

LECC

Law Enforcement
Conduct Commission

Community Engagement Strategy

2024–2026

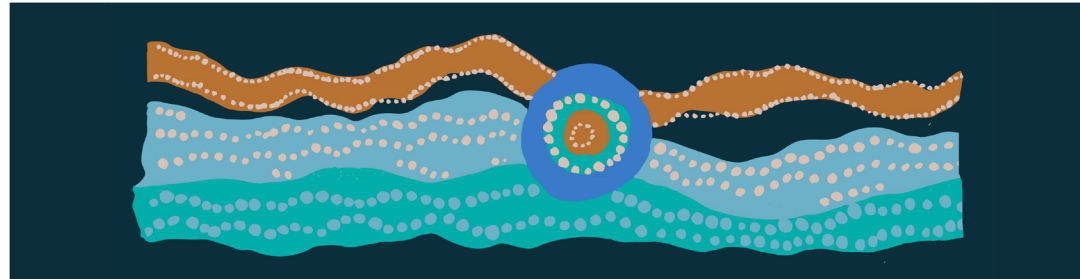
February 2024

lecc.nsw.gov.au



Acknowledgement of Country

The Law Enforcement Conduct Commission acknowledges and pays respect to the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands on which we work. We recognise the continuing connection of First Nations people to the lands and waters of NSW and pay our respects to the First Nations Elders, past and present.



*Sand Dunes (1991, Licensed reproduction, ink on canvas)
John and Ros Moriarty, Balarinji Design Studio, Jumbana Group*

An excerpted graphical element of the Sand Dunes artwork has formed part of the Commission's Acknowledgement of Country graphic device since 2021.

The artwork tells the story of clan people's journey to a camping place on sun-bleached sands along weathered shores. Food is prepared and stories are shared around the fire near their shell middens.

The original Sand Dunes artwork is gouache on paper and part of the Balarinji art collection acquired by the National Museum of Australia in 2009. The collection comprises 409 individual artworks, predominantly gouache on paper, created by the Balarinji design studio. The works were created by John and Ros Moriarty and various artists, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, who were part of the Balarinji team.

This artwork features in the Commission's first Reconciliation Action Plan.

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About us

The Law Enforcement Conduct Commission (the Commission) started in 2017.

We are the independent watchdog over the NSW Police Force and the NSW Crime Commission.

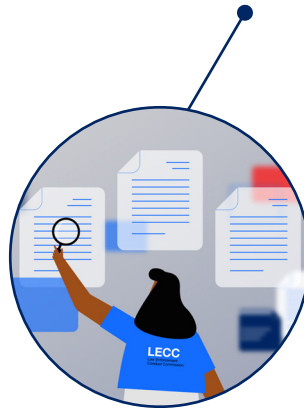
Our job is to strengthen law enforcement integrity by preventing, detecting and investigating misconduct and maladministration within law enforcement in NSW.

Our core functions are:

- oversight of the handling of misconduct investigations by the NSW Police Force and Crime Commission
- to detect and investigate allegations of serious misconduct by police and Crime Commission officers
- to independently oversight and monitor the investigation of critical incidents by the NSW Police Force.

