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Building Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Governance: Report of a Survey and Forum to Map Current and Future Research and Practical Resource Needs

In Australia today there are an estimated 8000 to 9000 Indigenous organisations, many of which are incorporated under Commonwealth, state or territory legislation. Their governance work is often seen by Indigenous people as nation-building: an expression of self-determination and a way of reconceptualising relations with governments and asserting unique cultural traditions.

The effective governance of these organisations is critical to attracting funding, promoting sustainable economic activity and building resilient communities. It is now recognised that Indigenous governance and the governance of governments are intertwined and the latter is receiving greater critical scrutiny.

A growing number of research projects, governance building initiatives and practical resources are providing evidence of what works, what doesn't and why. But the opportunities to evaluate this evidence, consider strategic priorities and build collaborations are limited.

On 29–30 July 2014, AIATSIS and AIGI convened an Indigenous governance forum in Canberra to provide such an opportunity. In preparation, a survey of Indigenous governance research, practical resources and future needs was widely circulated. This report provides a synthesis of ideas, comments, issues and possibilities identified through the survey and the forum.

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