



Australian Government  
Australian Public Service Commission

# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the Australian Public Service

April 2021

Research Note 48-20



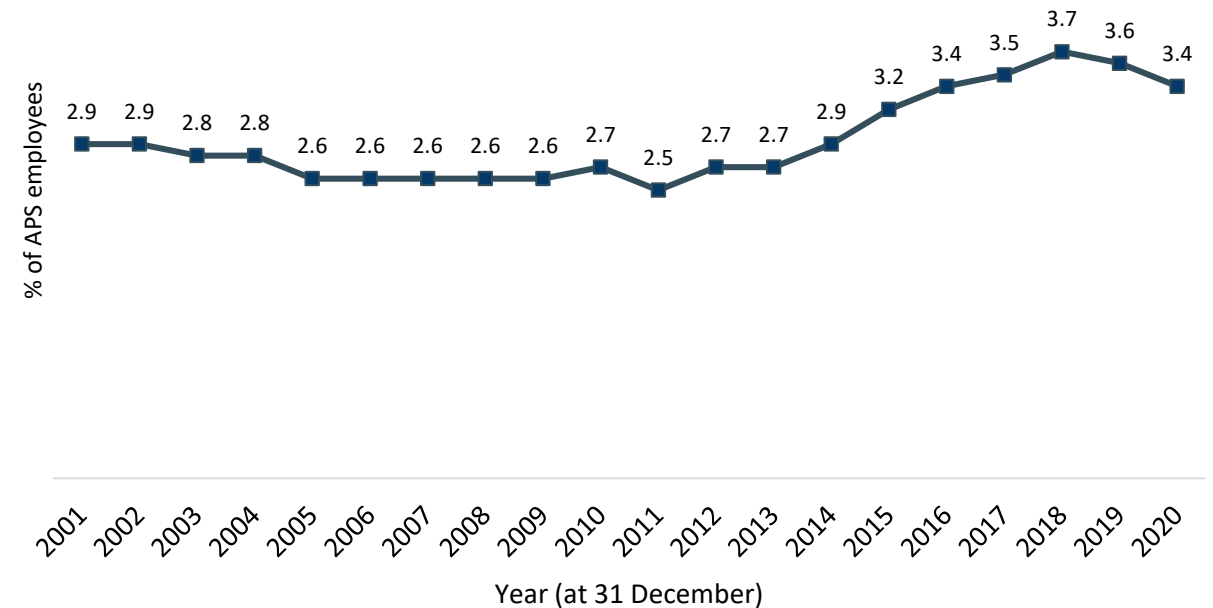
# The proportion of APS employees who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander has increased over the past 20 years

3.4% of APS employees identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in agency human resources systems.

The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the APS has steadily increased over the past 20 years.

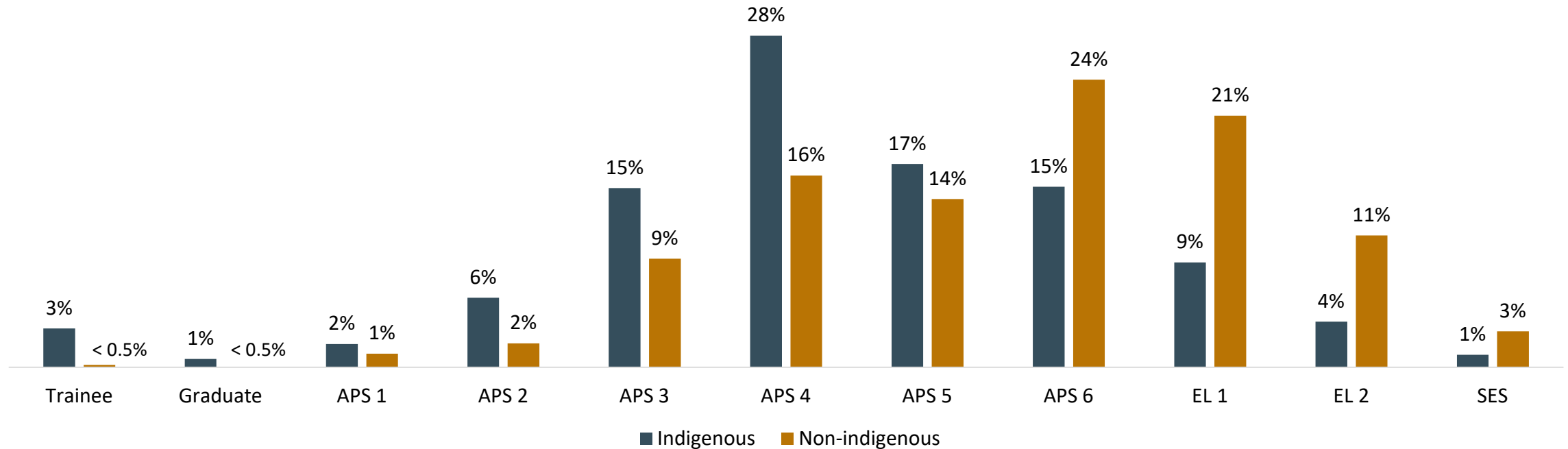
Overall representation, however, dropped over the 24 months prior to 31 December 2020.

Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees



# The majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are employed at APS 1-6 levels

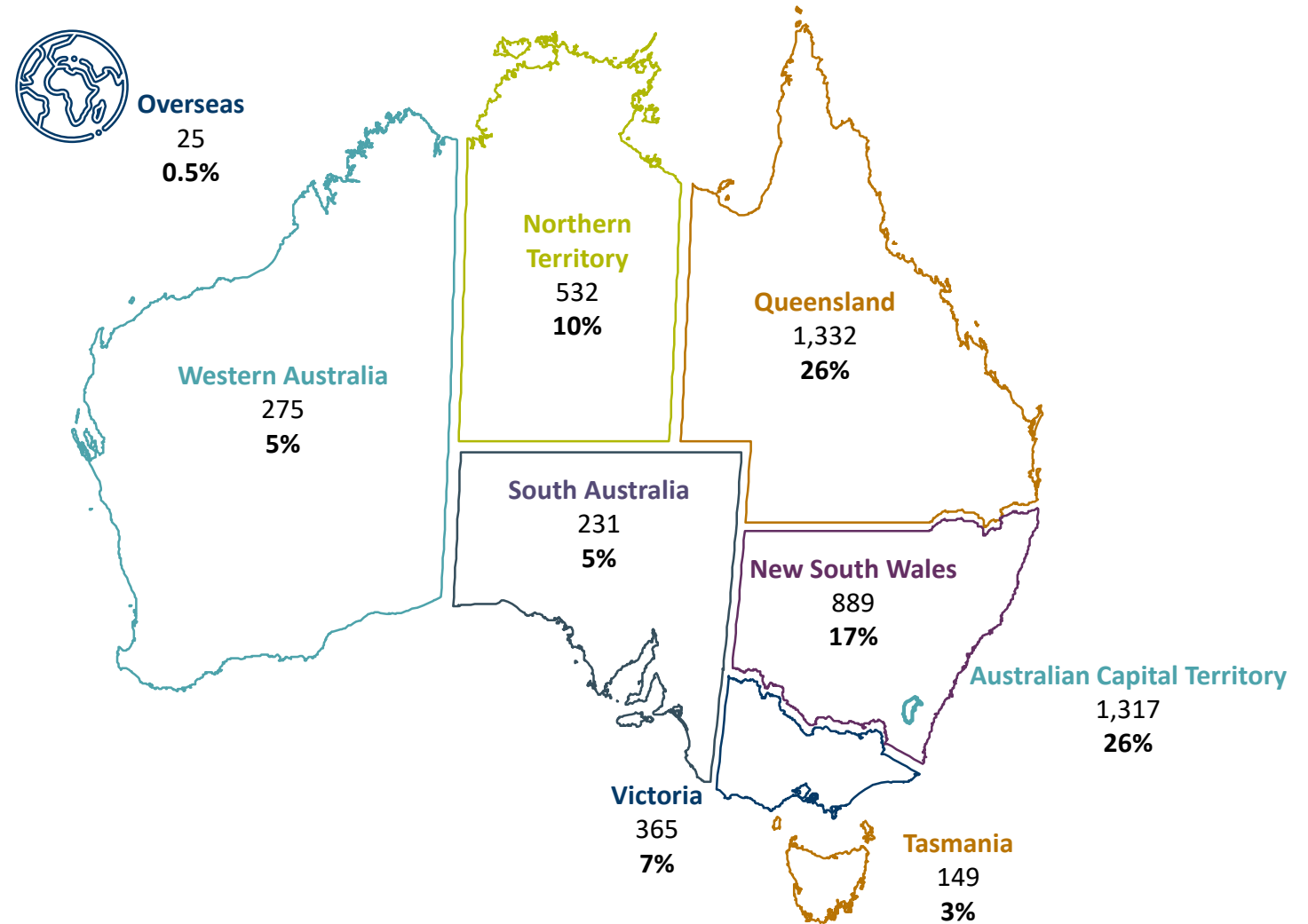
Proportion of Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees by APS classification



