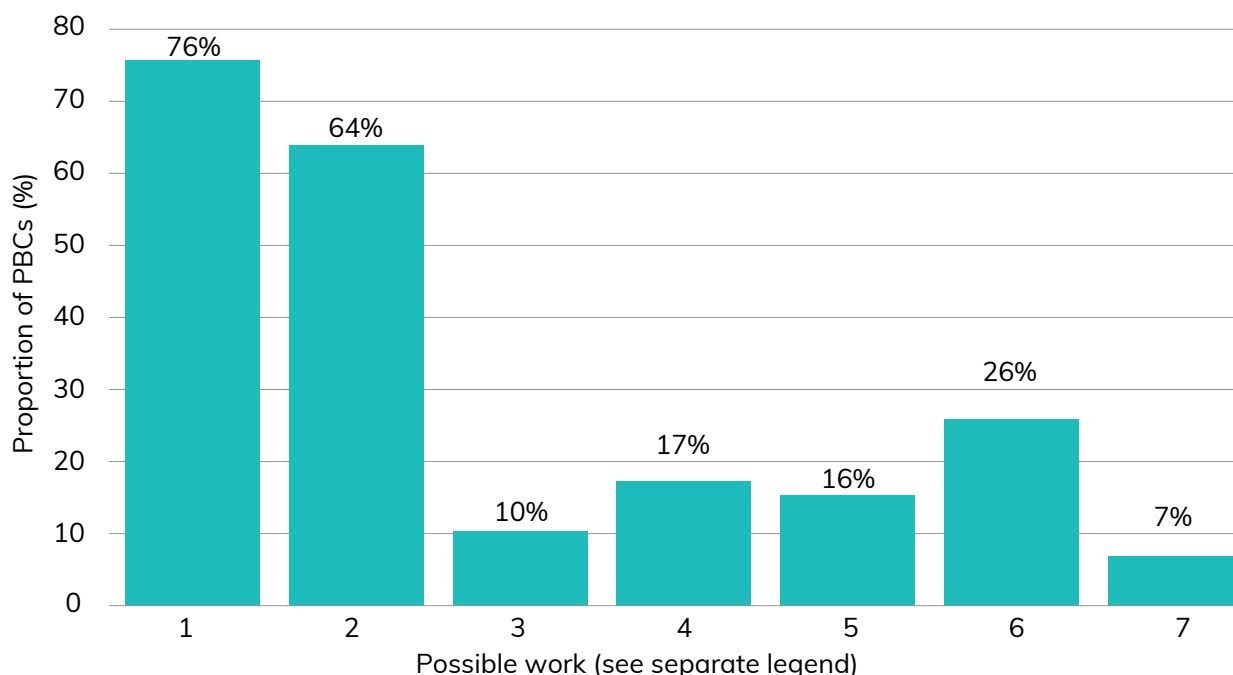
Cultural strengthening

Cultural services and strengthening culture are central services provided by PBCs, and are integral to many of the corporate and internal community ambitions. We saw 62% of PBCs stating strengthening culture as a core purpose of their corporation. Further, the data shows that cultural services take the top spot for the work done by PBCs, with 76% saying they had done this work in the previous 12 months. These cultural services take many forms, including largely external facing cultural programs, art and cultural heritage services.

Wealth & business creation

Whilst cultural services and environmental services have maintained the largest share of work done by PBCs there is evidence of diversification within the sector. 47% of PBCs ranked wealth and business opportunity creation as an important purpose in the running of their PBC. This innovation and drive to create strong economic participation is heavily evident in the sector, with many PBCs aspiring to having multiple business ventures across diverse fields.²

Graph 2: Kinds of work done by PBCs, and the entities they own or control, in the last 12 months³



Legend: Kinds of work

1. Cultural services (including cultural heritage, cultural programs, art production)
2. Environmental services (land and sea management, carbon, biodiversity)
3. Farming and fishing (including pastoralism, agriculture, aquaculture, horticulture, forestry, bush food development)
4. Mining, transport and construction services
5. Hospitality services (including tourism, accommodation, catering and retail)
6. Social services (including housing, employment, community, and education services)
7. Financial services and investments

Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation's (QYAC) 2018–19 Annual report states that the PBC is planning for corporate self-sufficiency by teaming up with various businesses and organisations in the local community. Facilitating these joint ventures between Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses has seen the expansion of QYAC business into new industries, capital and networks. The PBC is now launching into the tourism, hospitality and medicinal bushfoods sector.⁴

Want to know more?

Find more information about the 2019 PBC survey (<https://aiatsis.gov.au/research/current-projects/prescribed-bodies-corporate>) and read the full report (https://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/research_pub/AIATSIS%20-%20PBC%20Survey%20Report%20-%202021.pdf).

References

- 1 B Burbidge, M Barber, TM Kong & T Donovan, *Project report: 2019 survey of Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBCs)*, AIATSIS, Canberra, 2021, p. 22, viewed 2 February 2021, <https://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/research_pub/AIATSIS%20-%20PBC%20Survey%20Report%20-%202021.pdf>.
- 2 National Indigenous Australian Agency (NIAA), *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*, NIAA, July 2020, p. 47.
- 3 Burbidge et al., *Project report: 2019 survey of Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBCs)*, p. 24.
- 4 Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation, *Ngaliya Maguydan – Annual Report 2018–2019*, Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation, 6 December 2019, pp. 39–43, viewed 30 November 2020, <<http://www.qyac.net.au/docs/18-19AnnualReport.pdf>>.



Smoking ceremony on Yawuru Country. Credit: Nyamba Buru Yawuru.