



First Nations Trade and Investment Bulletin May 2024

CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES

Expression of Interest: First Nations Trade and Investment Advisory Group

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is establishing a pilot First Nations Trade and Investment Advisory Group. Central to Government being able to drive benefits for First Nations people through trade and investment is ensuring that First Nations people are part of the right conversations, at the right time. The Advisory Group will be an established group of First Nations representatives that the Department can meet with on a scheduled basis about trade and investment policy.

Expressions of Interest for the pilot First Nations Trade and Investment Advisory Group are now open and will close, **Sunday 9 June 2024**. If you are a First Nations person and have experience or expertise in international trade or foreign investment, [apply now](#).

Australian Export Awards

If you're a First Nations exporter, don't miss your chance to shine by entering the 62nd Australian Export Awards.

This prestigious program helps established and emerging exporters build their brand and customer base across Australia and internationally.

We know First Nations businesses are exporting in sectors as diverse as tourism, I.T., merchandise, food and beverages, consulting and logistics. Key export markets are New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States, while some businesses are focussed on the Indo-Pacific or Europe.

Enter online via your home [State or Territory Awards Program](#). **Applications close 14 June 2024**.

Austrade SEABX Program

The [Australia – Southeast Asia Business Exchange](#) is the Australian Government's flagship program to grow two-way trade between Australia and Southeast Asia through sectoral business missions and after-visit support, a Southeast Asian trade and investment promotion campaign in Australia, and a diaspora survey to identify opportunities for engagement.

This program is a key initiative from the [Invested Australia Southeast Asia Economic Strategy](#) released in September 2023. The Business Exchange program is focussed on two-way trade across 10 key markets: Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Timor-Leste, and Brunei. In 2024/25, the Business Exchange will be running missions focussed on the themes of green energy transition, digital economy as well as education and skills.

These are aligned to Australian industry capability, Southeast Asian government policy drivers and opportunities for commercial outcomes. If your business is interested to participate in these business missions to Southeast Asia and/or seeking information on upcoming Business Exchange activities in Australia, please register via the link above.

Inquiry into the understanding and utilisation of benefits under Free Trade Agreements

Following a referral from Senator the Hon Don Farrell, Minister for Trade and Tourism the [Joint Standing Committee on Trade and Investment Growth](#) resolved to inquire into and report on the *Understanding and utilisation of benefits available to Australian industry and communities under Free Trade Agreements*.

The terms of reference for the Inquiry includes consideration of the extent to which “regional, diaspora and First Nations communities take advantage of trade opportunities including the benefits created by FTAs”.

The Committee invites submissions addressing the terms of reference by **21 June 2024**. Submissions to the inquiry can be made at the committee website.

Coalition of Peaks – Economic Development Partnership

In September 2023, the Government committed to developing a [First Nations Economic Partnership](#) with the Coalition of Peaks and other organisations. The Coalition of Peaks and Commonwealth Treasury are working together to scope the policy partnership, ensuring ongoing engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations.

These First Nations-led engagements, delivered by the Coalition of Peaks and supported by Commonwealth Treasury, will help shape the partnership and its priorities. To participate in the consultations, visit the Coalition of the Peaks website.

Join the International Trade Network (ITN)

The International Trade Network (ITN) brings together trade professionals in Australia from government, the private sector, thinktanks, academia and the diplomatic corps to enhance dialogue and collaboration on trade and investment policy issues, including linkages to broader foreign and domestic policies. It's also open to future trade professionals who want to learn more about trade and investment policy.

[Join DFAT's International Trade Network](#) to stay connected and hear about upcoming events.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Diversity Council Australia – First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property Seminar

Hosted by the Diversity Council Australia, a panel of experts will unpack the essential concepts behind understanding and recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural and intellectual property; the rights that Indigenous peoples have to their cultural heritage; and practical tips on how First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property can benefit both organisations and First Nations communities.

Discover practical strategies for how your organisation can engage respectfully and ethically and register for the seminar [here](#). The seminar will be held online from 12:30pm – 2:00pm, **Thursday 13 June 2024**.

World Indigenous Business Forum – Albuquerque 2024

Registrations are now open to attend the [World Indigenous Business Forum](#) in Albuquerque, New Mexico on October 28-30, 2024. Now in its 14th year, the Forum is a key driver when it comes to Indigenous Economic Development. Australia's own Northern Territory Indigenous Business Network has secured the rights to host the 2025 WIBF event in Darwin. Further information can be found about WIBF from the link above.

Supply Nation Connect – Brisbane 2024

Supply Nation's annual flagship event Connect is back for 2024. To be held in Brisbane on 28-29 August, the event brings together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses, corporate organisations, and government departments to foster opportunities and celebrate the success of the Indigenous business sector.

To find out more and to book tickets, visit the [Supply Nation Connect](#).

RECENT NEWS

World Intellectual Property Organisation Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge

After 20 years of negotiations, a landmark treaty providing long overdue recognition for Indigenous people's traditional knowledge in the intellectual property system was successfully concluded on 24 May 2024 in Geneva. Through this recognition, the treaty provides further pathways for First Nations peoples to benefit from their cultural heritage.

The World Intellectual Property Organization's (WIPO's) treaty on intellectual property, genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge requires patent applicants to disclose the origin or source of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge such as medicinal plants or agricultural crops, in patent applications. The Australian Government commends the significant contributions of Australian First Nations people over many years in bringing this negotiation to a conclusion.

Please see [Historic global agreement recognising First Nations' cultural knowledge](#) for more detail.

National Foundation for Australia-China Relations 2023-24 Grants Round

Congratulations to the Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Council who has been awarded a \$180,000 grant through the National Foundation for Australia-China Relations (NFACR). The grant will support First Nations tourism operators across Australia to better understand Chinese traveller perceptions and demand for Australian First Nations experiences, helping First Nations businesses develop China engagement strategies.

Other grants to the Australian Tourism Export Council, Australian Dance Theatre and Queensland University of Technology also include First Nations opportunities. The [full list of grant recipients](#) can be found online.

Stay tuned for the opening of the future grant opportunities with NFACR.