

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday, 23 October 2023

First Nations Director Scholarship Program Applications Open

The Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) is pleased to announce the First Nations Director Scholarship Program is now open for applications.

This exciting new national initiative is aimed at developing a pipeline of Indigenous directors with the skills and capability to take up board appointments in First Nations and non-First Nations organisations across the country.

The \$1-million program is funded by the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) and will see 135 governance scholarships delivered over three years from 2024.

Minister for Indigenous Australians Linda Burney said: "This is a ground breaking program to boost the representation of First Nations people in boardrooms across the country.

"The First Nations Director Scholarship Program will offer 135 Indigenous leaders from the community sector an exciting opportunity to advance their career.

"Importantly, the world-class training will also help develop Australia's Indigenous director pipeline."

For the inaugural round, AICD is partnering with the Australian Indigenous Governance Institute (AIGI) to support 45 senior leaders in the First-Nations community-controlled sector who are ready to step into governance roles.

Participants will have access to world-class governance education as well as a program of culturally relevant and community-informed mentoring and workshops.

Successful applicants will undertake AICD's highly regarded Foundations of Directorship for Indigenous Organisations course, learning the fundamentals of the boardroom and building their knowledge of the duties and responsibilities of boards and directors.

AICD Managing Director and CEO Mark Rigotti said: "This is a new collaborative model for us in the First Nations sector, which combines the AICD's formal governance education with AIGI's mentoring and immersive workshop program.

"The AICD is excited to be launching this concept on a national scale and we look forward to working with leaders in the First Nations sector to build their capacity and gain the necessary skills to step into boardroom roles.

"This is a groundbreaking initiative for the AICD and we thank the NIAA for its backing of such a significant program."

The Australian Institute of Company Directors is committed to strengthening society through world-class governance. We aim to be the independent and trusted voice of governance, building the capability of a community of leaders for the benefit of society. Our membership of over 50,000 includes directors and senior leaders from business, government and the not-for-profit sectors.

Each scholarship includes a one-year membership to the AICD as well as accommodation and subsidised travel to attend the AICD course in a capital city.

AIGI will pair participants with seasoned company directors for a 12-month mentoring program and a series of workshops and peer-led activities.

AIGI CEO Jess Bulger said: "This program will add to a generation of Indigenous leaders who are building culturally and community-informed governance practice into their leadership style. We recognise that meaningful learning happens beyond the classroom and are excited to contribute a program of mentoring and workshops to help bring that learning to life."

The First Nations Director Scholarship Program supports the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and the Federal Government's commitment to building a strong and sustainable First Nations community-controlled sector that delivers high quality services to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

First Nations directors and committee members of peak organisations across the country are invited to apply.

Applications are open from Monday 23 October to Sunday 26 November.

Go to the [AICD website](#) for further details and to apply online.

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The Australian Indigenous Governance Institute (AIGI) is an Indigenous-led organisation that supports First Nations organisations and communities to strengthen sustainable systems of self-governance. Visit www.aigi.org.au