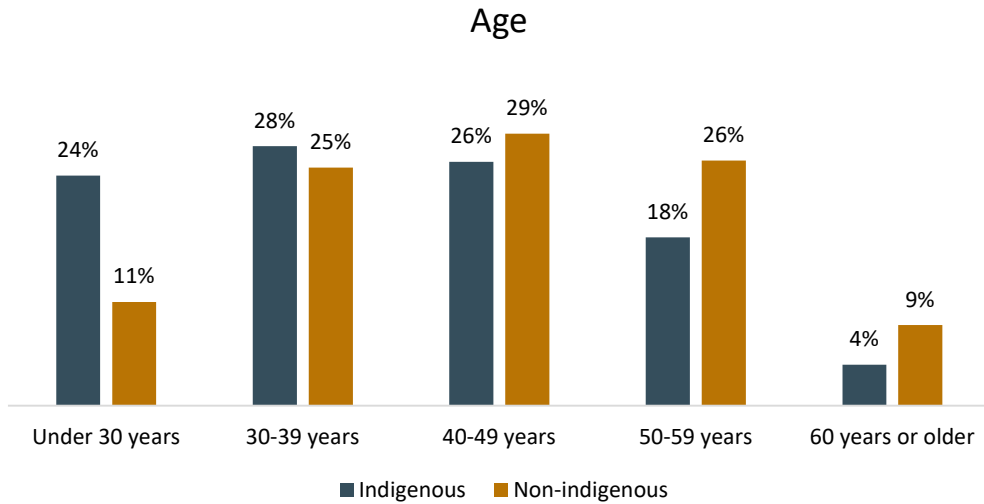
The greatest proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are employed at the APS 3 (15%), APS 4 (28%), APS 5 (17%) and APS 6 (15%) levels.

# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the APS work in all areas of Australia

A greater proportion of APS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees work in regional areas (35%), than non-Indigenous employees (13%).



# Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees had similar employment profiles except for a notable difference in median length of service



## Median length of service in the APS

7.01 years  
Indigenous

12.37 years  
Non-Indigenous

## Employed on ongoing basis

88%  
Indigenous

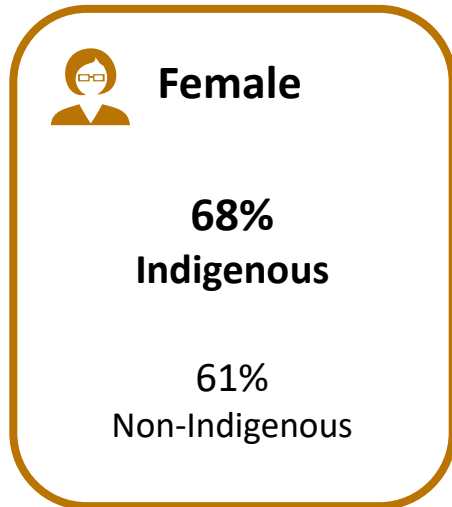
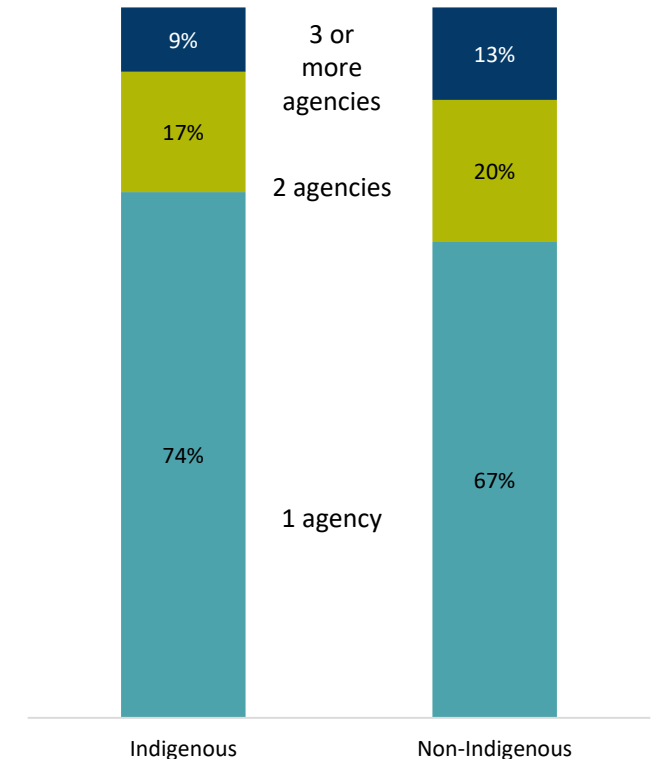
90%  
Non-Indigenous

