

**First Nations Funders Network**  
Terms of Reference

This document outlines expectations for PA funder members who nominate to join the First Nations Funders Network. By agreeing to the terms laid out in this document, funders commit to being part of meaningful change for First Nations peoples of Australia.

**1. Background**

The Philanthropy Australia (PA) First Nations Funders Network was established in 1999 as the Indigenous Affinity Group. It is a network of philanthropists that fund Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples organisations and programs and has historically been the largest of PA's national peer networks. In their current iteration at PA, peer networks come together two to three times per year in person and online to hear from experts and learn from one another. In 2019, PA made the strategic decision to seek Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership for this group and the inaugural Co-Chairs were Rick Macourt, Gumbaynggirr man, and Adele Peek, Yawuru/Bunuba woman.

Continuing this leadership, in 2023, Adrian Appo OAM, Gureng Gureng man and Leah Armstrong, Torres Strait Islander woman, agreed to lead as Co-Chairs and shape the strategic direction and programming of the First Nations Funders Network. Adrian Appo has since had to step down from his commitment as Co-Chair and Leah Armstrong will continue as Chair of this network in 2024.

**2. Purpose**

To activate a movement in philanthropy that fosters better giving, meaningfully supports, and respectfully partners with First Nations organisations and communities.

**3. Principles**

This network is guided by the International Funders for Indigenous Peoples' (IFIP) 5R principles: Respect, Relationships, Responsibility, Reciprocity and Redistribution, alongside key principles that embrace the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP):

- dedicated to **shifting power**,
- **mobilising resources**, and
- **build reciprocal partnerships** that amplify First Nations voices (leadership) and to support the self-determination and rights of Indigenous Peoples.

These principles emphasise building and sustaining respectful relationships, honouring self-determination, earning trust, and focusing on shared interests and goals.

#### **4. Commitment as a member of this network**

The Chair has made a commitment to lead the funders network, and ask members to commit to:

- Distributing funds to First Nations communities or First Nations-led and controlled programs within the next 12 months.
- Anonymous, de-identified self-reporting on levels of funding, providing aggregated baseline data for the network and the wider philanthropic sector. This will allow for the measurement of both the network and sector improvement in more and better giving over time.
- Progress towards embracing the principles of this network.
- Attend meetings; listen, share and learn
- Ensure financial resources, Board and/or staffing resources are put behind:
  - capability-building in your organisation, e.g., around cultural awareness training for staff and/or Directors, investments; more and better giving. e.g., engaging First Nations people to inform or lead decision making processes
- Be willing to be open and transparent.

#### **5. Meetings**

The network will meet approximately four times a year. Dates will be circulated the previous year and members of the network are expected to attend all meetings if possible. Meetings won't be recorded. However, notes and presentations will be shared with members as appropriate and agreed upon.