

**Aboriginal Languages  
Trust**

**CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT  
STRATEGIC PLAN**



## Background to the Strategic Plan

The NSW Aboriginal Languages Act 2017 (the Act) commenced on 5 March 2020. The Act was written following months of consultation with Aboriginal communities, peak organisations and other stakeholders from all over NSW so that it would truly reflect Aboriginal community aspirations for their languages. It is the first piece of legislation in Australia to acknowledge the significance of Aboriginal languages, seeking to promote, reawaken, nurture and grow Aboriginal languages across NSW.

The Act calls for two things:

1. The establishment of an **Aboriginal Languages Trust (the Trust)** to provide a focused, coordinated, and sustained effort in relation to Aboriginal languages activities at local, regional and State levels.
2. **A five-year Strategic Plan** to guide investment and activities in language revival in NSW.

A Board of the Aboriginal Languages Trust has been appointed, made up of nine Aboriginal people with the skills, expertise and experience relevant to the Trust and with appropriate standing in their respective communities. The role of the Board is to provide strategic advice on the direction of the Trust, ensure the Trust's affairs are managed effectively, and provide advice on the development and implementation of the five-year Strategic Plan.

We now have a draft of the Strategic Plan. This draft takes incorporates feedback received from communities during the state-wide consultations on the Act, subsequent consultations with community language stakeholders and government agencies (including stakeholders who gave feedback at the Ngamuru Languages Gathering in 2019), and the knowledge and experience of our Board members who work with NSW's first languages.

As this will be the first Strategic Plan for the Trust, it's important that it focusses on setting strong foundations, building relationships and setting up a sustainable model for the future. We believe that the draft Strategic Plan is both ambitious and achievable in our first five years. We plan to take a strengths-based approach, building on the existing work, connections and infrastructure in NSW in relation to the state's first languages. This draft Strategic Plan seeks to support, empower and partner with Aboriginal communities, and connect with government and other organisations involved with our languages.

We are now seeking input from community, government and other language stakeholders on the draft Strategic Plan. Your feedback will help us to shape a plan that will set the Trust on a path for success – so that all Aboriginal languages in NSW can thrive.

## Overview

We are seeking feedback on the following key areas of the draft Strategic Plan:

1. Values
2. Goals
3. Five Focus Areas, including actions and measures for each

# 1. VALUES

The Values of the Trust express the 'way we will work' and will be the guiding principles for all work of the Trust.

## Background to this section:

In these Values, we have attempted to express the importance of Aboriginal people owning their own language paths, whilst acknowledging that by working together and sharing information, we can all achieve more.

## The draft Values are:

- *Aboriginal people are the custodians of their languages*
- *Each community determines their needs and priorities*
- *We work together and learn from each other*
- *Language, culture and Country are intertwined*

## Consultation questions:

1. Do you think these are the right Values to guide the work of the Trust?
2. Are there any other Values that the Trust should be guided by?

## 2. GOALS

The Goals give a broad description of what the Trust wants to achieve.

### Background to this section:

During consultations for the Aboriginal Languages Act, communities told us that they wanted to see and hear their languages used in everyday life. They also told us that they needed funding, resources and support to develop their own language plans and programs. We believe that the Trust should partner with government and national and international language networks to progress towards these aspirations.

The draft Goals are:

1. *Work with language communities to increase the use of languages – so that languages are seen and heard in everyday life*
2. *Invest in and support Aboriginal communities - so that they can confidently develop their language needs and priorities*
3. *Support language networks in NSW - so that Aboriginal language resources and ideas can be shared across and between language communities*
4. *Increase awareness throughout NSW in partnership with communities and relevant organisations and agencies at local, regional and state levels about the unique contributions Aboriginal languages bring to the identity of NSW - so that they are celebrated and sustained*
5. *Partner with all levels of government – so that public policies and programs support Aboriginal languages across NSW*
6. *Connect with our national and international First Nations language networks – so that our efforts, ideas and learning are linked*

### Consultation questions:

3. **Do you think these are the right Goals for the Trust?**
4. **What role do you expect the Trust to play in working with government and other language networks?**