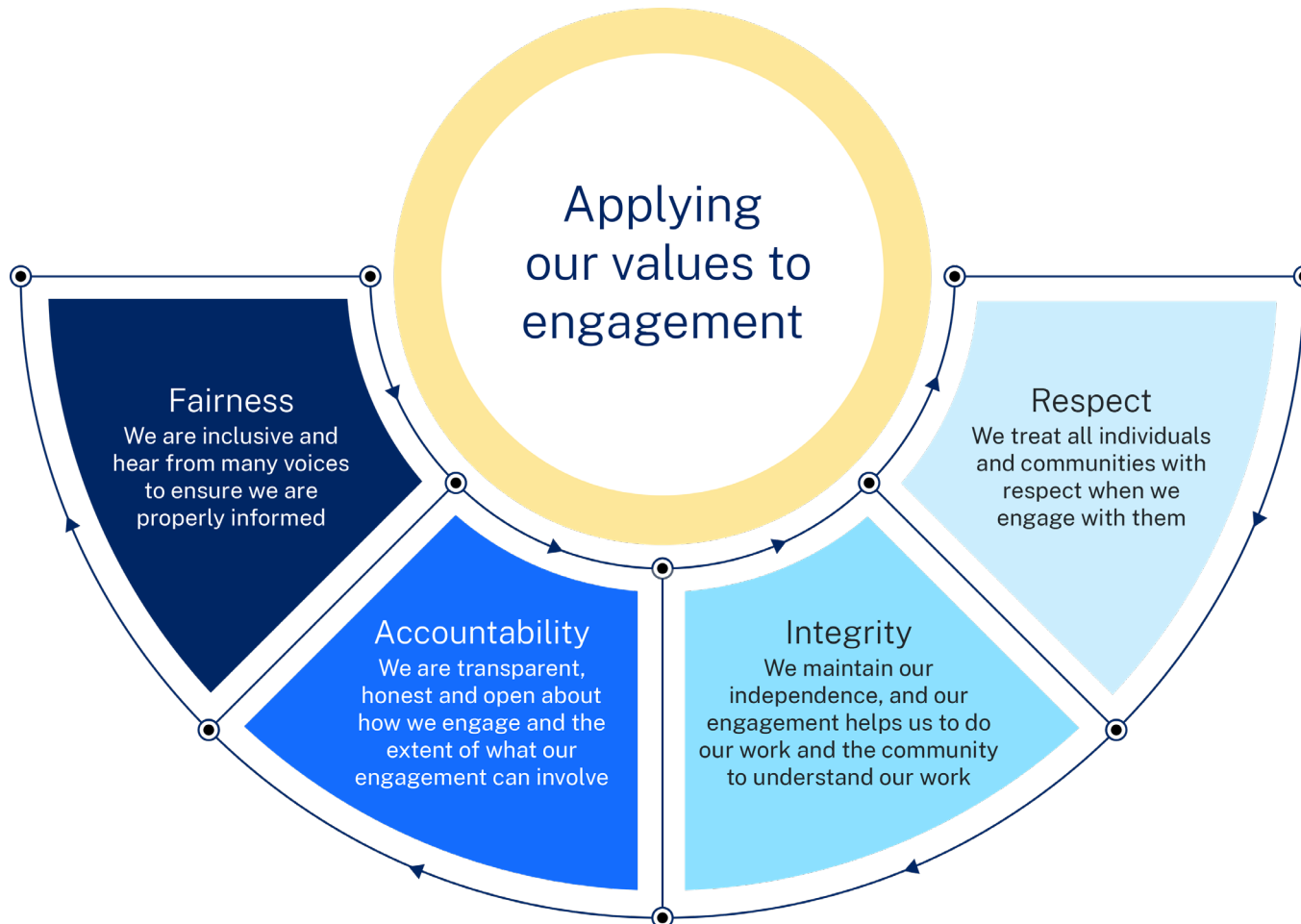
We also complete research projects and investigations that focus on systemic misconduct and maladministration issues, such as conduct or practices that might be unreasonable or unlawful, to help the NSW Police Force prevent this from occurring.

In some instances, we may be asked by Parliament to review and report about the way certain police powers are used.



Principled engagement

Our core values guide the way we work. They influence our interactions with Commission staff, the organisations we oversight and the public of NSW. This includes those who raise concerns about law enforcement organisations, as well as groups representing different parts of the NSW community.



Our relationships

The Commission is an independent integrity agency. We are empowered by legislation to do the work we do.

We are part of the NSW public service. We receive our funding from the NSW Treasury and we abide by the NSW public sector values and rules. We are independent of the NSW Police Force and the NSW Crime Commission, and their Ministers.

We can report to those law enforcement agencies directly about the issues we identify and our recommendations for how those issues should be addressed.

Where it is in the public interest, we report publicly about our work. We report directly to Parliament - we do this by presenting our report to the NSW Parliament via the Presiding Officers, namely the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and the President of the Legislative Council, along with a recommendation that the report be made public.

The following page outlines our key stakeholders.



The NSW Police Force and the NSW Crime Commission

These are the organisations that we oversight. We also listen to the unions that represent the employees from these organisations.



The NSW Parliament

We report publicly through Parliament. Our performance and our reports are reviewed by a Parliamentary Joint Committee.



Inspector of the LECC

This independent organisation oversees our work and handles any complaints that may be made about us.



