Australian Government
Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations

ORIC: What have we achieved

November 2026

Registrar's word

This report shows my office has had another busy 12 months. For a small office of 42 full-time equivalent staff, I am proud of what we've achieved.

ORIC's regulatory approach is outlined in its Regulatory Compliance Framework. ORIC's regulatory approach sets out our response to corporations based on their attitudes towards complying with the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006* (CATSI Act). It says that to support corporations self-regulate, we will provide training and education and release explanatory information, among other types of support. This report shows ORIC's strong commitment to building the capacity of boards and members to self-regulate.

The introduction of ORIC's new online training platform is a significant addition to our training program. Allowing people to undertake training in their own time makes our training more accessible. I am excited to see people enrolling and completing the online training modules. I encourage people interested in the modules to start one!

We have also continued our focus on reviewing and revising existing guidance materials as well as releasing new materials to help boards understand their responsibilities under the CATSI Act. We have expanded our materials to help members understand and exercise their rights. I see the capacity of members to exercise their rights and boards to appropriately respond to member concerns as fundamental to well-governed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations.

At the other end of ORIC's regulatory approach is its enforcement response, including actions such as investigations, prosecutions, deregistrations, winding up and disqualifications. You can read in this report, we have not shied away from enforcement action in the past 12 months. And just as we have shown a commitment to supporting corporations that are doing the right thing, I have shown I have limited tolerance for those corporations that demonstrate an attitude of wilful or deliberate non-compliance.

Over the past 12 months we have observed an increasing number of corporations that are potentially trading insolvent or whose solvency is at risk. This risk increases when members and directors of a corporation abandon it.

Whether you are a member or director of a corporation, you have a responsibility to be engaged, know and understand your obligations, to exercise your rights responsibly and to meet any requirements diligently. If you cannot do this – as either a member or director – I encourage you to review your position. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations that fail undermine public confidence in the sector as a whole. They also fail those that they are set up to serve.

ORIC will soon be sending out its annual corporation survey to get feedback on its services, systems, guidance and other materials. Not only do we report the survey results publicly but we use them to improve. I encourage all corporations to complete the survey and inform our commitment to continuous improvement.

Training opportunities for corporations

ORIC has added a new training offering since November 2025 by releasing a new online learning platform, ORIC learn, on 30 June 2026. There are currently 7 modules available on ORIC learn as set out in Table 1.

Financial literacy was prioritised in the first tranche of modules released.

As of 31 October 2026, the 'Rights of members' module has the highest completions followed closely by the 'Finance: Basics' module.

Table 1: Online training modules

Module	In Progress	Completed
Budgeting	19	17
Finance basics	8	26
Financial board papers	15	7
Financial delegations	3	6
Governing an RNTBC	31	4
Rights of members	18	28
Workplace sexual harassment	1	8

ORIC will be releasing 2 additional modules soon on 'Understanding conflicts of interest' and 'Related party benefits'.

ORIC has also collaborated with the Fair Work Ombudsman to include its module on 'Workplace sexual harassment' in ORIC learn.

ORIC introduced reporting webinars to its suite of virtual training sessions to show participants how to lodge their reports in myCorp – ORIC's online corporation portal. ORIC has held 5 webinars with 45 attendees up until 31 October 2026.

Training needs analysis

In March 2026 ORIC surveyed corporations about their training needs to inform its annual training program. ORIC received 74 responses to the survey. There was a strong preference among respondents for in-person training. The preferred states, regions and cities/towns for in-person training are set out in the table below.

Table 2: Location preferences from training survey

State/ territory	Region	City/town
Queensland	Northern Queensland	Cairns Hopevale
Western Australia	South West and Perth metro Kimberley	Perth
Northern Territory	Arnhem Land and Groote Eylandt	Groote Eylandt

Since November 2025 ORIC has delivered 5 training workshops to individual corporations.

None of those corporations were exiting special administration.

ORIC has also undertaken 8 rule book workshops.

Civil prosecution outcome

Following an 8 month investigation, ORIC sought the civil prosecution of a former director of Nguurruumungu Indigenous Corporation (ICN 7592). The Federal Court of Australia found the director had breached his duties as a director under the CATSI Act. Consequently, after finding he used his director position to authorise payments for personal benefit, he was:

- disqualified from managing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporation for 5 years
- ordered to pay a $200,000 penalty
- ordered to repay Nguurruumungu Indigenous Corporation $482,478.

