



Opening Statement

Finance and Public Administration Budget Estimates – 2 December 2025

As 2025 draws to a close, Aboriginal Investment NT's work to strengthen the economic future of Aboriginal Territorians continues to grow in momentum. As stewards of Aboriginal wealth – funds that historically sat idle in the Aboriginals Benefit Account – we take seriously our responsibility to uphold best-practice governance, investment management, grant administration and community engagement. As a Corporate Commonwealth Entity, we also carry significant fiscal and legislative obligations. These responsibilities guide our 2024–29 Strategic Investment Plan and our new operational plan, both of which are designed to be robust, transparent and community-focused.

Governance and Risk Management

Over the past year, we have strengthened our governance and risk systems to ensure they meet the highest standards. Our Board and staff completed governance training, and five major policies were reviewed and approved in September, including substantial improvements to the Complaints Policy and Public Interest Disclosure Policy. A team workshop was held in November to embed these changes. We have also enhanced our cyber security arrangements through the engagement of a virtual Chief Information Security Officer and have commenced implementation of a two-year cyber roadmap.

Confirmation of Aboriginality

We have refined our Confirmation of Aboriginality (COA) requirements to ensure they align with best practice and established NT community confirmation standards. While third-party certifications such as those from NTIBN and Supply Nation will no longer be mandatory, we strongly support their push for stronger, nationally consistent Indigenous business certification to lift integrity across the sector. Our refinement of these requirements are consistent with the PGPA and the requirement to adhere to due diligence protocols.

Grants Administration

Our updated COA requirements came into effect on 17 November alongside the opening of Business Grants Round 3, which has already attracted more than 20 eligibility applications. Business Grants Round 2 is nearing completion. Updates to the Community Quick Response Grants will be published shortly, and the Community Impact and Innovation Grants program will open on 2 February 2026, supported by simplified guidelines and a clearer application process.

Investments

As at 30 October, \$250 million has been invested in the Future Fund, with a total balance of \$534 million. Based on our review of historic ABA settings, a cash-and-term-deposit strategy would have generated an estimated 4.2% since the Fund's inception in December 2024. Over the same period, the Future Fund returned 6.0% – around \$9 million more than we estimate would have been achieved under previous arrangements. For the Community Ready Fund, \$117.5 million has been invested, with a total balance of \$164 million. AINT has the capacity to and expertise to continue to work with NIAA and the Minister to ensure the funds that remain in the ABA provide greater returns for Aboriginal Northern Territorians.

Community Engagement

Our team has visited eight communities across four regions since October this year and held around 20 meetings with grant applicants – ensuring our work continues to be shaped by the voices and priorities of Aboriginal Northern Territorians.

Annual Report Delay

In September, we advised the Minister of delays to the 2024–25 Annual Report, due to delays to the commencement of our audit amidst ANAO resourcing constraints. While an extension to 30 November was granted, the ANAO has since advised that audit completion is now expected by late December or mid-

January. As a result, we have notified the Minister that we will be unable to meet the original extension and have provided a revised timeframe for the end of February 2026.

Aboriginal Investment NT was created to deliver long-term economic benefit, stability and opportunity for Aboriginal Northern Territorians. That responsibility is at the heart of our work. We remain steadfast in our commitment to self-determination – ensuring that Aboriginal wealth is managed by Aboriginal people, for Aboriginal people, and in the best interests of generations to come. Through strong governance, strategic investment and deep community partnership, we will continue to build an organisation that empowers our mobs to drive their own economic future in the time, place and manner of their choosing.