Complainants

People who complain about the conduct of the NSW Police Force or the NSW Crime Commission, whether they make their complaint to the Commission directly, or to the NSW Police Force or the NSW Crime Commission.



The public

People who have an interest in knowing that law enforcement operates with integrity.



Community stakeholder organisations

These are organisations that represent different communities in NSW that might interact with police. They encompass both government and non-government entities, such as legal organisations, advocates for specific crime victims, and groups that represent and advocate for people with particular demographic characteristics.



Experts and advocates

Those with professional interests in the criminal justice system, including academics and professional associations.



Other integrity agencies

Agencies which do similar work in other jurisdictions, so we can share knowledge and learn from each other about how to strengthen integrity and anti-corruption.

What community engagement means for us

Our Community Engagement Strategy captures the way we engage with the public, community stakeholder organisations and experts, and advocate organisations.

Community engagement involves working with individuals or groups from different parts of the community that may have come into contact with law enforcement organisations and expect them to operate with integrity. The group may be based on geography and represent different regions of NSW. They might represent a certain demographic category such as age, cultural background, gender or sexuality. They could also have a particular experience such as a mental health crisis or domestic violence.

Why is community engagement important?

Community engagement helps the Commission to:

- keep informed about the issues that stakeholder organisations and community groups consider important in relation to law enforcement integrity
- understand the experiences of different groups and individuals in their interactions with law enforcement agencies in NSW
- decide how we should prioritise our limited resources so we can respond to the issues that are important to the community
- demonstrate our impact and build public trust in law enforcement integrity by the work we are doing and the outcomes we have achieved
- be informed by the expertise, knowledge and lived experience of others in the community.

How community engagement differs from complaint management

We use community engagement to hear about emerging issues that may not have been the subject of a complaint. We use it to hear from groups in the community who may not regularly complain, but who may have regular interactions with law enforcement.

We engage with the NSW Police Force and the NSW Crime Commission daily as we undertake our work. We also engage with complainants who complain about the NSW Police Force or NSW Crime Commission. This may take place if we need more information, or to let a complainant know when we have concluded a formal investigation under Part 6 of the *Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016* (NSW).

Communicating about us and listening to you

We use different types of engagement to make sure the public of NSW know about our work. This helps us to understand what communities think is important to law enforcement integrity.

Our engagement activities may include:¹



¹ This engagement draws from the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation: Spectrum (iap2.org.au)

Protecting information and maintaining our independence

We aim to engage with community in a way that is transparent. This is balanced against the need to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of sensitive information we use to oversight complaints and investigate serious misconduct.

As a result, we may be limited in what we can share with any stakeholder organisations or experts that we engage with. At times we must limit what we can say publicly about our work – especially if it involves an ongoing investigation, an individual’s complaint, or information about the way the NSW Police Force or Crime Commission operate.

Where there is a public interest in sharing information about our work, we will do so. Our community engagement must also fit alongside this important role of protecting sensitive information.

Further information about how we work to protect information is available on our [website](#).

