Building an Indigenous Employment Strategy

A starter kit for Commonwealth agencies
MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

I am pleased to introduce the revised version of Building an Indigenous Employment Strategy—A Starter Kit for Commonwealth Agencies (the Kit). The Kit was first developed in 2008 to assist in the development of Indigenous Employment Strategies across the Australian Public Service (APS), and has now been expanded to assist all Commonwealth agencies. The Kit has been reviewed and updated by the Australian Public Service Commission in partnership with the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Improving employment outcomes for Indigenous Australians is now a responsibility for all agencies across the Commonwealth public sector.

The national agenda is clear:

• Halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians by 2018.
• Increase the representation of Indigenous Australians across the Commonwealth public sector to 2.7% by 2015.

In quantifiable terms, an extra 6000 Indigenous Australians need to be employed into the Commonwealth public sector to meet the 2015 target. The reality is that all agencies have to be more effective at attracting and recruiting Indigenous Australians, and providing rewarding career pathways to support retention and development.

As we work towards the 2015 target, I encourage agencies not to see this as the end point, but rather as an ongoing process to improve Indigenous employment.

Indigenous employees play a key role in the public sector as they contribute not only to their own career goals, but to broader issues around helping to change perceptions of cultural diversity and respect. They also provide pathways into Indigenous communities and organisations, built from a deeper understanding of culture and communication. It is these Indigenous Australians, who will help in Closing the Gap and making sustainable change.

In the 2009–10 State of the Service Report, 76% of Indigenous employees rated ‘making a difference’ as their top attraction attribute, compared to 66% of other employees. This indicates a good motivational fit to the ethos of public sector work. What we need to do as agencies, is match that by better promoting ourselves in the recruitment market, and delivering rewarding and supportive careers.

Across the Commonwealth public sector, agencies are at different stages in addressing Indigenous employment issues. An Indigenous Employment Strategy is an important tool to confirm your agency’s commitment, identify the areas to make improvements, and outline actions for moving forward. It is the starting point to bring about the organisational change required to provide meaningful steps to improve Indigenous employment.

These approaches are essentially about building business capability and practising good people management, and I encourage you to continue working towards improving Indigenous employment outcomes in your agency.

Stephen Sedgwick
Australian Public Service Commissioner
October 2011
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**USING THE KIT**

*Building an Indigenous Employment Strategy—A Starter Kit for Commonwealth Agencies* (the Kit) is designed to help human resource (HR) practitioners build their agency’s Indigenous Employment Strategy (IES) to assist in attracting, recruiting, retaining and developing Indigenous employees.

The Kit consists of the following parts.

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Further support for agencies is available through the Indigenous Employment HR Forum and the Indigenous Employment HR Coordinators GovDex website. For more information on these initiatives or advice on your IES contact the Commission’s Indigenous Liaison Officer on 02 6202 3593 or at IndigenousLiaisonOfficer@apsc.gov.au.
BACKGROUND

Key Points

- Improving Indigenous employment is a responsibility for all Commonwealth agencies.
- Indigenous employment levels have stabilised in the APS over the last few years. However, insufficient progress is being made.
- Indigenous employees are over-represented at lower level positions, and under-represented at higher level positions.
- Indigenous people are the fastest growing population in Australia.
- Meeting the 2015 target is about workforce capability and good people management.

Introduction

Increasing Indigenous employment and reducing the level of disadvantage among Indigenous Australians is an integral part of the Australian Government’s agenda. The Commonwealth has an important role to play, modelling better practice to the broader workforce, and strengthening community capacity.

The Council of Australian Governments’ (COAG’s) National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation (the Agreement) aims to accelerate improvements in ‘closing the gap’ in economic outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. A key element of this Agreement includes the review of public sector Indigenous employment and career development strategies. The aim of the review is to increase Indigenous employment across all classifications to reflect the national Indigenous working-age population share of at least 2.6 per cent by 2015.

The Commonwealth raised this to 2.7 per cent representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees across the Commonwealth public sector, and the onus is on all APS and non-APS agencies, to determine how they will meet the COAG target. Some agencies already in excess of the Commonwealth’s 2.7 per cent target, are working towards an additional 20 per cent proportional target.

While the Commonwealth’s commitment to Indigenous employment is expressed as a target, the target should be regarded as a performance measure. The intention of the commitment is to ensure a holistic, sustainable plan for diversity, and strengthening existing strategies for recruitment, retention and career pathways.

It is important not to view the meeting of this target as an onerous task. An Indigenous Employment Strategy that considers the workforce needs and issues of your agency will prove an effective and necessary element to demonstrate an agency’s progress towards achieving the target and improving employment outcomes. As shown in Figure 1, the increase, in comparison to overall employment, is minimal.
Since August 2005, the *APS Employment and Capability Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employees* (the APS Strategy) has contributed to stabilising Indigenous employment in the APS, and the Australian Governments’ wider agenda of improving employment outcomes for Indigenous Australians (see Appendix A for more information).

