

November 17, 2023

Indigenous-led organizations in Canada, Australia sign MOU

Economic-development organizations commit to greater collaboration

GATINEAU, QUEBEC – The Indigenous Peoples in Australia and Canada share a similar history marked by the dispossession of their lands and waters, the denial of their rights, systematic exclusion from the economy and from opportunities for wealth creation. This exclusion and marginalization of Indigenous Peoples from economic opportunities is an ongoing issue in both Australia and Canada.

A unique international agreement between key Indigenous-led organizations in Australia and Canada that prioritizes Indigenous collaboration and diplomacy, signed on Nov. 16, seeks to address the entrenched economic exclusion and lack of opportunity of Indigenous Peoples in the two countries.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by key Canadian First Nations financial institutions – the First Nations Financial Management Board and the First Nations Finance Authority; and key Australian Indigenous-led organizations – the Australian National University's First Nations Portfolio, First Australians Capital, The Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation, and the National Native Title Council.

The agreement is a unique and historic move to encourage closer ties and collaboration between First Nations organizations, committed to advancing economic reconciliation in Australia and Canada.

Formalizing an already strong relationship between the organizations developed over the past 18 months, the agreement commits the parties to working together on matters of shared concern, including collaborative research, the exchange of knowledge and ideas, as well as facilitating staff exchange and other reciprocal opportunities in both countries.

The MOU is a unique example of Indigenous-led international collaboration and diplomacy. Involving multiple key institutions in Australia and Canada, it will be an important platform for advancing collaboration to improve better economic opportunities for Indigenous peoples, and broader economic reconciliation in the two countries.

Acknowledging that the economic rights and interests of Indigenous Peoples is a matter of global concern, the agreement enhances the importance of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a critical consideration and important standard, in addressing matters related to opportunities and the well-being of Indigenous peoples in Canada and Australia.

The agreement adds an outward-looking, international dimension to struggles in both countries of Indigenous Peoples, to confront and address barriers to economic exclusion and participation.

About FMB:

The First Nations Financial Management Board (FMB) is a First Nations-led non-profit organization that supports First Nations in developing sound financial and administrative governance practices. The FMB was created under the *First Nations Fiscal Management Act (FMA)* in 2006. Services offered are at no cost to First Nations. For more information on all products and services, visit www.fnfmb.com

About FNFA:

The First Nations Finance Authority (FNFA) is a non-profit corporation that permits qualifying First Nations to work co-operatively in raising long-term private capital at preferred rates through the issuance of bonds, and also provides investment services to First Nations.

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QUOTES - CANADIAN PARTNERS**Harold Calla - Executive Chair - First Nations Financial Management Board**

“The MOU is an important next step in our expanding relationship with First Nations partners in Australia. Our connections have grown in recent years and this agreement reflects our shared awareness of the benefits greater collaboration will yield in business opportunities, economic development, and the preservation of cultural assets. We still have much to learn from each other.”

“Indigenous Peoples in Canada and Australia have similar histories in the hardships caused by colonialism. In recent years, we’ve strengthened our bilateral relationships and recognized the tremendous potential in sharing insights, experiences, and solutions. This MOU commits us to further our relationship in ways that will foster economic development and wealth creation for First Nation Peoples in both countries. – and our countries as a whole.”

Ernie Daniels - President and CEO - First Nations Finance Authority

“First Nations Finance Authority (FNFA) is enthusiastic to be signing this historic Memorandum of Understanding with the Australian National University and our First Nation Financial Management Authority sister institutions. This MOU will allow us to start the conversation about how we can collaborate to advance Indigenous economic reconciliation in Australia and Canada.”

QUOTES - AUSTRALIAN PARTNERS**Jamie Lowe – CEO, National Native Title Council**

“The parties to the MOU work to support the economic self-determination of First Nations in Canada and Australia. This means creating strong First Nations industries with culturally appropriate investment opportunities and access to capital. We will work together to support First Nations leadership in strong agreement-making that results in equity and community owned projects and development.

Although we are culturally distinct and diverse, our Australian and Canadian brothers and sisters share a long history of cultural resistance and strength. We benefit from working together to create opportunities for our communities.”

Peter Yu – Vice President First Nations – Australian National University

“The MOU is an important milestone in the developing relationship between our respective First Nations peoples and agencies from Australia and Canada. It demonstrates the important shared historical experiences and common commitment to First Nations economic empowerment as fundamental to our self-determination.”

“As mandated by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the MOU is significant to our shared responsibilities towards bringing greater government and corporate world responsibilities in developing and adopting global standards and measures, regarding the rights and interests of Indigenous people.”

Leah Armstrong – Chairperson – First Australians Capital

“First Australians Capital aims to create a new economy driven by First Australians. We are excited by the opportunity to grow global collaborations between First Nations authorities in Canada that this MOU aims to facilitate.

Our shared histories and pursuits on reconciliation and self-determination provide the foundations for advancing Indigenous economic rights and wealth creation.”

Joe Morrison – Group Chief Executive Officer - Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation

“People and Country is at the heart of why the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation was established. We work in partnership with First Nations peoples so they can achieve self-determination through the return of their Country.”

“We are stronger when we work collectively. That is why the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation is proud to have partnered with other likeminded organizations on our path to advance economic self-determination for Indigenous peoples.”

MOU PARTNER WEBSITES

- First Nations Financial Management Board - fnfmb.com/en
- The First Nations Finance Authority - www.fnfa.ca/en/
- The Australian National University as represented by the First Nations Portfolio - services.anu.edu.au/business-units/first-nations-portfolio
- First Australians Capital - firstaustralianscapital.org/
- The Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation - www.ilsc.gov.au/
- The National Native Title Council – nntc.com.au/

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