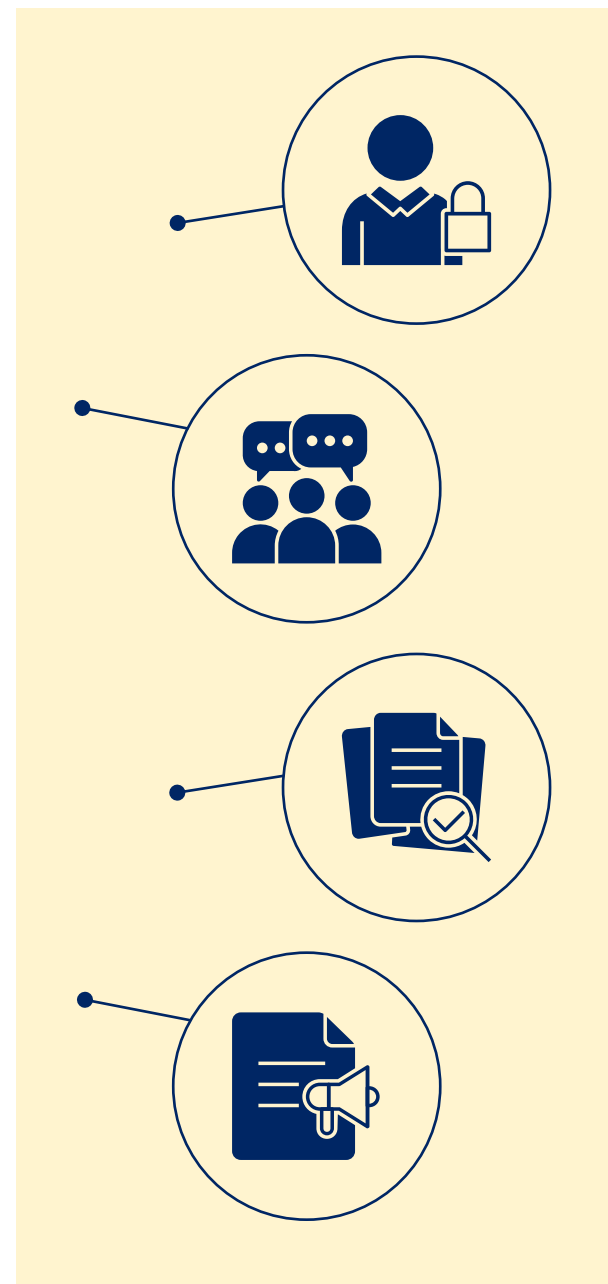
Consultation is an important way for us to hear about community concerns and learn from the expertise of community stakeholders. At the same time, the Commission will always evaluate information and reach conclusions independently.

Communicating about us and listening to you

When we do our work, we may impact change through:

- our dialogue with the NSW Police Force, NSW Crime Commission and community stakeholders
- requesting or requiring police to investigate particular misconduct issues
- our recommendations to the NSW Police Force and NSW Crime Commission about issues on individual matters, as well as systemic issues that relate to many police or different community groups
- drawing public attention to important integrity issues through our reports and engagement activities.

Unlike courts, we cannot make binding decisions on the NSW Police Force or the NSW Crime Commission.



How we engage with communities

Telling the community about our work

We communicate to communities in NSW about our work by:

- publicising our work on our website and social media
- giving presentations at conferences and events
- hosting meetings and working groups with community stakeholder organisations
- holding public examinations about some matters of public interest and publishing transcripts or recordings of those examinations on our website.

Hearing from the community

We create opportunities to hear from the community by:

- holding meetings, working groups or forums with community stakeholder organisations or sectors of the public
- asking for submissions from external stakeholder organisations or the public on specific projects we are doing
- considering submissions that are unilaterally provided from external stakeholder organisations.



Priority engagement

There are many different communities and stakeholders we will engage with under this strategy. Some of our engagement will be prompted by issues arising from community groups and stakeholders, while other engagement opportunities will be promoted by different projects and priorities.

We aim to prioritise contact with the following communities in 2024–2026:

- First Nations communities
- people who experience a mental health crisis
- communities in regional areas
- university centres that focus on law and criminology.

How to make an engagement request

Community groups and stakeholders wishing to engage with the Commission can email us at **engage@lecc.nsw.gov.au**

Please provide details about your organisation and the purpose of the engagement.

Visit our engagement webpage on our [website](#).



Our action plan

This action plan sets out some of the proposed engagement activities we aim to do in 2024–2026.

Community	Engagement activity	Why engaging with this community is important to us
The public	Improve transparency and accessibility of information on the Commission’s public website.	We want to build public awareness and trust in our work and in the integrity of law enforcement in NSW.
	Explain the work of the Commission in different formats, including videos, social media posts and fact sheets that summarise our larger reports.	We want to expand the reach of our work so more people understand what we do.
	Broaden our communications to languages other than English.	We recognise the diversity of our population and want our communication to be accessible.
First Nations people and communities	Work with a mix of internal and external stakeholders to implement a Reconciliation Action Plan.	We want to strengthen and build the knowledge and cultural competency of Commission staff.
	Engage with First Nations communities about our work.	The work of the Commission and others over the past 5 years shows that First Nations people are significantly over-represented in interactions with NSW police. It is important that we work to reduce this disproportion where possible. We want to build awareness and trust in our work among First Nations people, and in the integrity of law enforcement in NSW.
	Share data about the complaints that are made by First Nations people within that community.	We want to help communities to understand how the police complaint system works. Where we can, we want to share data about what the complaint system tells us. We want to hear from First Nations communities about what works well and what their concerns are, so we can support positive engagement with law enforcement and address any concerns through our work.

