

## First Circles Leadership Program

### Leadership and Governance

The Northern Territory Government recognises that building and supporting strong Aboriginal leadership, governance and capacity building is fundamental to Aboriginal Territorians driving local solutions and leading the way in local decision making.

### About the First Circles Program

The First Circles Leadership program is a unique program that brings new voices, and quiet voices, to the conversation to ensure Aboriginal people from remote areas are engaged and can confidently and directly speak to, negotiate and influence government about matters affecting their lives, their families and communities.

The Program provides an opportunity for participants to directly engage at the highest level of government. They meet with Cabinet to discuss matters impacting Aboriginal Territorians, their communities, and present local solutions.

First Circles is about identifying, mentoring and supporting the next generation of Aboriginal leaders with a strong focus on remote leadership.

The term 'First Circles' combines two concepts:

- Acknowledgement of 'First Peoples'
- The use of 'Circles' represents the collaboration between people and communities being the main driver to improve outcomes.

The First Circles Leadership Program helps participants develop and expand their leadership skills, develop their professional profiles and better understand the impact of public policies and programs on their communities, and help influence and contribute to change, while having direct engagement with Members of the Legislative Assembly, Ministers and Cabinet.

First Circles is an annual leadership program offered to 15 Aboriginal participants from the six regions of the Territory; Top End, East Arnhem, Barkly, Big Rivers, Central Australia and Darwin Palmerston and Litchfield.

An expressions of interest process is undertaken for members to nominate to be part of the program each year.

## What is the role of First Circles members?

Members' roles include:

- A First Circles member must be an Aboriginal person who comes from a Northern Territory remote community, homeland or town camp
- Proactive in the community and throughout their region
- Ability to liaise with community members, seeking advice and support for local and regional opportunities/initiatives
- Participate in community forums, projects and policy development
- Work collaboratively with the Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet, local authorities and other agencies
- Support department officer visits and assist with community discussions
- Attend four workshops and the Cabinet meeting and actively participate in discussions

## How are First Circles members supported?

The First Circles Leadership Program is managed through the Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet's, Aboriginal Affairs Strategic Partnerships, with staff providing mentoring to First Circles members.

First Circles members are not paid as the program is voluntary. The Department will meet the costs for members to attend workshops and the Cabinet meeting.

## Program Outline

In the lead-up to a Cabinet meeting participants engage in leadership training; attend workshops designed to support their capacity to actively engage and communicate with government about priorities and other matters that are important to them; and to collaboratively engage with all levels of government.

The workshops include traveling to Darwin, Alice Springs and other regional centers.

To find out more about the First Circles Leadership Program; go to [aboriginalaffairs.nt.gov.au](http://aboriginalaffairs.nt.gov.au) or call phone 08 8999 8579, or email [firstcircles@nt.gov.au](mailto:firstcircles@nt.gov.au)