## 3. FOCUS AREAS

### Background to this section

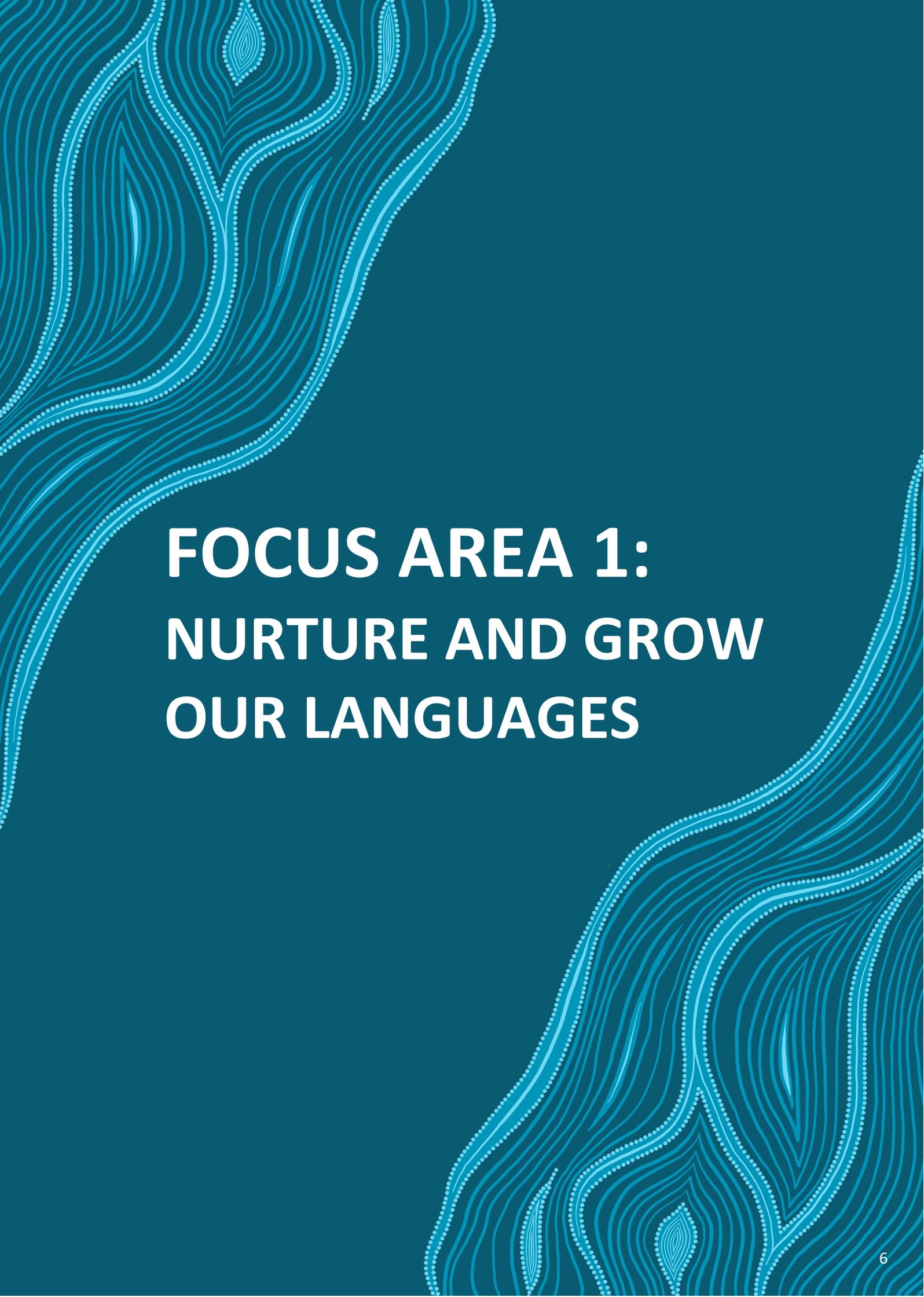
This section of the Strategic Plan maps out the work that will be undertaken over the next five years. The Board have drafted five Focus Areas for the Trust that they believe are both ambitious and achievable:

1. Nurture and grow our languages
2. Build relationships and networks
3. Increase awareness and promotion
4. Our workforce and corporate capability
5. Sustainable futures

Focus Areas 1, 2 and 3 relate to the work that the Trust will undertake to support Aboriginal languages in NSW.