Insolvency concerns

As highlighted before, ORIC is observing an increasing number of corporations at risk of trading insolvent or trading as insolvent. This is resulting in a higher number of requests from members and directors seeking the appointment of a special administrator.

ORIC has updated the special administration content on its website to explain why the Registrar may not appoint a special administrator to a corporation that is, or is at risk of, trading insolvent.

ORIC has also added this as a new type of risk to its strategic risk framework. Proposed treatments at this stage include designing a new process to manage insolvency concerns as well as considering a targeted project to detect corporations at risk of insolvency.

2026 Regulatory Posture

For 2026, ORIC's annual priorities included:

- providing resources for boards on the rights and expectations of CEOs and their obligations as an employer
- corporations meeting the related party benefit requirements of the CATSI Act
- winding up corporations that hold assets, are non-compliant and are no longer serving the interests of their members and community
- ensuring boards are able to support members to exercise their rights
- a sector focus on corporations that are delivering municipal services.

To give effect to these priorities, ORIC has:

- developed an online learning module on related party benefits – due for release shortly
- released an online learning module on members' rights
- commenced winding up proceedings against 4 corporations in the Court
- included corporations delivering municipal services in ORIC's rolling program of examinations
- released new information on its website about the roles and responsibilities of boards and CEOs.

Registrar-initiated deregistration program

Each year, ORIC undertakes a bulk Registrar-initiated deregistration program. This program typically targets small, disengaged corporations. This year ORIC also targeted medium, disengaged corporations. In 2026, a total of 494 corporations were deregistered in bulk; of which, 469 were small corporations and 25 were medium corporations.

The CATSI Act says the Registrar can deregister corporations if:

- the corporation has not lodged its reports to ORIC within 6 months after the date it was due; and
- the corporation has not lodged any other documents in the last 18 months; and
- the Registrar has no reason to believe that the corporation is carrying on business.

We are currently exploring regulatory options for a further 162 corporations but do not rule out deregistration.

External guidance materials

Guidance materials are useful to corporations to help them understand and meet the requirements of the CATSI Act. Since November 2025, ORIC has released:

- a new model rule book corporations can use to help them decide their governance rules, and as the basis for their own corporation rule book
- guidance outlining the pathways available to boards to help resolve disputes
- 11 new position statements setting out the Registrar's views on aspects of the CATSI Act.

Some of these materials were developed to address common queries received by ORIC, including new position statements on:

- members' rights
- Registrar-initiated general meetings
- director IDs
- permission to deny a members' request for a general meeting
- change of officer forms.

ORIC released a guide on the information available on the public Register of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporations. The guide can be used by members, directors as well as other stakeholders such as funding bodies to understand and interpret the information on the public register and other public information sources.

ORIC also improved guidance on its website about a number of topics, including payments to directors. A common enquiry or concern is about whether payments to directors need to be approved by members. The CATSI Act requires remuneration to be approved by members, such as sitting fees. However, the CATSI Act says the payment or reimbursement of director expenses does not require member approval.

Other topics that were improved were: resolving financial difficulties, dealing with insolvency, finding an auditor, winding up and regulatory actions.

Making materials easier to understand

ORIC has been reviewing its policy statements resulting in some being retired or updated. Those policy statements being retired are being replaced with updated, easy to find web content and/or a position statement.

ORIC replaced policy statements with clearer, easier to understand web content for:

- registering, deregistering and reinstating corporations
- examinations and special administrations
- RNTBC fees
- suspending members and directors
- internal reviews of ORIC decisions
- alternative reporting
- whistleblower reports
- directors' delegation of authority/ powers to others
- corporation names.

Introduction of a new whistleblower process

In 2026, ORIC introduced a new process for managing whistleblower disclosures. This involved the creation of a new mailbox to record whistleblower disclosures, the development of a new internal standard operating procedure and an update of ORIC's web content.

Internal guidance materials and training

ORIC has continued its focus during 2026 to build the capability of its staff. Since November 2025, ORIC held 17 training sessions for all staff including on system enhancements and new and revised standard operating procedures. One training session was jointly delivered by the Fair Work Commission and the Fair Work Ombudsman to help ORIC staff better direct people with employment concerns to the right agency.