## Employed full time

81%  
Indigenous

81%  
Non-Indigenous

## Number of agencies worked in



# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees reported high levels of employee engagement and that their wellbeing was supported

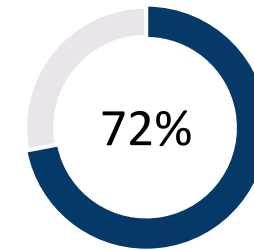
Employee Engagement Index scores reflect whether respondents feel emotionally connected and committed to their organisation.

The Employee Engagement Index score for the APS overall is 73%.

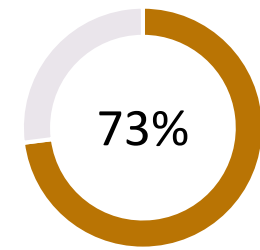
Wellbeing Index scores reflect whether respondents feel their health and wellbeing is supported.

The Wellbeing Index score for the APS overall is 70%.

Employee Engagement Index score

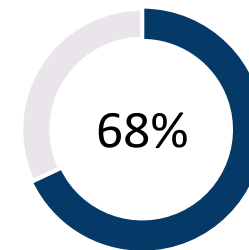


Indigenous employees

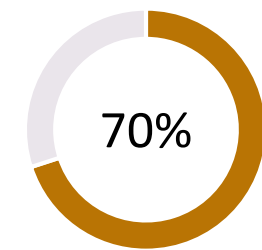


Non-Indigenous employees

Wellbeing Index score



Indigenous employees

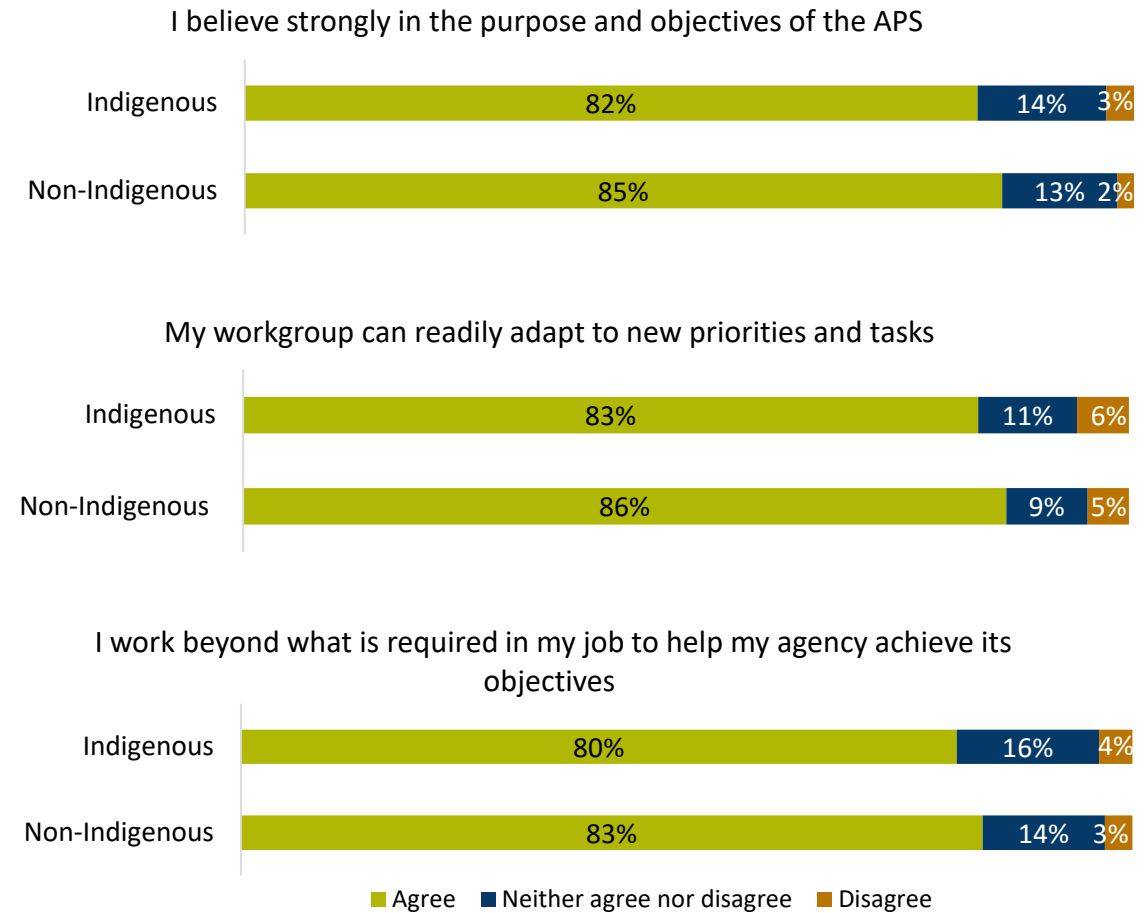


Non-Indigenous employees

# Indigenous employees believe strongly in the APS and are a vital part of an adaptive workforce striving to achieve its objectives

Similar to their non-Indigenous colleagues, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees show strong belief (82%) in the purpose and objectives of the APS.

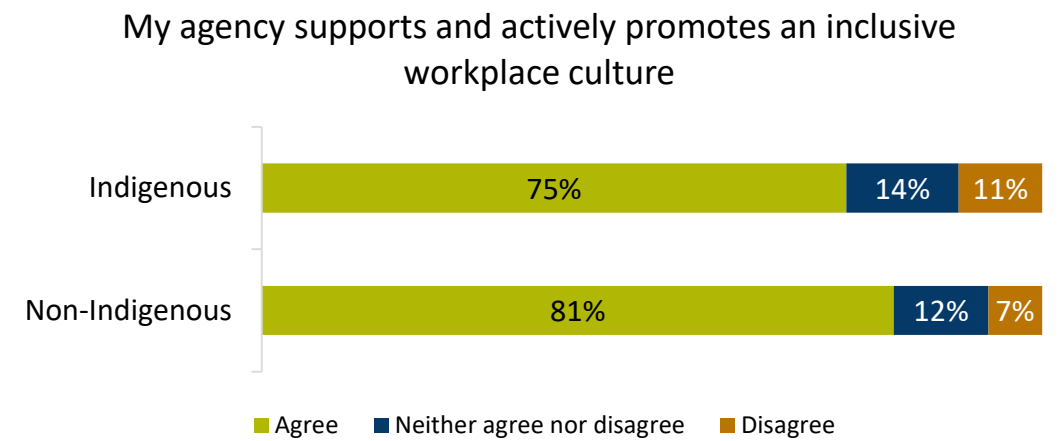
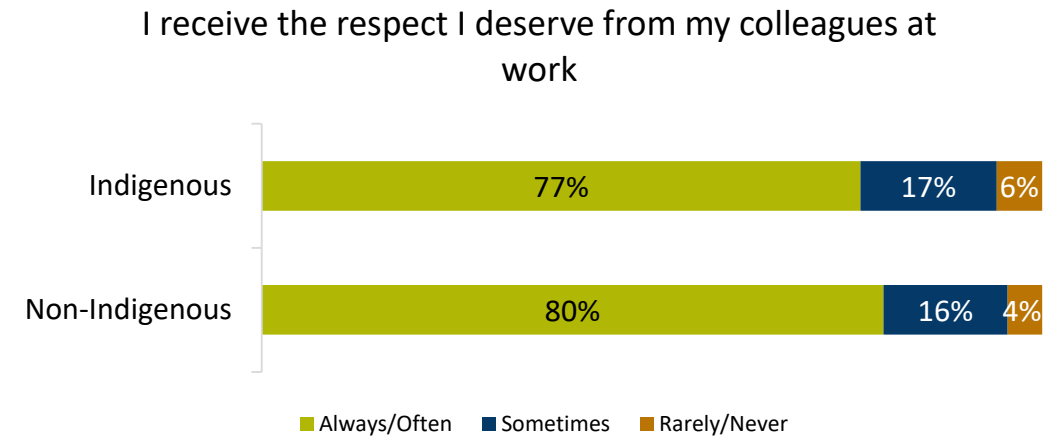
They demonstrate this purpose through their flexibility to prioritise and adapt with colleagues to complete workgroup tasks, and their willingness to work beyond what is required by their job to help achieve their agency's objectives.