Focus Areas 4 and 5 relate to the establishment of the Trust as an entity, developing its workforce and ensuring a financially sustainable future.

More details on these five Focus Areas are on the following pages.

The background features a dark blue field with intricate, flowing patterns of white and light blue lines. These lines form a series of interconnected, wavy shapes that resemble stylized waves or organic forms, creating a sense of movement and depth. The patterns are most prominent in the upper left and lower right corners, framing the central text.

# **FOCUS AREA 1: NURTURE AND GROW OUR LANGUAGES**

## Focus Area 1: Nurture and grow our languages

### Background to this Focus Area:

We acknowledge that many Aboriginal language communities are so busy teaching or revitalising languages, or doing other important community work, that they don't have time to work on their longer term language plans. We have proposed that the Trust will work with communities to develop language sustainability plans so that every community knows where they are heading and what it will take to achieve their aspirations. We've also identified what we believe are the key things we need to do to nurture and grow languages. The information in each language sustainability plan will tell us what else we need to do to support each community.

The draft text is:

We recognise that each language community is at a different stage in revitalising, nurturing or growing their languages and there is no 'one size fits all' approach. The Trust will support communities to have ownership of their languages and to achieve their aspirations for language progression.

### *Our actions*

- 1.1 Invest in capacity building for communities to support the development of language sustainability plans<sup>1</sup>
- 1.2 Promote and support communities to exercise their Indigenous cultural intellectual property rights concerning languages
- 1.3 Resource language events and activities that address local community priorities
- 1.4 Establish partnerships to support effective storing of community language knowledge, resources and teaching methods
- 1.5 Develop ongoing communication pathways between the Trust and communities so that the Trust can understand and respond to language community needs
- 1.6 Develop a collection that supports communities to gather information on language activities and outcomes so that community priorities are supported and strategy and investment informed
- 1.7 Build connections with government institutions (for example, AIATSIS and the State Library of NSW) to facilitate greater community access to archive material

### *Our measures*

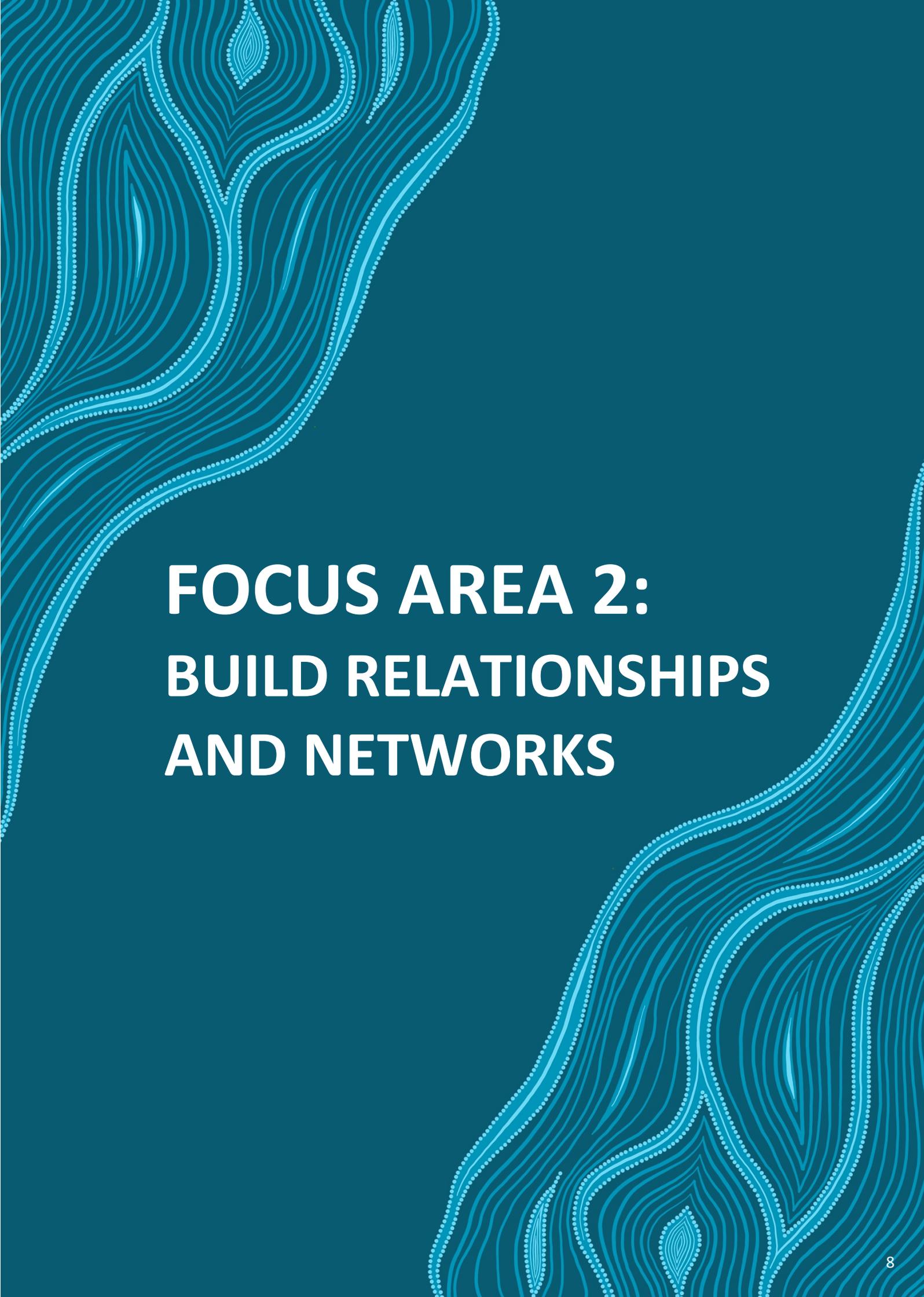
- 1.8 Information is available on language needs, activities and outcomes
- 1.9 Options to support language activities, including grant funding, are identified and prioritised in partnership with relevant stakeholders
- 1.10 An increase in the number of language sustainability plans established in communities who want one. The target for this increase will be identified through community consultations

