



Call for Expressions of Interest – Indigenous Ranger Reference Group membership

The National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) is establishing an Indigenous Ranger Reference Group (IRRG) to contribute to strategic delivery of initiatives to support First Nations people to maintain distinctive spiritual, physical, cultural and economic relationship with Country.

The IRRG will:

- provide Indigenous-led guidance to finalise the Indigenous Ranger Sector Strategy following feedback received through consultation;
- provide direction on a National Action Plan to support the sector;
- develop the scope for a future Indigenous Ranger (or land and water management) sector body;
- provide advice and perspectives to inform the Indigenous Rangers Program expansion; and
- provide advice and perspectives to inform other strategic level initiatives relating to development and support of the Indigenous land and water management sector.

Further information on the Expression of Interest

Expressions of Interest (EOI) are called for seven to ten (7-10) members to sit on the IRRG who have significant expertise and / or experience in Indigenous land and water management.

Respondents to this EOI are to direct any questions or concerns regarding this EOI to irrg@niaa.gov.au.

The requirement

IRRG membership will require a broad range of expertise and experience in Indigenous land and water management. Members must have familiarity with the challenges and aspirations of Indigenous rangers or the demonstrated capacity to become familiar with these interests based on their current or past experiences. The membership is expected to bring diverse First Nations perspectives and leadership to support National level oversight and delivery of Indigenous ranger policy, strategy and programs, including the potential establishment of an industry body.

IRRG membership needs to include:

- expertise and experience in natural resource management/land and water/environment/ marine management



- geographical representation (including representation from both Native title-determined and non-determined areas)
- gender representation
- youth representation
- representation of knowledge of various ecosystems (e.g. desert, woodland, marine etc).

IRRG members are required to participate in their capacity as individuals, rather than as representatives of an organisation (with the exception of an IAC representative and the NIAA adviser). This is necessary to maximise the independence of advisory services provided to the NIAA and fairness to all eligible ranger organisations throughout the grant processes where the IRRG may have some input. All members will be required to sign a Code of Conduct and to declare any real or perceived Conflicts of Interest.

Conditions for participation

To be eligible to submit a Response, you must:

- be an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person and provide evidence of indigeneity with your application;
- be an Australian Citizen;
- **not** be:
 - Listed as ineligible to receive Australian Government grant funding in accordance with the *National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Grant Connected Policy*; and
 - Subject to review by NIAA due to concerns about any known compliance or fraud issues.

To meet the conditions for participation, you should provide as part of your application:

- a letter signed and executed by the Chairperson of an incorporated Indigenous organisation confirming that you are recognised as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person; or
- a confirmation of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent form executed by an Indigenous organisation

Note that Successful candidates will also be required to be assessed through our pre-employment screening checks, such as an Australian Criminal History Check. The NIAA may exclude Responses that do not meet these checks to the NIAA's reasonable satisfaction.

Applicant qualities

Applications will be evaluated against Evaluation Criteria which will be seeking demonstration of the following qualities:

Essential qualities for IRRG members:

- expertise and relevant skills, knowledge, experience and networks within the Indigenous land and water management and Indigenous ranger sector



- understanding of national and regional issues, particularly in relation to the ILWM/or Indigenous ranger sector and Australian Government-funded Indigenous Ranger Program (IRP) or other State or independently delivered Indigenous ranger programs.

Desirable qualities for IRRG members:

- effective communication and negotiation skills, both verbally and in writing, with members and the NIAA , the Minister and the Agency’s senior executive
- proven ability to build relationships, to overcome conflict and contribute to an agreed approach to provide advisory services to the Minister and the Agency
- the ability to work closely with the Chair and Secretariat (provided by the Agency) to ensure advisory services are provided in a timely manner, through meetings and out of session requests as required
- experience on committees or similar governance bodies, particularly in roles advising government or other organisations on policy development and emerging issues
- the enthusiasm and capacity to dedicate the time and energy required to effectively participate in the IRRG and respond to requests for input / advice in a timely manner

Evaluation criteria

Responses will be selected based on an evaluation against the listed evaluation criteria below:

1. The extent to which the Response demonstrates relevant expertise, skills, knowledge, experience and networks within the Indigenous land and water management and Indigenous ranger sector
2. The extent to which the Response demonstrates familiarity with the challenges and aspirations of Indigenous rangers or the demonstrated capacity to become familiar with these interests based on their current or past experiences.
3. The extent to which the Response demonstrates:
 - effective communication and negotiation skills, both verbally and in writing, with members and the NIAA , the Minister and the Agency’s senior executive
 - proven ability to build relationships, to overcome conflict and contribute to an agreed approach to provide advice to the Minister and the agency
 - the ability to work closely with the Chair and secretariat (provided by the agency) to ensure advice is provided in a timely manner, through meetings and out of session requests as required
 - experience on committees or similar governance bodies, particularly in roles advising government or other organisations on policy development and emerging issues
 - the enthusiasm and capacity to dedicate the time and energy required to effectively participate in the IRRG and respond to requests for input / advice in a timely manner

The NIAA may exclude an EOI from further consideration if the NIAA considers that the respondent does not comply with a requirement identified as essential, or does not address the evaluation criteria.

The NIAA may, at any time during this EOI process, seek clarification from and enter into discussions with any or all of the respondents in relation to their response.



Interested individuals are invited to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI)

A brief EOI of no more than two pages should address the evaluation criteria. Please submit the EOI, documentation to support the Conditions of Participation required above and a brief Curriculum Vitae/Resume to NIAA at irrg@niaa.gov.au by **COB Friday 28th July 2023**.

Remuneration

Membership would be endorsed by the Minister for Indigenous Australians, with remuneration based on the *Remuneration Tribunal (Remuneration and Allowances for Holders of Part-time Public Office) Determination 2022* or latest update.

Members will be paid using the remuneration tribunal rates but will not be engaged as officeholders under the Remuneration Act.

Members will be entitled to a daily fee of \$686/day (GST exclusive), or part thereof, equivalent to the daily fee provided to members of the Indigenous Advisory Committee established by the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (sourced from Section 22 Table 4A of the Remuneration Tribunal (Remuneration and Allowances for Holders of Part-time Public Office) Determination 2022, registered on 11 July 2022 or as updated).

Members will be required to enter into standard Australian Government Service Contracts which will detail services required, standard terms and conditions, remuneration rates, invoicing and payment details. Members will need to provide an ABN (Australian Business Number) to form a contract with the Commonwealth.

Session length	Rate
Less than 2 hours	40% of daily fee
At least 2 hours and less than 3 hours	60% of daily fee
At least 3 hours	\$686

IRRG designated positions

IRRG membership may include one (1) current member of the Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC) formed under the *Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, who will contribute on behalf of the IAC. IAC members can still apply to be considered for the other non-designated IRRG positions.

The IRRG will also include an additional representative from the NIAA who may be non-Indigenous and will perform an advisor role.



Chair

The group will be chaired by an elected member of the group to operate in that capacity for the period. Members can elect a new Chair should the existing Chair need to step down or the majority of the group consider a change in the Chair is needed.

Conflict of interest

Group members must declare any private interests or relationships that could or could be seen to influence decisions made by the Group, or advice provided to the NIAA, through a conflict of interest declaration form. Any real or perceived conflicts of interest will be managed on a case by case basis.

Tenure and workload

Members of the IRRG will be required to commit up to an estimated 18 full days (including meeting dates) over a period of at least two years. Some work out of session will also be required.

- Informed by their area of expertise, members to provide independent advisory services and perspectives to the development of the Strategy and establishment of an industry body.

The Group will meet a minimum number of 4 times per annum (TBC), but may hold additional meetings as required. Meetings shall be held by means of teleconference or videoconference. The invitation to participate in a specific meeting will include details of how to participate, including time and date and technical assistance.

Members, with the exception of those with a conflict of interest, to participate in a moderation panel to be established as part of the evaluation process of the IRP grant opportunity.

Privacy Statement

Personal information is collected by the NIAA and will only be used for the purpose for which it was provided to NIAA. This includes the administration of programs by both NIAA and service providers. The collection, storage, use and disclosure of the information is governed by the [Privacy Act 1988](#) and the [Freedom of Information Act 1982](#). NIAA's [Privacy Policy](#) sets out how NIAA complies with these Acts.

Use of Expressions of Interest (EOI)

All EOI submitted in response to this call become the property of the NIAA and the NIAA may use, retain and copy the information contained in those documents for the purposes of:

- a. evaluation of any response to this call for EOI and the preparation and conduct of any procurement process subsequent to this EOI;
- b. verifying the currency, consistency and adequacy of information provided under any other procurement process conducted by the NIAA; and
- c. the development of any other procurement process conducted by the NIAA.



