

First Nations Economic Partnership

First Nations Economic Partnership communiqué

The First Nations Economic Partnership (Economic Partnership) met for its sixth meeting on Ngunnawal and Ngambri Country in Canberra on 23 September 2026.

Partners acknowledged that 29 September 2026 will mark the first anniversary of the signing of the Partnership Agreement and reflected on the Economic Partnership's achievements to date, including the recent publication of the [2025–26 First Nations Economic Partnership Annual Update](#). Partners reaffirmed their commitment to practical reforms that advance First Nations economic empowerment.

First Nations Economic Framework

Partners noted progress in the development of the First Nations Economic Framework discussion paper and associated engagement strategy. Partners reiterated that meaningful engagement opportunities are central to enabling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities, and organisations to inform and shape the Framework.

The discussion paper is expected to be finalised and released for consultation in the coming weeks.

Employment and career pathways

Partners considered advice from the Employment and Career Pathways Working Group on the Economic Partnership's priority to grow secure employment and strengthen career pathways in the community-controlled sector. This advice included three proposals focused on:

- Strengthening school-to-work pathways through Aboriginal community-controlled registered training organisations and supported work placements.
- Supporting long-term unemployed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in non-remote areas through dedicated employment pathways.
- Growing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood education and care workforce.

Partners endorsed the three proposals and agreed they should be presented to Government for detailed design and funding consideration. Partners agreed Dr Josie Douglas and Professor Peter Yu, on behalf of the Economic Partnership Co-Chairs, will write to the Treasurer and Minister for Indigenous Australians as Accountable Ministers for the Economic Partnership to share the proposals and confirm their support for further work so that the proposals can be strongly positioned for future funding consideration.

Access to capital and institutional arrangements

Partners welcomed an update from the Access to Capital and Institutional Arrangements Working Group on advancing the Economic Partnership's priorities to improve First Nations access to finance and capital. As part of this work, engagement with banks, investors and philanthropy representatives has focused on:

- potential mechanisms to better connect First Nations projects and sources of finance,
- suitable capital products to support First Nations businesses and organisations, and
- opportunities to increase participation by private sector investors and financial institutions.

The Working Group will draw on these engagements to develop practical options for Partners to consider at the December 2026 meeting.

Partners also acknowledged the Minister for Finance's response to advice previously provided by the Economic Partnership on reforms to Commonwealth Specialist Investment Vehicles.

Indigenous Procurement Policy

Partners noted progress on [Indigenous Procurement Policy \(IPP\)](#) reforms and agreed to continue engagement on longer-term policy reform options. Partners also agreed to investigate a high-transparency approach to Mandatory Minimum Indigenous Participation Requirements, provided implementation remains practical and proportionate.

Australian Law Reform Commission Review of the Native Title Act

Partners noted the Australian Law Reform Commission review of the [Future Acts regime](#) under the Native Title Act 1993 and discussed its implications for economic empowerment, access to capital, compensation and future land-use negotiations.

Partners emphasised the importance of the reform process being undertaken consistent with the Priority Reforms in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, including meaningful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and maintaining a focus on reforms that strengthen the position of Native Title holders in economic development and decision-making processes.

Annual Workplan and emerging issues

Partners agreed the Operational Committee would update the Annual Workplan to reflect outcomes and emerging areas of focus discussed at the meeting.

Partners also discussed national standards for artificial intelligence infrastructure and data centres, recognising this as an emerging priority for the Economic Partnership. Partners agreed to an out-of-session briefing and to maintain visibility of broader government AI initiatives relevant to First Nations economic outcomes.

The next meeting of the Economic Partnership is scheduled for 2 December 2026.