<sup>1</sup> A language sustainability plan is a community-owned plan that outlines the aspirations of the language community and the steps that will be taken to achieve them, including the resources and support required.

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### Consultation Questions

- 5. Are these the right actions to support, nurture and grow languages in NSW?**
- 6. Are these the right measures for the Trust to check that it's on track?**
- 7. Would your community or communities that you work with benefit from having a long-term plan in place to ensure language sustainability? If so, how?**

The background features a dark blue field with intricate, flowing patterns of lighter blue and white lines. These lines form a complex, organic network that resembles a topographical map or a neural network, with various loops, curves, and branching structures. The overall effect is one of dynamic movement and interconnectedness.

# **FOCUS AREA 2: BUILD RELATIONSHIPS AND NETWORKS**

## Focus Area 2: Build relationships and networks

### Background to this Focus Area:

Relationships are integral to the work of the Trust. We will need to build relationships with the many people and organisations who support communities in their language work. Aboriginal community members told us that they wanted opportunities to connect with each other and share knowledge about language teaching and revival, so we plan to develop formal network groups for this to happen.

The draft text is:

Strengthening Aboriginal languages in NSW requires the focused, coordinated and sustained effort of many, including Aboriginal communities, language leaders and teachers, research organisations, government, private sector and philanthropic supporters. We will grow and connect the pool of people to nurture Aboriginal languages. We are standing on the shoulders of those who have come before us.

### *Our actions*

- 2.1 Develop and strengthen relationships with community at local, language or cultural group (regional), state and national levels
- 2.2 Establish and resource formal structures to support local, language or cultural group (regional) and state government networks
- 2.3 Investigate a model to build international language group networks, in partnership with the NSW and Federal Governments
- 2.4 Establish a network of publishers and designers to support community in publishing language resources
- 2.5 Link corporate and philanthropic sectors with local communities to support community to achieve their goals and aspirations
- 2.6 Develop technologies that support sharing of knowledge, including language resources, between language groups
- 2.7 Develop an understanding of existing networks to inform strategy and investment

### *Our measures*

- 2.8 A NSW language gathering hosted, with the frequency of the gathering to be determined through community consultations
- 2.9 A formalised Aboriginal languages network is established and operational
- 2.10 A fit for purpose system is in place to support effective sharing of language knowledge and resources teaching methods