Figure 2 highlights the factors which contribute to low Indigenous employment rates. All of these factors are within the control of agencies and can be overcome. The trouble-shooting guide provided in the Resources section suggest a range of possible strategies to address factors which contribute to low Indigenous employment rates.

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1 At June 2010 the APS had 150,871 ongoing employees, of which 3,307 were Indigenous employees (refer pgs 176 and 152 *State of the Service Report, 2009–10*).
Refer to the trouble-shooting guide in the Resources section for a number of possible solutions for addressing these factors.
Indigenous employment statistics

Indigenous employment reporting

All Commonwealth public sector agencies and organisations need to reach the target. All agencies are encouraged to keep data to assist in tracking strategies and progress towards the Indigenous employment target.

However, comprehensive Indigenous employment statistics are not available across the Commonwealth public sector.

The Australian Public Service Commission (the Commission) has responsibility for supporting the Australian Public Service (APS) response to targets. The Commission keep the APSED (APS Employee Database) and other data which is the primary source of information for Indigenous employment reporting on APS organisations.

There is currently no centralised data point for non-APS organisations to track progress towards the target. The ABS Census Report (2006) reported 0.9% representation of Indigenous employees in over more than 80 non-APS organisations.

For the purposes of reporting under element four of the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation, (the Agreement) the definition of an Indigenous public sector employee is:

A headcount of employees:

1. who have self-identified as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and/or in a position which can only be held by a person of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent; and
2. of State, Territory or Commonwealth public sector organisations (based on the ABS SESCA Level of Government classification); and
3. are in paid employment types that include permanent and non-permanent positions or roles.

An example of the type of data that needs to be collected to enable reporting and tracking of progress is included in the Resources section in the Agency ‘snapshot’ report.

Indigenous employment data

Comprehensive employment data is essential for effective workforce management and planning. In the case of diversity data, those agencies who are confident in the quality of their data, will be in a position to better inform targeted workforce strategies, and measure their progress.

As a guide, alongside standard employment statistics which capture appointments, level of appointment, length of service, and separation, agencies can also ask potential applicants and employees whether they identify as:

- Aboriginal, or
- Torres Strait Islander, or
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.
While it is an individual’s choice to disclose their Indigenous status, having good quality data enables agencies to better track, and understand Indigenous employment.

Across the APS, 24.5% of ongoing employees do not declare whether they are Indigenous or non-Indigenous. This equates to just under 37,000 employees.

Agencies can directly influence their progress against the target by improving their data. Strategies to increase disclosure rates will provide agencies with better quality diversity data, and a more comprehensive understanding of their progress against improving Indigenous employment.

It may be possible to increase disclosure rates if people are informed of:

- why it is important to disclose such information
- what the information will be used for, and how.

Employees may also be more likely to disclose if they feel the workplace is supportive, and free from potential discrimination or harassment.

The value of employment data is significantly enhanced by information which reports on employee experiences in the workplace. The use of staff surveys, exit surveys and exit interviews can highlight particular issues which can be addressed by the agency. Data which reveals factors that are causing Indigenous employees to be less engaged, less satisfied and leave the agency can be fed into ongoing implementation of the IES.

**Indigenous employment in the APS**

Current facts relating to ongoing Indigenous employment in the Australian Public Service (APS), as at 30 June 2010 include:

- Between 2006 and 2010, representation across the APS stabilised at 2.2%.
- Over half (55.8%) of ongoing Indigenous employees were at the APS 1–4 classifications, compared with just over a third (37.8%) of all staff APS-wide.
- The proportion of ongoing Indigenous employees at the APS 5–6 and EL classifications has steadily increased to 41%. Only 0.5% of SES staff are Indigenous.
- Indigenous employees made up 4.2% of all engagements, the highest level since 1997–98.
- Indigenous employees are more likely to separate from the APS than other ongoing employees, with 11.7% separating compared to the overall APS rate of 6.4%.
- They also have a much shorter length of service with 16.8% of Indigenous employees separating within one year of service, compared to 9.1% of non-Indigenous employees.

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2 If the person has been recruited and appointed under a Special Measures position, it is a requirement that they provide proof of their Indigenous heritage.