Community	Engagement activity	Why engaging with this community is important to us
First Nations people and communities	Identify opportunities to work with other government organisations that work with First Nations people, as well as Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to build our engagement.	Working with organisations that have established connections with First Nations communities is an effective way to build our engagement. We want to make sure we partner effectively to work towards common goals such as the NSW Government Closing the Gap Implementation Plan.
Regional communities	Participate in regional outreach programs to present our work and hear from different communities. Work with other integrity bodies and government agencies to identify opportunities for regional outreach.	While we are based in Sydney, our work looks at issues across NSW. We want to ensure we are visible across the state and hear from people in different geographical locations. Where we can share expertise and resources with similar agencies, the community benefits.
University centres which focus on law and criminology	Present our work at conferences and other events. Seek submissions to our work when appropriate. Continue to identify opportunities to engage with these stakeholders.	These stakeholders do work relating to the criminal justice system and administrative law, which intersect with our work. Increasing understanding of our work and its impact may help us to identify opportunities to share and build knowledge and expertise or to collaborate in research. We welcome considered input from experts which can help us understand issues in more detail or from different perspectives. We are open to considering new ways to draw on the expertise of these stakeholders. We also want to demonstrate our impact to others who work in fields that might draw upon our work.
People experiencing a mental health crisis	Identify opportunities to increase our understanding of the experiences of people who experience a mental health crisis and their interactions with police.	We want to build public awareness and trust in our work and in the integrity of law enforcement in NSW. We welcome considered input from stakeholder organisations that can help us understand interactions between police and those experiencing a mental health crisis.

Community	Engagement activity	Why engaging with this community is important to us
Professional organisations and the legal fraternity	In 2022–23, we created an external legal sector reference group with quarterly meetings called the LECC Legal Stakeholders Group. The group provides a quarterly forum for us to inform the group of our research and to hear from represented community groups and stakeholders about issues they have identified in law enforcement integrity.	These experts and advocates help us to capture the insights into public trust and confidence in NSW law enforcement, from stakeholders that represent clients who interact with the NSW Police Force.
	Present our work to judicial officers.	Judicial officers often interact with police and make decisions that impact on police work. We may be able to show judicial officers how police implement some of the decisions they make, such as dealing with bail conditions.
Complainants	Survey complainants about the way we do our work.	Understanding how we are perceived by those who use the complaints system can help us to strengthen our processes.
Other integrity agencies	Participate in working groups and meetings to share expertise and training opportunities for staff.	Sharing expertise with other organisations that do similar work is a resourceful way to develop our staff.
Young people	Create a strategy to ensure young people are aware of the Commission and how to engage in the complaints system.	We want to build public awareness and trust in our work and in the integrity of law enforcement in NSW.
Culturally and linguistically diverse groups	Create a strategy to ensure culturally and linguistically diverse groups are aware of the Commission and how to engage in the complaints system.	We want to build public awareness and trust in our work and in the integrity of law enforcement in NSW.
LGBTQIA+ groups	Create a strategy to ensure LGBTQIA+ groups are aware of the Commission and how to engage in the complaints system.	We want to build public awareness and trust in our work and in the integrity of law enforcement in NSW.

How we keep track of engagement activities

Community engagement is undertaken across the Commission by executive staff including the Commissioners, other staff from different divisions and Community Engagement Officers.

We are strengthening the way we keep track of what we learn in our engagement activities and identify those parts of the community that we need to engage with.

Our Executive Committee will periodically review the engagement activities we have carried out in different aspects of our work.

As we build our strategic intelligence capacity, it can help us to identify opportunities for engagement with different parts of the community.

Community engagement can inform the other work we do, such as projects, investigations, and the way we direct our resources to explore or tackle particular issues.

How we report about our engagement

This kind of engagement helps us to understand misconduct and integrity issues within law enforcement from a range of perspectives. We aim to be transparent about the way we engage with the community and publish information about our current engagement activities in our Annual Report.

We are keen to explore how we can engage with communities across the state. Our action plan highlights some of the ways we plan to do this over 2024-2026.

More information

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