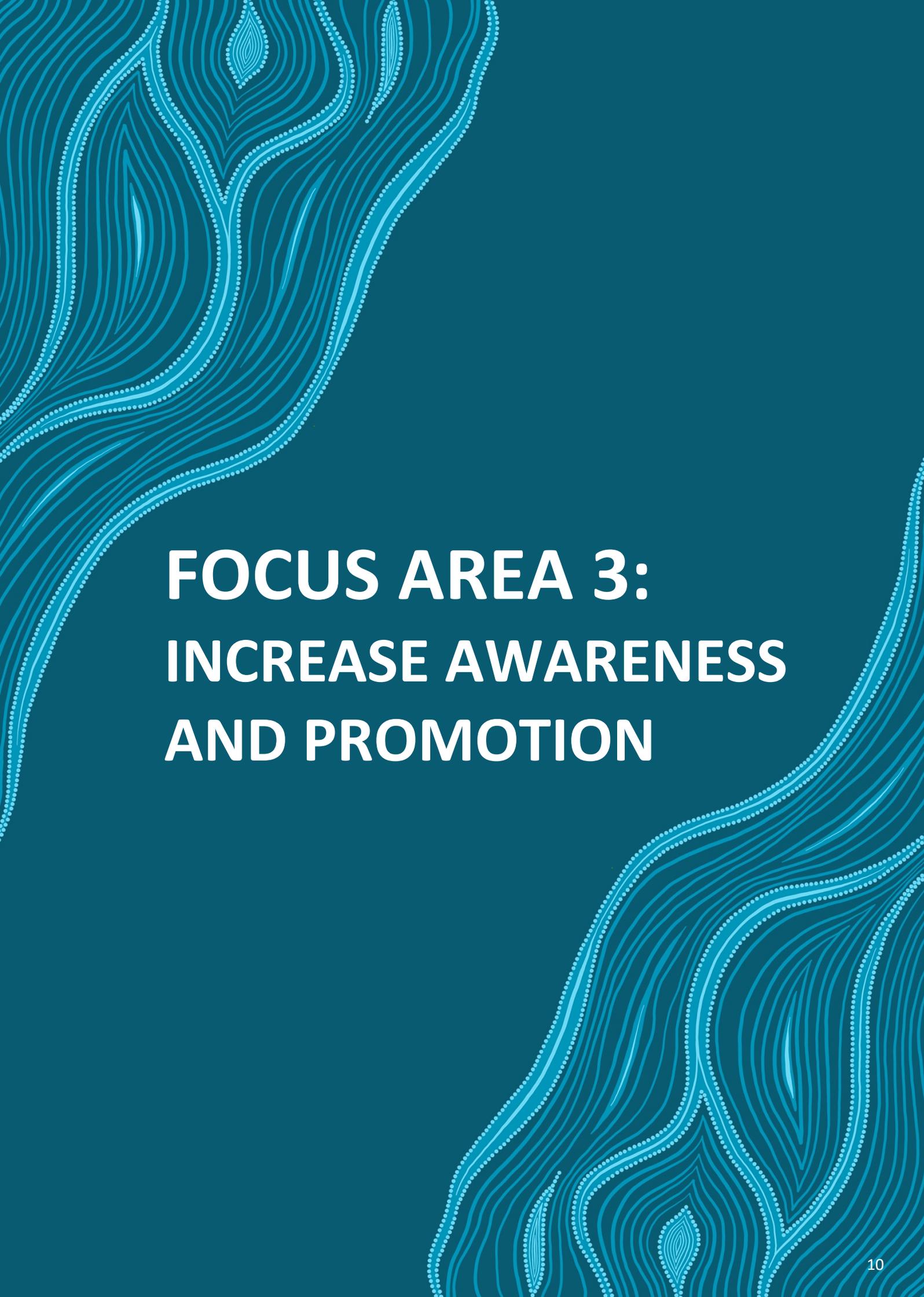
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### Consultation Questions

**8. Are these the right measures for the Trust to check that it's on track?**

**9. What kinds of relationships do you expect the Trust to have to best support language communities?**

**10. What kinds of networks would your community or communities that you work with benefit from joining (e.g. teacher networks, language group networks)?**



**FOCUS AREA 3:  
INCREASE AWARENESS  
AND PROMOTION**

## Focus Area 3: Increase awareness and promotion

### Background to this Focus Area:

We believe that by celebrating the Aboriginal languages of NSW, wider NSW will better appreciate their importance and embrace Aboriginal languages and cultures. In this Focus Area, we have also set out to engage government so that policy and service delivery better meets the needs of language communities.

