

**First Nations Funders Network
Terms of Reference FAQs**

Question 1 – We have yet to formally finalise our strategy, and our future granting decisions need to be approved by the board. Can we still commit to the Terms of Reference?

The First Nations Funders Network is for funders with a strong intent to give to First Nations led communities and First Nations-led and controlled programs. If this is highly likely, but the distributions have yet to officially be signed off by your board, you can still be part of the group.

You now have until 24th of October to sign the Terms of Reference document.

We also understand some foundations may have recently changed their giving priorities to include a specific focus on First Nations but are yet to identify how. We encourage these foundations to participate in the First Nations Funders Network but make a commitment to implement their giving practices/strategy within the next 12 months.

Question 2 – To be part of the First Nations Funders Network, do we need to commit to increasing our giving to First Nations communities or First Nations-led and controlled programs?

The purpose of the Network is to foster better giving and meaningfully supports to First Nations communities and organisations. This may include increased giving and/or better giving practices and support. We are asking members to commit to these objectives.

Some confusion has come from the original wording in the Terms of Reference. We will seek to clarify that wording to avoid confusion.

Also, the self reporting survey being prepared is to measure de-identified, aggregated data. It is not and will not be used to check up on individual foundations and their distributions over time.

Question 3 – What is the self-reporting survey for, and what information will it ask?

The invitation to commit to self-reporting data is to create a “baseline” level of information on the level of giving to First Nations communities from Philanthropy Australia members. It will measure the collective effort over time and be used to see how philanthropy is performing overall in the years to come.

Importantly, it is not to monitor or check that the individual foundation levels of giving to First Nations communities are increasing.

The survey questions and design is yet to be determined, however we are seeking data to understand:

- The total amount of funds given to First Nations communities and First Nations-led and controlled programs.
- The percentage of funds given to First Nations communities and First Nations-led and controlled programs.

Plus, other information including:

- First Nations representation at a staff and governance level
- Investments by members in capability-building such as cultural awareness training, resources for staff and board, etc.

In designing the survey, we will seek input into the appropriate level of detail being asked.

Question 4 – Will the information in the survey be deidentified and where will the data be held?

Yes, all data will be de-identified. It will be held by a specialised data company, not internally by Philanthropy Australia.

Question 5 – Due to privacy concerns, I may only be able to complete some of the survey questions or need to provide information separately in an appropriate manner. Is that ok?

Yes, we know philanthropy often works in high levels of sensitivity. Please contact us if you have any concerns. We will work to find a way for you to contribute as much as appropriate.

Question 6 – Will the information be shared just within the network or publicly?

Publicly. It is our intention for the survey to be sent to all Philanthropy Australia members, as well as the First Nations Funders Network members. A report with aggregated and deidentified data is planned to be released publicly, in Q3 or Q4 of 2024.

Question 7 – Can “investment or give” include non-cash support such as volunteering, fundraising assistance, procurement, or pro bono support?

No. While all these areas (and more) are important levels of support and may be captured in the survey in various ways, for the purposes of identifying the level of philanthropic funds going to First Nations communities, these “non cash” contributions do not count as “invest or give”.

Question 8 – In the context of a small organisation that doesn't employ staff, what does a commitment to capability building look like?

Investing in capability-building in this context can mean a range of things and is flexible depending on your circumstances. It can mean:

- Cultural awareness training or experiences for Directors.
- Cultural awareness training or experience for staff.
- Engaging First Nations people to inform or lead decision making processes.
- Actively participating in the First Nations Funders Network or other First Nations focussed seminars/networks
- Joining or participating with International Funders of Indigenous People (IFIP)

This commitment aligns to the principles of building understanding and capability to shifting power, mobilizing resources, and building reciprocal partnerships that amplify First Nations voices (leadership) and to support the self-determination and rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Version control

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