

MEDIA RELEASE

October 2026

New snapshot reveals untapped potential of First Nations Directors

The Australian Institute of Company Directors has released its inaugural First Nations Sector Snapshot 2026, providing a national picture of First Nations directorship across Australia.

This important new research shows that First Nations directors bring substantial governance, leadership and professional experience to boards across a range of sectors.

But there are significant gaps in the opportunities for First Nations directors to consolidate and advance their board careers, and First Nations representation on the boards of Australia's largest not for profit and listed companies remains extremely limited.

Only four of the 707 board positions on the ASX100 are held by identified First Nations directors - representing just 0.6 percent of all positions - even though more than two-thirds of the First Nations directors surveyed for the report said they were actively seeking commercial governance opportunities.

AICD Managing Director and CEO Mark Rigotti said the findings demonstrate that limited representation was not a reflection of the available talent.

"The report establishes an important baseline for understanding where progress has been made, where barriers remain, and where further action is needed.

"The AICD is committed to acting on this evidence and doing its part to help strengthen the governance pathways for First Nations directors and to ensure capable directors have genuine opportunities to contribute, influence decisions, and lead."

AICD First Nations Lead Justin Agale said the research challenged the idea that a lack of capability was preventing greater First Nations representation.

"There's a strong cohort of First Nations directors who are ready to contribute and want to be appointed and valued for the full breadth of their skills and experience, rather than approached simply to fill a designated seat.

"The task now is to make that existing talent more visible, recognised and connected with the opportunities and networks that exist across the wider commercial board landscape."

The Australian Institute of Company Directors Limited (AICD) is a not-for-profit organisation committed to strengthening society through world-class governance. A trusted voice in national policy creation and rollout, the AICD advocates for, informs and empowers those leading, influencing and shaping the future of contemporary governance. Its flagship Company Directors Course™ has been the gold standard in practical, real-world governance education for over 50 years - equipping leaders across all sectors with the skills and confidence to navigate complex boardroom challenges and lead their organisations with impact. The AICD is also home to the world's largest community of professionals committed to better governance for a better future. To learn more, visit aicd.com.au

Drawing on AICD membership and survey data, governance datasets and interviews with First Nations directors, the report examines:

- where First Nations directors currently serve
- the experience and skills they bring
- their motivations and governance aspirations
- the barriers affecting access to board opportunities, and
- actions that could strengthen governance pathways.

The First Nations Sector Snapshot identifies practical steps to improve access to commercial board opportunities, including the important role of recruiters and senior directors in drawing on broader networks during appointment processes and creating credible pathways for First Nations directors to gain commercial board experience.

Media Contact: Jane Braslin 0439 167 567