

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **Developing a First Nations director pipeline**

The Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) is proud to announce the launch of the First Nations Director Scholarship Program, a new national initiative aimed at developing Australia's Indigenous director pipeline.

The AICD's ambition to develop a targeted program for First Nations leaders has been accelerated by a \$1 million grant provided by the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), which will facilitate the delivery of governance training to 135 First Nations leaders over the coming three years.

The program will be delivered in partnership with the Australian Indigenous Governance Institute (AIGI) and The Observership Program and is an exciting opportunity for the AICD to collaborate with these organisations, to provide effective and culturally appropriate training that delivers world class governance education and mentoring.

Scholarships will be awarded to Indigenous leaders in the community-controlled sector who have been nominated for their potential to transition into senior leadership roles including executive, c-suite and board positions.

AICD Managing Director and CEO Mark Rigotti said this was a groundbreaking program for the AICD and acknowledged the NIAA for its endorsement of such a significant initiative.

"This is a very important step in the AICD's stated ambition to increase the relevance and reach of our governance education and services for First Nations members and directors.

"We firmly believe it's through this type of program and especially with the strong emphasis on collaboration, that the AICD can make a serious and important contribution to increasing and advancing the level of First Nations representation in the boardrooms of Australia."

Delivery partner AIGI is an Indigenous-led organisation that supports First Nations organisations and communities to strengthen sustainable systems of self-governance.

AIGI CEO Jess Bulger said: "We're excited to be involved in this partnership with the AICD and the Observership Program to provide culturally empowering mentoring and learning experience to 135 First Nations leaders. It offers a valuable opportunity to grow the pipeline of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander talent across key sectors."

*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.*

Delivery partner The Observership Program places emerging leaders in non-voting board roles for a period of 12 months, providing a structured program to develop capability and experience in governance and contemporary directorship issues.

CEO Cathy Robinson said: "The Observership Program is delighted to partner with AICD and AIGI on this initiative. It will be a powerful tool to advance the capability and participation of First Nations directors in the governance of organisations throughout the community and society."

The First Nations Director Scholarship Program supports 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 across the country.

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