

# First Nations Leadership Council

## Terms of Reference



### Investment Dialogue for Australia's Children

The Investment Dialogue for Australia's Children is a collaboration between government and philanthropy to improve the wellbeing of children, young people, and their families, by working with communities to reduce intergenerational disadvantage in Australia.

This long-term commitment is based on a shared vision for an inclusive and equitable Australia where all children, families and communities can fulfil their potential.

A collaborative and long-term approach is needed to ensure all children and young people across Australia can fulfil their potential. We believe this requires a different way of working and strong, enduring partnerships between key stakeholders, including between communities, philanthropy and governments.

ARACY – The Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth provides the Strategic Convening function for the Investment Dialogue, and is responsible for working with partners across government, philanthropy, and community to develop the initiative.

### First Nations Leadership Council

The First Nations Leadership Council provides strategic advice and leadership to the Investment Dialogue for Australia's Children. This advice is based on the unique experiences, knowledges and stories of First Nations communities.

The First Nations Leadership Council will be one mechanism for bringing voices of lived experience to the Investment Dialogue and creating an opportunity for First Nations peoples and communities to contribute to the work of the Investment Dialogue initiative.

The First Nations Leadership Council is not intended to replace other consultation mechanisms already in place with government and philanthropic partners, including as relates to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and Early Years Strategy for example. Instead, the Leadership Council will provide a targeted opportunity to elevate First Nations perspectives on Investment Dialogue specific work and will link into broader discussions where appropriate without duplicating existing work.

## Role

The First Nations Leadership Council will:

- Provide a strong voice on how the Investment Dialogue initiative can best support and maximise opportunities for First Nations children, young people, families and communities.
  - This includes providing advice on areas Investment Dialogue partners should consider when making decisions regarding Investment Dialogue specific collaborations or projects.
  - It also includes contributing to discussions to promote an improved shared understanding on how different domains of power manifest and discussions on potential opportunities to address power imbalances as part of the new ways of working of the Investment Dialogue.
- Support the design and operation of processes to engage and consult First Nations communities (and their children), advocates, researchers, services providers and leaders to bring additional First Nations perspectives into the Investment Dialogue initiative.
- Advocate for and support the development and delivery of accountability processes to promote transparency and ensure information gathered and generated by the Investment Dialogue initiative is actively shared with communities to benefit First Nations children, young people, families and communities.
- Advise on how the operations of the Investment Dialogue initiative and its supporting governance arrangements can be culturally appropriate, and grounded in First Nations ways of knowing, being and doing.

## Partnering

The First Nations Leadership Council will partner with the Investment Dialogue's Community Leadership Council including by at least one joint meeting per year.

The First Nations Leadership Council will also work collaboratively with the Dialogue's governance groups as required, with the specific mechanisms to be determined and facilitated by the ARACY Strategic Convening team.

Philanthropic and government partners will be invited to attend Leadership Council meetings as determined by the Chair and/or members to ensure direct opportunities to hear from and connect with Investment Dialogue partners at least once a year, including in person opportunities where possible.

## Membership

The First Nations Leadership Council will comprise people who have stories to share and/or ideas from their own lived experience or professional experience of how we can improve the wellbeing of children, young people, families and communities.

The Council will comprise only Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander people. There will be a minimum of 8 and maximum of 12 members and recruitment can occur at any time to ensure participation.

The initial recruitment of Council members will occur through an Expression of Interest process. Membership will aim to provide opportunities to develop emerging leaders and reflect a geographic spread of diverse views Australia-wide.

## Commitment

Members are asked to commit to a minimum two-yearly consecutive term. Provisions will be put in place to ensure a smooth transition for members and stagger changes to ensure continuity.

Members will be required to attend at least three meetings per year. The Council will meet virtually, with the potential for at least one meeting to be in-person. Each meeting will be around three hours in duration. Travel costs will be covered through ARACY, as the Investment Dialogue's Strategic Convenor.

As well as attending meetings, members are expected to dedicate time to considering relevant issues and engaging with written materials ahead of meetings. There may also be additional opportunities for members to provide feedback and insights between meetings.

While not a requirement, there may also be opportunities to engage with other groups of the Investment Dialogue; for example, attending and presenting at Investment Dialogue Roundtables.

Honorarium payments will be offered to members for participation at the end of each calendar year.

## Chair

The inaugural Chair of the Council will be selected by ARACY as the Strategic Convenor in the initial establishment of the Council, for a two-year term. Future chairs will be nominated and elected by Leadership Council members by an agreed process.

## Decision-Making

The First Nations Leadership Council is a guiding and advisory body. All members will actively participate in the thinking, dialogue and design processes of the Council.

Members will declare actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest at the start of meetings. Members with a conflict of interest in relation to particular discussion topics

may be asked to absent themselves for the discussion or have their conflict recorded in any advice developed.

## Quorum

A quorum of no less than 50 per cent of members is required to hold a formal meeting of the First Nations Leadership Council. Individual or small groups of members may provide informal advice to Investment Dialogue members but that advice will not hold the authority of the Council.

## Convenor

As the Strategic Convenor of the Investment Dialogue, ARACY convenes and provides support for the First Nations Leadership Council.

The responsibilities of the convenor include:

- Distributing the agenda and papers two weeks prior to the meeting.
- Taking notes of proceedings and preparing minutes of the meeting.
- Following review and approval of the draft minutes by the Chair, distributing the approved minutes to all members.
- Tracking the actions arising from the Council meetings and conveying information to Investment Dialogue members.

## Disputes

In the event of a dispute or grievance arising within the First Nations Leadership Council, every effort will be made to resolve the grievance by negotiation. This will be facilitated by the Chair, or if the Chair is party to the grievance, another Leadership Council representative. If a dispute cannot be resolved via this process it will be resolved in accordance with ARACY's organisational grievance policy.

## Terms of Reference Review Process

The role of the First Nations Leadership Council is expected to evolve over time, to adapt to new information and priorities. These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually from the date of approval.

Approved: 11 June 2024

**FIRST NATIONS:** A person who is of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent, who identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and is accepted by the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community as such.