



Young Reef Leaders Initiative

Expression of Interest

Issued Friday 27 October 2023

About the Young Reef Leaders Project

Keeping culture, governance and leadership strong remains a top priority for Traditional Owner governance members working with the Great Barrier Reef Foundation in the co-design and delivery of the Reef Trust Partnership Agreement. Leadership succession and bringing along emerging leaders is particularly critical to future-proofing Traditional Owner governance arrangements operating within the Great Barrier Reef Region.

The Young Reef Leaders Initiative aims to amplify the voices of dynamic young Traditional Owner leaders and other First Nations people working in the Great Barrier Reef Region between the ages of 18-28 years. This opportunity will elevate the lived experience and young leaders' diverse perspectives through peer-to-peer dialogue and activities, facilitate young and emerging leader solutions, explore cultural exchanges, foster leadership skills and experiences, and create meaningful connections with established leadership networks, including with other young or emerging leadership networks.

The Great Barrier Reef Foundation is committed to meaningful collaboration and engagement with Reef and Catchment Traditional Owners throughout the delivery of the Reef Trust Partnership.

Who are we?

The Great Barrier Reef Foundation brings together science, community, First Nations people, industry and government to find and grow conservation and restoration solutions for healthier coral reefs. The Reef Trust partnership (the Partnership) between the Australian Government and the Foundation is centred on a landmark investment of \$443.3 million to build the resilience of the Great Barrier Reef. The Traditional Owner component runs until June 2026. Check out the Foundation's website [Great Barrier Reef Foundation](#) for more information.

This work forms part of the Reef Trust Partnership Traditional Owner Component Leadership Series (Innovation, Leadership and Collaboration) and is an important foundational piece in understanding how successional planning may be effective across future governance and leadership scenarios.

Reef Trust Partnership

The Reef Trust Partnership investment is the largest single government investment in protecting the Reef and its Outstanding Universal Value. Importantly it has secured Australia's largest Traditional Owner Reef Protection Program, with \$51.8m of investment dedicated over the life of the Partnership. This investment aims to improve Traditional Owner engagement in the management of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and Catchment, and acts to catalyse and accelerate important activities that Traditional Owners have planned to look after Country. These activities maintain cultural practice and build strong foundations for the future.

Key Dates

Expression of Interest open	27 October 2023
Expression of Interest close	10 November 2023
Successful applicants notified	20 November 2023, unless otherwise communicated
Initial Sydney workshop	Monday 4 December – Thursday 7 December 2023 (with up to 2 additional travel days either side)
Other gatherings	To be co-designed with participants Young Reef Leaders

Governance arrangements: Traditional Owner Reef Protection Program

Within the Great Barrier Reef Foundation (the Foundation) dedicated governance roles are established to guide both strategic and operational co-design approaches in delivery and co-production of the Reef Trust Partnership Traditional Owner Reef Protection Program. This means Traditional Owner perspectives are central in driving work within the Foundation.

The Traditional Owner Advisory Group was established in late 2018 and attracted five Reef Traditional Owners into foundational leadership roles. Since 2020, the Foundation established several component-level Traditional Owner Technical Working Groups – adding another 18 governance roles for Traditional Owners to contribute to the core workforce and assist in the co-design and co-delivery of the Reef Trust Partnership.

The Young Reef Leaders Project is being co-designed by the youngest members within these Traditional Owner Working Groups and seeks to foster more young and emerging leaders' perspectives from dynamic Traditional Owners and First Nations Peoples whom are actively involved in and passionate about working to promote positive impacts for Communities, Culture and Country within the Great Barrier Reef and its catchments.

Initiative Objectives:

- **Provide a culturally appropriate and safe platform** – communicating unique perspectives of young First Nations leaders on issues related to the Great Barrier Reef and its catchments; promoting and inspiring solutions led by yohg leaders to create meaningful and positive impact on the ground and in the water.
- **Foster opportunities for a movement and network** to be explored identifying priority themes, key topics and local action that may lead to greater inclusion and participation of young First Nations leaders in the management and care of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.
- **Advance connections and pathways** to build and strengthen leadership, policy and governance skills, capabilities, and experiences. Explore linkages between emerging young leaders across the Great Barrier Reef, Pacific Region and globally as relevant.
- **Build a strong pipeline of emerging leaders** for existing or future based governance arrangements operating within the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and region as part of successional planning.
- **Cultivate effective relationships** between young leaders and established governance leaders with opportunities to explore mentorship, coaching and/or identified training.