The draft text is:

Aboriginal languages have always, and will continue to, enrich the culture and identity of NSW. The Trust will work with government and other stakeholders to promote the importance of our languages and ensure that the goals of Aboriginal communities are enshrined in government language policy and programs.

### Our actions

- 3.1 Engage with government about the ongoing use and promotion of Aboriginal languages
- 3.2 Advise the NSW Government in its work to progress the Closing the Gap language target
- 3.3 Develop protocols to support effective engagement with NSW Aboriginal communities on language related activities, in partnership with local communities, relevant community organisations and the NSW Government
- 3.4 Design and implement a strategy that encourages the wider use and appreciation of Aboriginal languages
- 3.5 Develop and promote evidence and practice wisdom to inform effective language policy, advocacy and service delivery
- 3.6 In partnership with the Geographical Names Board of NSW and other government agencies, develop the policies and processes to increase the number of dual-named sites and Aboriginal place names for public spaces (e.g. parks, suburbs, infrastructure). More information is needed before this can be finalised

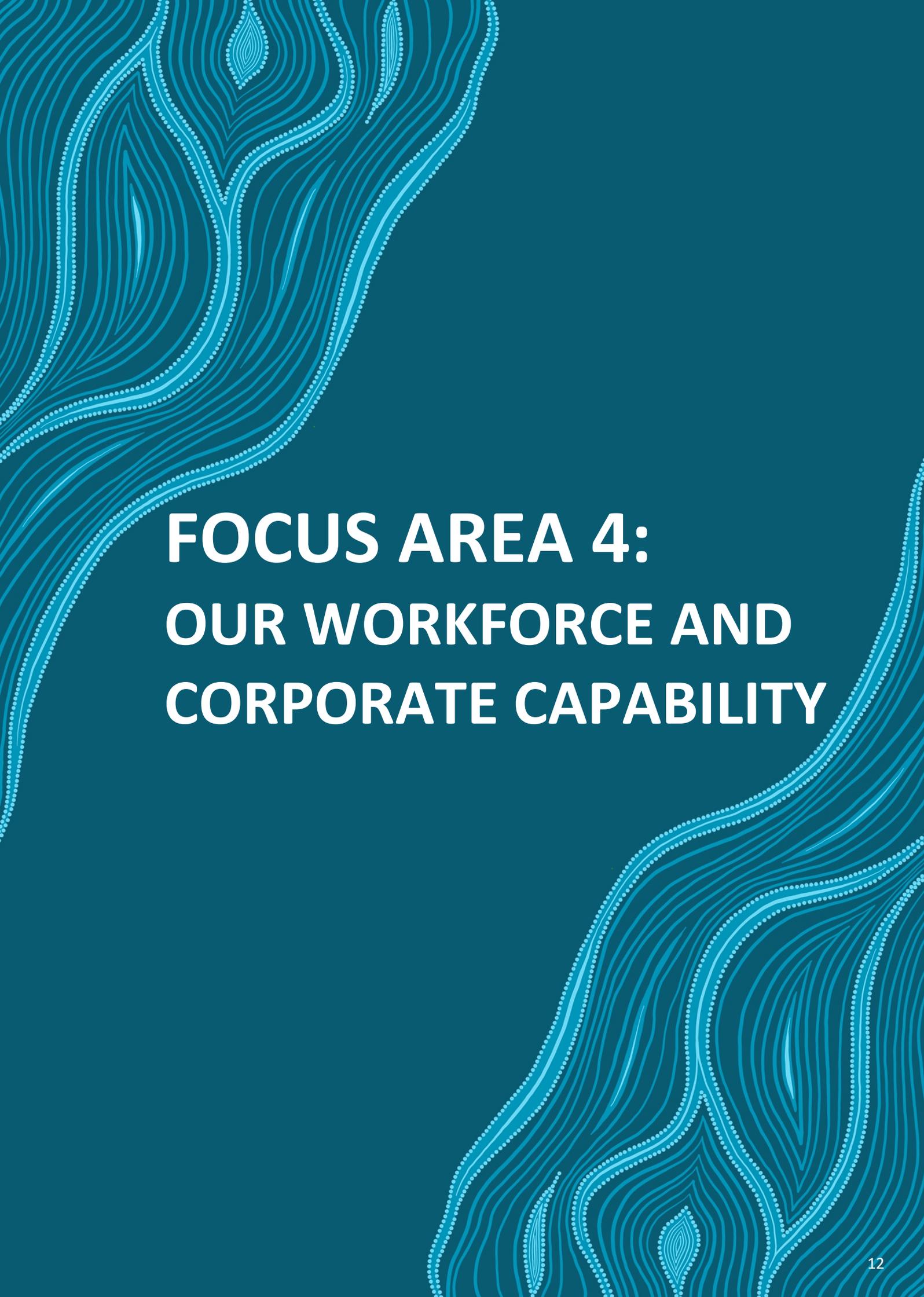
### Our measures

- 3.7 A five-year research agenda is developed and implemented, in partnership with relevant stakeholders to support and inform language revitalisation and growth
- 3.8 A communication plan is developed and implemented, in partnership with relevant stakeholders, which engages communities and stakeholders and promotes Aboriginal languages in NSW

