

MEDIA RELEASE

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FSC releases Cultural Capability in Native Title Services Standard - National Reconciliation Week 2015

The Financial Services Council (FSC) today released a *Cultural Capability in Native Title Services Standard* which aims to build strong partnerships between trustees and Indigenous communities founded on equality, mutual respect, and recognition of the knowledge and skills gaps on both sides.

A group of widely-respected Indigenous leaders and organisations including – the First Nations Foundation (FNF), Indigenous Business Australia, the National Congress of Australia’s First Peoples, the Australian Indigenous Governance Institute, and Nyamba Buru Yawuru from Broome, WA – worked in partnership with the FSC’s trustee members to develop the Cultural Capability Standard. Its development drew on the diverse background and skill sets of working group members including in native title, governance, cultural capability, and professional trusteeship.

The Native Title Standard has been launched as part of National Reconciliation week – 27 May to 3 June.

FSC members providing native title services to Indigenous communities will be bound by the Standard which will encourage tailored, culturally appropriate financial services so that communities can achieve their economic aspirations.

Sally Loane, FSC CEO said: “The FSC’s members often act as professional trustees of native title trusts and help to manage the funds in those trusts in the best interests of Indigenous communities.”

“The outcomes of native title are critical to the economic and cultural future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The FSC and the First Nations Foundation have been working in partnership to promote best practice in the financial services industry,” Ms Loane said.

Ian Hamm FNF chairperson on the FSC Standard said: “As a result of Native Title we are seeing the emergence of the next stage of the journey for Indigenous people.”

“This Standard allows the financial services industry to form a strong relationship with Indigenous people by offering financial stability, which is imperative to the continual growth of Indigenous individuals and businesses.”

Mr Hamm also said: “The Standard allows for greater transparency and accountability when dealing with native title recipients. This is a major step forward for industry in building confidence and self-determination for Indigenous people.”

The Standard requires FSC trustee members to clearly and transparently disclose the services they provide in plain English and to recognise that English is not always the first language for many traditional owners. FSC trustees must support Indigenous governance structures and communities – for example, through delivering appropriate financial literacy and governance training.

Mr Hamm added: “With bi-partisan support, this policy is another step towards developing a strong First Australians business sector.”

“Financial literacy is all about people’s capacity to make informed judgments and to take effective decisions about the use and management of money,” Mr Hamm said.

Sally Loane added: “The Standard also helps with capacity and knowledge gaps on both sides. It requires trustees to undergo their own processes, including ensuring staff who work with communities undertake cultural competency training; partnering with communities to gain an understanding of their cultural values, histories and aspirations; and working towards establishing a formal strategy to develop cultural capability, for instance, through a Reconciliation Action Plan.

“Financial literacy and equal participation in the economy are critical for the empowerment and wellbeing of all Australians. The development of a sound, sustainable, economic base in any community is paramount to protect the things that we as a society value and to sustain our sense of culture and identity,” Ms Loane said.

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BACKGROUND

Two years ago the Financial Services Council (FSC) and First Nations Foundation (FNF) – an Indigenous organisation – entered into a three-year community alliance partnership to deepen the financial services sector’s relationship with Indigenous Australia. The first part of this relationship was to further support Indigenous financial literacy.

My Moolah, the FNF’s flagship financial literacy program, was established in 2007 to enable Indigenous Australians to engage in financial products and services from a position of strength, both socially and economically, while supporting cultural identity. It is not simply about “changing you to fit into mainstream” but “learning new skills that will work to support who you are as an Indigenous person”.

The second part of the goal is building processes that assist in closing economic and knowledge gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

About the Financial Services Council

The Financial Services Council represents Australia's retail and wholesale funds management businesses, superannuation funds, life insurers, financial advisory networks, licensed trustee companies and Public Trustees. The Council has over 120 members who are responsible for investing more than \$2.5 trillion on behalf of 11 million Australians. The pool of funds under management is larger than Australia’s GDP and the capitalisation of the Australian Securities Exchange and is the third largest pool of managed funds in the world. The Financial Services Council promotes best practice for the financial services industry by setting mandatory Standards for its members and providing Guidance Notes to assist in operational efficiency.

About First Nations Foundation

First Nations Foundation (FNF) is a not-for-profit Indigenous organisation with a primary focuses of closing the economic and knowledge gaps between Indigenous communities and the Australian financial services industry. The Foundation was established in early 2006 by a group of respected First Australian leaders. It was developed and established out of the strong Yorta Yorta community of Shepparton. The Foundation operates from a strength-based community development approach, promoting the values of social justice, collaboration and self-determination.