Key activities being explored:

Participants will work with Traditional Owner Reef Trust Partnership governance members and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation to co-produce:

- **A series of get-togethers:** Dedicated time for young and dynamic leaders to gather from across the Reef and Catchment areas to identify and participate in wide-ranging discussions on topical and relevant issues, with an aim to:
 - Provide insights into relevant topics.
 - Identify strengths, barriers or challenges they face and opportunities they see or imagine.
 - Identify experiences and opportunities that foster and strengthen knowledge sharing amongst peers and how they may wish to grow their capabilities in areas such as, but not limited to, leadership, governance, policy, research, land and sea management, economic empowerment and communications.
 - Identify skills development that may address existing gaps.
 - Identify key people they may wish to connect with to advise or guide on relevant issues.
 - Develop a roadmap that captures their goals and prioritise what and how critical themes and activities may be actioned.
- **Young Leaders Network:** Explore the validity of establishing a network where young leaders can connect, share ideas, and collaborate on projects, ideas, events and opportunities through fit for purpose platforms.
- **Summit or Gathering:** Explore hosting or collaborating on a Young Reef Leaders Summit or Gathering as a collective project where young First Nations leaders can share their voice, talk about their concerns, share their achievements, and discuss future strategies they feel are relevant to the care and management of the Great Barrier Reef.
- **Strategic Issues and Communication:** Explore how Young Reef Leaders may wish to create, promote and share relevant topics, themes, issues, products and solutions that matter to them with First Nations audiences and broader audiences.

Time Commitment and Remuneration for Successful Participants

In alignment with co-design mindsets and principles, successful participants will be paid for their time and contributions to this project.

- A daily rate of \$250 will apply to successful applicants participating in this initiative to value their lived experience, knowledge and contributions made in formal meetings, workshops, gatherings and events that may apply to this initiative.
- There will be a cap to the number of days that apply to this initiative to align with the total budget available to successfully deliver this project. This will be dependent on the number of final participants in the initiative, design elements co-produced as a part of the co-design process undertaken by the collective cohort, and any additional fundraising the group may wish to do to meet their aspirations. In the first instance the number of days of commitment is unlikely to exceed 20 days across a 12 month time-period.

Who should apply?

We invite young Traditional Owners and First Nations individuals in the Great Barrier Reef Region who:

- Hold a strong vision for Healthy Country and Healthy People.
- Are passionate about the care and protection of the Great Barrier Reef and its catchments.
- Are aged between 18 and 28.
- Demonstrate emerging leadership experience with a passion for Country, Culture, and Community.
- Are researchers, scientists, or individuals interested in leadership, governance, and program delivery within the Great Barrier Reef Region.

The Young Reef Leaders initiative is a positive step towards ensuring the perspectives of young Traditional Owners are heard and understood. By empowering young and emerging First Nations leaders through culture, learning, mentorship, and opportunities this initiative aims to produce an emerging generation of leaders equipped to influence and make informed decisions for the future of the Great Barrier Reef as part of reef-wide governance arrangements across the region.

Eligibility Criteria

To submit an application, you must meet the following requirements:

- **Age Range:** Applicants must be between 18 and 28 years of age.
- **Indigenous/First Nations Heritage:** Applicants must:
 - Identify as a Traditional Owner of the Great Barrier Reef and/or Great Barrier Reef Catchment Area (Great Barrier Reef Region); or
 - Identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person and can demonstrate a connection to Traditional Owner group(s) and/or communities in the Great Barrier Reef Region.
- **Availability:** Must be available 3 December – 8 December 2023 to participate in the first face to face Young Reef Leaders workshop in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. Be available for future meetings and able to commit to the broader participation of this initiative, which may include 3 workshops and up to 20 days across a 12 month period.