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### Consultation Questions

11. Are these the right measures for the Trust to check that it's on track?
12. How would you like to see Aboriginal languages celebrated and promoted?
13. What kind of research or evidence is needed to better inform government services and policy?



**FOCUS AREA 4:  
OUR WORKFORCE AND  
CORPORATE CAPABILITY**

## Focus Area 4: Our workforce and corporate capability

### Background to this Focus Area

We recognise that the Trust needs to attract and retain knowledgeable and culturally capable staff, and have a strong governance framework in place, to function effectively. This Focus Area looks at what we need to do internally to make sure we can offer the best service and support to Aboriginal language communities.

The draft text is:

The capability of our staff is essential for our success and we will build key knowledge and skills that will enable us to support Aboriginal communities to achieve their language priorities. As a statutory authority, the Trust must meet a high standard of governance and financial management and ensure that our business continuity and information systems support our functions and meet NSW Government requirements.

### *Our actions*

- 4.1 Attract and retain a diverse and high-performing workforce
- 4.2 Cultivate a culturally competent and safe work environment
- 4.3 Build workforce capabilities to meet the objectives of the Trust
- 4.4 Establish effective communication throughout the organisation
- 4.5 Establish and maintain key corporate systems
- 4.6 Develop a governance framework, including the management of key stakeholder relationships