# The majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the APS perceive respect and inclusion in their workplaces

2020 APS Employee Census responses indicate that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and non-Indigenous employees share similar perceptions about the respect they receive from colleagues in the workplace.

The majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees agree their agency supports and actively promotes an inclusive workplace culture. However, this proportion is lower than that agreed by their non-Indigenous colleagues.

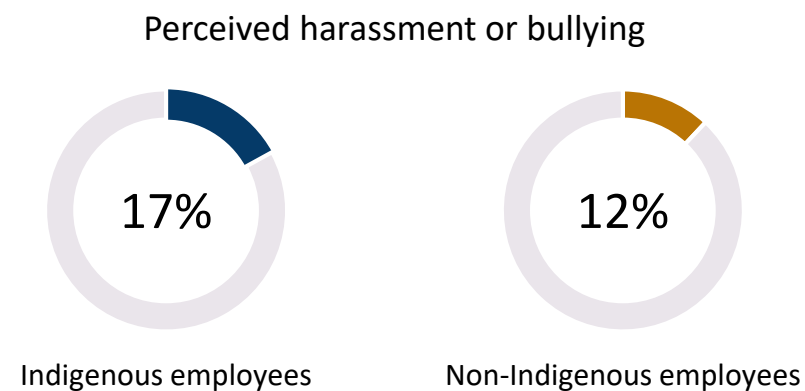
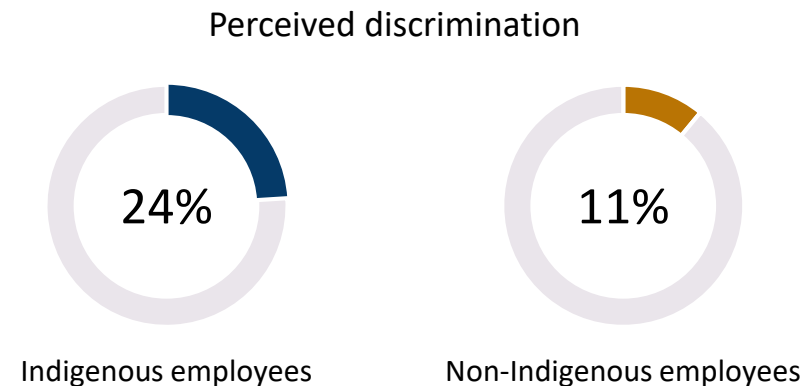




# A larger proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees perceived discrimination and harassment or bullying

Nearly one in four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees perceived discrimination on the basis of their background or a personal characteristic in the course of their employment over the previous 12 months.

Over one in six Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees perceived that they had been subjected to harassment or bullying in their current workplace during the previous 12 months.



# The *Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020 –24* will increase APS Indigenous employment outcomes

The Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020–2024 sets the direction for Commonwealth agencies to be inclusive workplaces with a greater Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce representation at all classification levels, and in all business areas.

The Strategy will ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees play a greater role in contributing to building a diverse Commonwealth public sector workforce capable of responding to the needs of the Australian community. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees will have enhanced capability and thriving careers and be employed in workplaces with greater Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural capability.



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