3 State of the Service Report, 2009–10, p.149

4 Based on 24.5% of 150,871 ongoing APS employees. (refer page 176 State of the Service Report, 2009–10).


7 State of the Service Report, 2009–10, p.182


9 State of the Service Report, 2009–10, p.6


• Four agencies employed 59.8% of all ongoing Indigenous employees. Representation is highest in agencies delivering services predominantly to, or working with, Indigenous communities. Twenty-six APS agencies had no Indigenous employees.13

• The proportion of Indigenous employees with graduate qualifications is much lower than the APS average—28.3% compared with the APS average of 55.5%,14 but compares favourably to the Indigenous population.

• Data on Indigenous status from the Australian Public Service Employment Database (APSED) is available for 75.5% of ongoing employees.15

Further results from the 2009 Census Report: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander APS Employees (2009 Census) revealed that Indigenous APS employees were most likely to be involved in service delivery to the public (41%), with the next most common types of work being program design and/or management (15%) and corporate services (12%).16

Indigenous employment has been affected by changes including changing classification profiles and an increased reliance on graduate qualifications. Recognising the impact these changes have on Indigenous employment is important if agencies are to improve the way they employ and retain Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

What do Indigenous APS employees think?
The 2009 Census produced some positive findings. Indigenous APS employees made the following observations:17

• 96% were willing to put in extra effort to get the job done
• 92% had a clear understanding of how their job contributed to the work of the team
• 87% clearly understood what was expected of them in their job
• 82% were satisfied with their supervisor’s support for them to use flexible working practices
• 81% on average expressed positive views about the job satisfaction factors that they nominated as important
• 78% of those with caring responsibilities were satisfied with their supervisor’s support in assisting them to meet their caring responsibilities
• 76% were satisfied on average with their supervisor’s performance against the attributes that they consider to be important
• 75% agreed that they had the same opportunities to access learning and development as non-Indigenous staff in their agency.

17 See Chapter 5 2009 Census Report: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander APS Employees
However, some results indicate areas for improvement:

- One in four (27%) Indigenous employees reported they experienced bullying and/or harassment, compared to 17% of all APS employees.18
- In regard to career advancement, 46% felt that there were factors that hindered or prevented them from applying for higher positions. The top three reasons cited were:
  - limited number of opportunities at higher level (49%)
  - lack of self confidence (38%)
  - not yet having the necessary qualifications and/or experience (29%).19

The 2009 Census results highlight four key areas that require further attention by agencies:

1. Strengthening the focus on retaining Indigenous employees.
2. Recruiting Indigenous employees.
3. Promotion of wider job opportunities for Indigenous employees.
4. Improving opportunities for career development and advancement.

Initiatives in these areas are likely to assist agencies to contribute to the target of 2.7% Indigenous representation in the Commonwealth public sector by 2015.

**The business case for employing Indigenous Australians**

Being an employer of choice is essential in the face of skills gaps, skills shortages, an ageing workforce and private sector competition. Innovative recruitment and retention strategies can include exploring relatively untapped labour pools, and investing in the recruitment and development of workers from non-traditional areas, including Indigenous people.

The Indigenous population in Australia is growing at a faster rate than the non-Indigenous population and has a very different age profile. About 56% of Indigenous Australians are under 25 years of age, compared with about 33% of the rest of the population.20 The growing number of young working-age Indigenous Australians is a valuable source of labour for Australia’s workforce today, and an essential one for the future. There are ongoing improvements in education and employment outcomes for Indigenous Australians, which will in turn increase the pool of ‘job ready’ candidates.21 In addition, agencies may consider implementing initiatives to improve ‘job readiness’ of potential candidates, such as training in skills relevant to agency business needs.

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18 2009 Census Report: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander APS Employees, p. 40–41
19 2009 Census Report: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander APS Employees, p. 67
20 ABS, 2006 Census data
21 The Review of Government Services report on Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2011, found positive changes for indicators relating to employment and educational attainment.
Indigenous employment:

- Raises the profile of the public sector and promotes it as an employer of choice particularly when the demand for skilled and talented staff is forecast to increase.
- Incorporates Indigenous employees’ varying perspectives, experience and knowledge. This can add substantial value to business outcomes, making significant contributions to the development of government policies and delivery of government services to the Australian community.
- Increases the diversity of agency’s employees, promotes cross-cultural interaction, and enhances knowledge and awareness of, and competence in, working with people from a range of backgrounds.
- Contributes to the COAG policy objectives of ‘closing the gap’.
- Contributes to meeting the 2.7% target by 2015.
- Improves cultural competency, not only in the workplace, but also in the delivery of services to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

Identifying, attracting and engaging with Indigenous candidates will play an important role in improving outcomes for Australian society generally. It will also contribute substantially to the Australian Government’s priority of closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, an ambitious aim that requires ‘sustained action across all levels of government, all sectors’ … and … ‘better engaging Indigenous people in developing solutions…’.

Why an Indigenous employment strategy?