Selection Criteria

- **Demonstrated interest and/or passion in Caring for Country:** land and sea management, governance, policy, research, creative solutions, driving positive outcomes for nature and culture in the Great Barrier Reef Region.
- **Vision for Change:** Demonstrate a vision and commitment to becoming a change maker and thought leader with the ability to drive creative ideas and solutions forwards.
- **Background/Experience/Education relevant to the Project:** Demonstrate work, education and/or lived experience within relevant Traditional Owner corporations and/ or other relevant organisations operating in the Great Barrier Reef Region.
- **Communication Skills:** Strong communication and interpersonal skills for community engagement and advocacy or the willingness to build these skills.
- **Innovative Thinking:** Ability to think creatively and propose innovative solutions to challenges facing the Great Barrier Reef and its communities.

How applications are assessed

There is a limited amount of spots for this opportunity (8 to 10), so the Foundation will undertake a merit-based assessment process with Traditional Owner governance members to ensure all applications are reviewed fairly and equitably.

Stage one – Eligibility Assessment

Each EOI will be screened to check that the applicant is eligible to apply. Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be progressed to Stage Two.

Stage two – Assessment Criteria

Eligible applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

Criteria	Description of Criteria	Weighting	
Lived experience and knowledge about Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef and/or its catchments; together with interest and passion for Country, Culture and Community in the Great Barrier Reef Region.	Applicants should showcase their lived experience and knowledge or any other matters of relevance that directly relates to Caring for Country, Culture and Community in the Great Barrier Reef and its catchments. This could include lived experience as a Traditional Owner and/or First Nations person, any professional, casual or educational experiences or any specialised training programs. The aim is to gain a better understanding about the applicant, their experience, their drive and passion for issues identified to be of relevance to young and/or emerging leaders and gauge ability for create solutions making.	10%	30%
	Applicants should highlight any hands-on experience they have gained in the Great Barrier Reef region. This could be in the form of community activities, internships, volunteer work, research projects, or any other on-ground activities that involve direct interaction with the Reef or its catchments.	10%	
	A commitment to fostering awareness within the applicant's communities is highly regarded. Applicants should detail any participation in community outreach endeavours, educational seminars, workshops, or other pertinent initiatives that have furthered the cause of the reef and its surrounding ecosystems	10%	
Creativity and innovating thinking that can help provide solutions for the future of the Reef.	Applicants may share moments when they have introduced fresh ideas or solutions to address issues they may see in the care and well-being of land or sea country, culture and community.	20%	
Leadership and communication skills, as well as a willingness to learn from and collaborate	Applicants are invited to showcase instances where they have demonstrated leadership qualities, be it in your family, community, academic, or professional settings. Candidates should demonstrate effective communication, sharing their ability to express their thoughts and ideas clearly, listen actively, and foster open dialogues. In the context of Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef Region, the ability to learn from and collaborate with fellow young leaders is an important	40%	

with other young leaders	part of the project. We are keen to understand how applicants have previously engaged in collaborative efforts, sought mentorship, or provided guidance and/or leadership to peers or in family or community settings.	
Ability to be an effective mentee and valuable mentor for future leaders	This project values individuals who can both absorb wisdom as mentees and impart knowledge as mentors. Applicants should highlight experiences where they have actively sought guidance, showing a genuine eagerness to learn. Equally, we're interested in moments where applicants have taken on a mentoring role, helping to nurture and shape the next wave of leaders in caring for country and community.	10%

Stage Three – Notification of Applicants

Applicants will be informed in writing whether their application was successful or not.

The Foundation will keep confidential all confidential information of the applicant which is obtained as part of the EOI process. However, the Foundation may disclose confidential information to its personnel, contractors or advisors for the purposes of administering this opportunity; or as required by law; or where the Foundation is required to comply with any provision of funding agreements in respect of confidential information.

Further information

Please complete the Application Form and email it to applications@barrierreef.org by 5pm (AEST) on **Friday 10th November 2023**.

Applicants may consult with the Great Barrier Reef Foundation Office while preparing Applications to ensure their proposal meets basic requirements. Office staff will not be able to provide feedback on Draft Applications.

Answers to questions asked during the Application period will be provided as 'Frequently Asked Questions' on the website.

Questions can be emailed to Great Barrier Reef Foundation Grants Office at traditionalowners@barrierreef.org