The NIAA may disclose all or part of the response documents to a third party for the purposes of assisting the NIAA in the conduct of this EOI process and for the purposes outlined above. The NIAA may obtain appropriate confidentiality undertakings from the third party prior to disclosure.

Amendment, suspension or termination of this call for EOIs

The NIAA may amend this document upon giving re timely written notice of an amendment.

If the NIAA amends this document after EOI have been submitted, it may seek amended responses.

Respondents will have no claim against the Agency or its officers, employees or advisers in connection with either the exercise of, or failure to exercise, the NIAA's rights to amend this document.

Without limiting its other rights under this document or at law or otherwise, the NIAA may suspend, defer or terminate this EOI process at any time. The NIAA will notify respondents to this effect.

Background

Australian Government supports the Indigenous Land and Water Management through the Indigenous Rangers Program and with the development of an Indigenous Ranger Sector Strategy.

The IRP assists First Nations people to manage Country in accordance with Traditional Owners' objectives. Indigenous rangers use traditional knowledge and cultural practices, combined with western science, to manage land, river and sea Country and deliver environmental, cultural, social and economic development outcomes.

The IRP program has supported the development of an Indigenous Land and Water Management sector that is well-regarded internationally. Over time, the emergence of enduring partnerships between IRP groups / Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) and jurisdictional natural resource management agencies, environmental non-government organisations (NGOs), research institutions and other stakeholders, has further developed this sector.

The Australian Government established the IRP in 2007. There are currently 128 IRP groups funded through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) employing approximately 2,000 Indigenous rangers (full time / part-time and casual) to deliver land and sea management activities across remote and regional Australia.

The Australian Government is committed to doubling the number of Indigenous rangers to 3,800 by the end of the decade and to work towards gender equality in ranger positions

Indigenous rangers operate on IPAs as well as other tenures, including jurisdictional and Commonwealth protected areas.



Indigenous Rangers Program consultation

In 2020, the Australian Government sought feedback from IRP groups and IPA managers to inform the future direction of both programs. NIAA undertook a series of consultations with IRP groups, and established an Indigenous Rangers Independent Reference Group (IRIRG), to support the review and finalisation of grant guidelines and policy settings for the IRP extension. NIAA and DAWE (now DCCEEW) also supported a series of roundtable workshops with IPA providers and key stakeholders in December 2020. The IRIRG was dis-established once the grant rounds for the seven year IRP extension were finalised. The complementary IPA program is jointly managed with DCCEEW which DCCEEW has policy responsibility for the program. Governance for the IPA program is provided through the Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC) under the Environment Biodiversity and Conservation Act 1999.

Indigenous Ranger Sector Strategy (IRSS)

In mid-2022, the NIAA concluded public consultation on the Indigenous Rangers Sector Strategy 2022-2028 – Consultation draft (the Strategy). The Strategy is intended to support the ongoing success of a growing Indigenous ranger sector.

A Strategy in support of the sector is timely given the rapidly increasing demand for Indigenous land and water management services to care for Country. Approximately 170 community-based Indigenous ranger groups, funded under Australian, Queensland or Western Australian Indigenous ranger programs, make a significant contribution to the economies of their communities while caring for Country. Separately, First Nations people are employed directly by numerous government and non-government employers in a range of ranger-related roles. As the demand for and number of ranger programs and ranger positions has grown an Indigenous rangers sector has evolved informally.

The draft Strategy vision is to support a vital Indigenous ranger sector empowered to manage Country sustainability, strengthen culture, provide economic and career opportunities for Indigenous people and communities, and have a recognised role and voice in land and water management. It aims to harness existing and emerging opportunities to amplify the benefits flowing from Indigenous ranger activities in the areas where they operate.

The consultation draft of the Strategy proposed an Indigenous Ranger Reference Group be established to support development of the Strategy. Feedback was sought on the role and structure of such a group. It was determined the IRRG would be able to provide First Nations leadership to support strategic work underway to support the Indigenous Land and Water Sector, including the IRP expansion to double the numbers of rangers by the end of the decade and scope the establishment of the Indigenous Ranger Sector peak body.

The industry/peak body concept was identified in the Consultation draft. It is intended to be Indigenous led with the roles and functions determined by the membership. An industry body could provide oversight of future iterations of a Strategy and longer term guidance and direction for the ranger sector.