Nine new standard operating procedures were released in 2026. ORIC also introduced a new type of interim guidance product to address urgent matters requiring clarification; of which 2 have been released.

In response to staff feedback, revisions were made to 5 standard operating procedures to clarify and add instructions as well as to change some processes.

myCorp support and enhancements

Since November 2025, ORIC has made changes to myCorp to improve its functionality for users and make it easier for ORIC staff to help users navigate the system, including:

- changes to allow corporations to lodge all their required reports in the one single lodgement
- enabling ORIC staff to provide real-time on-screen assistance to online users
- simplified log-in/sign-up screens improving user experience.

ORIC has released 5 task cards to help users navigate myCorp. These task cards relate to:

- lodging a change of officer form
- updating the corporation's list of members
- advising ORIC of people who the board have delegated powers to

- lodging annual reports
- applying for an exemption.

Changes to ORIC's report of concern process

Like other government entities, ORIC has been observing an increasing number of reports of concern drafted using AI. Often these types of reports are repetitive, lengthy and unclear as to the nature of the person's concerns. This can make it time consuming for ORIC staff, and more importantly, makes it difficult to identify and respond to the matters being raised. To this end, ORIC updated its report of concern policy to say that it may not consider reports of concern that show characteristics of being AI generated.

ORIC also updated its report of concern policy to say that it will not consider reports of concern that are more than 3 pages in length (excluding attachments).

Improved processing and response times

Table 3 shows ORIC has improved its average processing times for enquiries, change of officer forms and registration applications. Average processing time for general reports has remained stable while processing time for other reports and rule book change requests has increased.

Table 3: Average processing times

	31 Mar 25 – 31 Oct 2025	1 Nov 2025 – 31 Oct 2026
Enquiries	3.82 days	1.63 days
Rule book change	10.39 days	11.19 days
Change of officers form	1.21 days	0.9 days
General report	<1 day	<1 day
Other reports	3.29 days	3.83 days
Registration application	15.47 days	12.29 days

Note: ORIC released a new CRM on 31 March 2025 which is why the 2025 comparison year starts then.

ORIC's call centre answering rate has improved from an average of 82% for the period of 1 November 2024 to 31 October 2025 to 95% for the period of 1 November 2025 to 31 October 2026.

More corporations are lodging their reports and holding their AGMs on-time

The CATSI Act does not require corporations to tell ORIC they've held their annual general meeting (AGM). ORIC has added fields to myCorp so corporations can record if, and when, they held their AGM. This will help us monitor whether there is a year-on-year improvement to corporations holding their AGMs on-time.

As previously reported, the report lodgement rate for 2024-25 reports was disappointing with only 29% of corporations having lodged their reports by 31 December 2025. ORIC has implemented a reporting compliance campaign aimed at improving lodgement rates for 2025-26 reports.

Included in this campaign was the release of reporting reminders, a targeted communication campaign, reminders published on ORIC's website and myCorp, as well as the introduction of webinars to show people how to lodge their reports in myCorp.

ORIC is monitoring reporting compliance on a weekly basis.

Corporation survey and performance reports

We are preparing to release our annual survey of corporations to inform our February performance report. The results of last year's survey was presented in our February 2026 report, *What's been the impact*. Not only does ORIC report on the survey results, it uses the responses in its day-to-day work.

Responses to last year's survey were used to inform which online training modules to prioritise for development. Responses also helped shape priorities for system and public register enhancements as well as the development of guidance materials.

Complementing our performance reports are the state of the sector reports we release in April and September, which provide a snapshot of information about corporations. These are available on ORIC's website.

Providing information about the CATSI Act and ORIC to stakeholders

In ORIC's *2024-27 Corporate Plan* it sets out a pathway to increase understanding and awareness of the CATSI Act. It says that ORIC will do this through its annual corporation survey and performance reporting described previously. Also, through participation on panels and attendance at forums.

Since November 2026, the Registrar has participated in a range of forums to build understanding and awareness of the CATSI Act and the role of ORIC, including forums hosted by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand and the National Regulators Community of Practice.