### *Our measures*

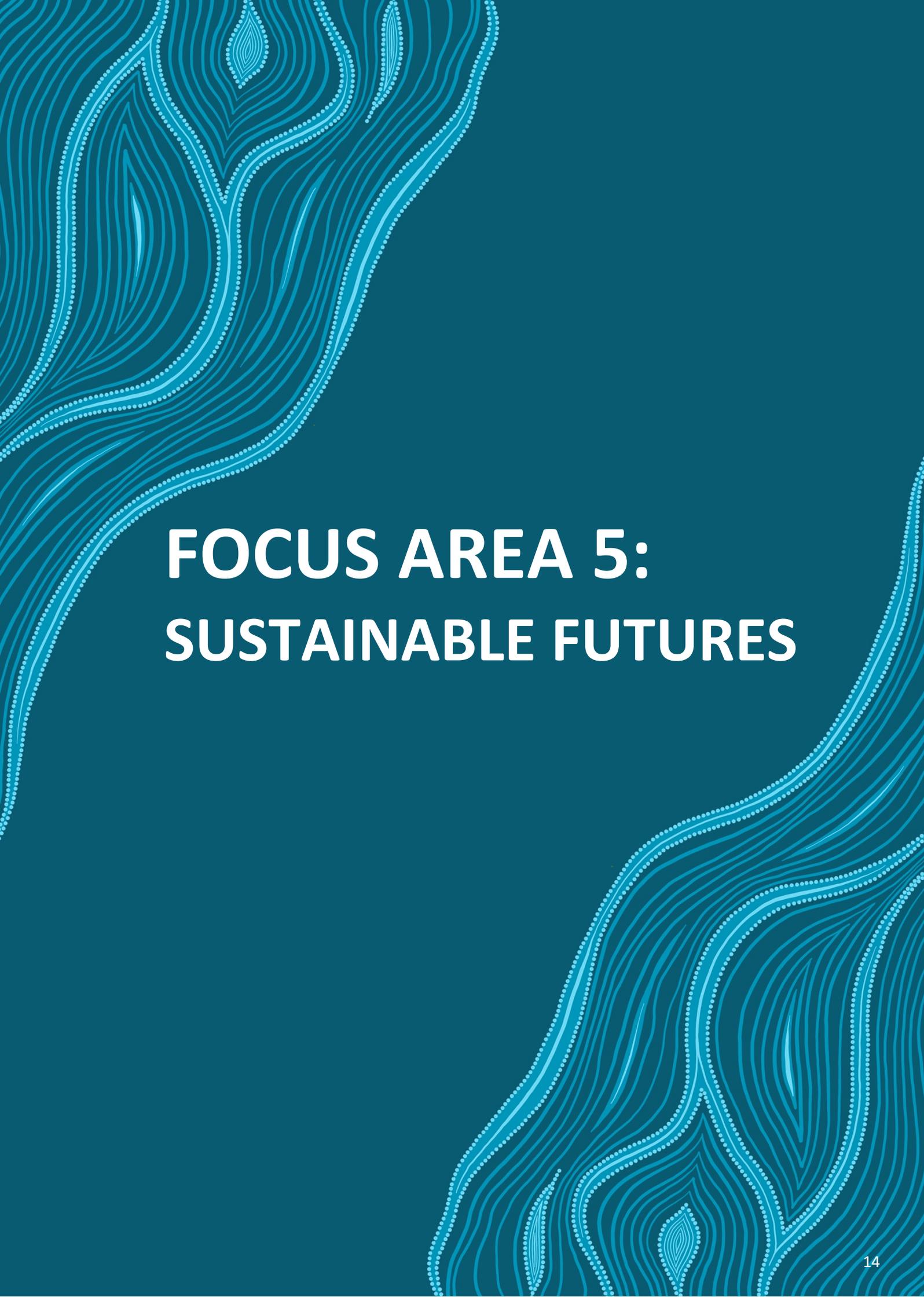
- 4.7 Individual learning and development activities build capabilities to deliver the objectives of the Trust
- 4.8 The Trust meets the functions as outlined in the Aboriginal Languages Act 2017
- 4.9 The Trusts' governance and financial management is independently assessed as meeting required standards

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### Consultation Questions

**14. How should the Trust ensure it maintains a culturally competent workforce?**

**15. What other mechanisms the Trust could use to ensure it stays on track to meet its obligations under the Act?**



# **FOCUS AREA 5: SUSTAINABLE FUTURES**

## Focus Area 5: Sustainable futures

### Background to this Focus Area

During the Trust's first five years it will need to create a sustainable funding model so that it can continue to support language communities in NSW for many years to come. In this Focus Area we have listed the things we will need to do so that the Trust has a sustainable future.

The draft text is:

Strengthening and sustaining Aboriginal languages in NSW requires the investment of funding and resources into Aboriginal language activities. As we build our foundations, the Trust will establish diversity in funding sources and increase financial support from the public, corporate and philanthropic sectors.

### *Our actions*

- 5.1 Develop a strategy that focuses on a sustainable future for NSW Aboriginal languages and the Trust, including investment targets
- 5.2 Develop and implement a communication strategy to promote the functions and value of the Trust relating to sustainable futures
- 5.3 Build and maintain relationships with philanthropic and corporate sectors
- 5.4 Establish a Memorandum of Understanding with Aboriginal Affairs NSW

### *Our measures*

- 5.5 Design and implement a continuous improvement process to ensure enhancement of the governance, planning, financial management, project management and operations of the Trust
- 5.6 By 2026 the Trust has reached 90% of its targets as set out in the sustainable future strategy

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### Consultation Questions

- 16. What should the Trust do in its first five years to ensure it is sustainable?**
- 17. How should the Trust communicate the value it brings to language communities and broader NSW?**
- 18. What other programs or services would you like to see offered by the Trust?**
- 19. Do you have any additional comments about the draft Strategic Plan?**

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