The critical message is clear: agencies need to do more to improve the representation of Indigenous employees. Indigenous employment strategies can drive action, and deliver meaningful employment results.

The National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation mandates action to be taken at all levels of the public sector to significantly improve employment opportunities for Indigenous people. Portfolio secretaries have reiterated this commitment for the whole of the Commonwealth.

For APS agencies, the APS Regulations state each agency must have a Workplace Diversity Plan. As part of this it is expected that a separate IES is developed. Workforce Diversity plans will continue beyond 2015, hence the need to ensure strategies for achieving targets for representation are sustainable.

Developing an IES is an opportunity for agencies to address workforce planning and development issues. An IES can be one pillar in a workforce strategy to attract the best people to meet business needs.

An IES can also help agencies build the skills of all of their employees, so that they are more confident and capable in developing and delivering services to the entire Australian community.

The goals set for any IES require a considerable commitment of financial and human resources, and goodwill.

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Formulating an agency-specific IES is a significant step for agencies towards making that commitment, and the initiatives provided in this Kit will offer some ideas on how to achieve agency goals.

In the APS, Portfolio Secretaries have committed to working collaboratively with portfolio agencies to reach the 2015 target. Touch base with your portfolio colleagues to work together to utilise resources, participate in current initiatives, provide secondment and mentoring opportunities, and provide support in your journey to improving Indigenous employment outcomes in your agency. Similar approaches could be adopted across agencies which are regionally located.

As with all strategic documents, an effective IES has a mechanism for evaluation and review. If you have an existing IES, is it time to consider a review of its current effectiveness? Within the review process, conduct an analysis and consider where the real gains and improvements can be made (use the Agency ‘snapshot’ report in the Resources section to assist with tracking progress). Is there an opportunity to reconnect with other strategic priorities or stakeholders or implement new strategies or tools? *Innovation is the key to moving on from business as usual.*

**Indigenous Employment Strategies and Reconciliation Action Plans**

There is a difference between an IES and a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). An IES focuses on workplace environment, recruitment and retention issues affecting Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees in your agency.

A RAP is a tool to help organisations build positive relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, to identify specific actions that will contribute to the improvement of the lives of Indigenous Australians in a wider sense, not solely focussed on agency business. An organisation’s RAP and IES will overlap in some areas and are important guiding documents to your agency’s efforts in improving outcomes for Indigenous Australians.

A RAP may include an agency-specific IES as an opportunity to increase Indigenous employment in your agency.

Commitment from individual agencies to the implementation of their own RAP in partnership with an IES is likely to result in substantial improvements in Indigenous employment outcomes. It is important however, that all areas within the agency commit to action under both the RAP and IES in order to bring about the cultural change required to make the Commonwealth public sector an employer of choice.

Workplace Environment, Attraction and Recruitment, and Retention

Employment strategies generally include the three key themes of workplace environment, recruitment and retention, with the relative emphasis varying according to the challenges each agency faces.

Workplace Environment

One of the factors driving high separation rates of Indigenous employees is the extent to which workplaces are able to adapt to and support the cultural needs and expectations of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees. This is, in fact, one of the greatest challenges in supporting Indigenous employees.

Agency-specific actions are fundamental to achieving change, and need to involve approaches where workplaces are able to welcome and support Indigenous employees, ultimately attaining higher retention rates.

For example, showing respect and sensitivity for cultural differences, needs and expectations will help to enhance an agency’s reputation as an employer of choice for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

Agencies can also encourage staff to engage with the Indigenous APS Employees Network, which provides considerable professional support to Indigenous employees through networking and mentoring opportunities, as well as avenues for cross-agency collaboration.

Managers play a very important role in setting a team environment that is collaborative and supportive. Employees join organisations, and leave managers. Agencies need to be conscious of how big an impact the workplace environment is having on an employee’s decision to continue with a career in the Commonwealth public sector.

Attraction and Recruitment

All Commonwealth agencies need to focus their efforts to recruit Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders at all levels and find new ways of attracting Indigenous Australians. This includes looking at innovative ways to becoming more active in better preparing Indigenous Australians for public service jobs.

A starting point is to review recruitment processes to ensure they are culturally appropriate and effective. For example, agencies could consider employing non-traditional advertising methods for reaching Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, and encouraging them to apply for advertised positions. Streamlined and efficient recruitment is also likely to increase application rates (for example, selection processes do not always need to include a formal interview, or a written exercise).

The development of initiatives to attract and recruit Indigenous Australians from regional areas will be particularly important for any agency strategy.

24 See, for example, the 2009 Census Report: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander APS Employees, the State of the Service Report 2009—10, and An Evaluation of the APS Employment and Capability Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employees (2008).
In the APS context, centralised, targeted recruitment efforts, coordinated by the Commission under the APS Strategy, have resulted in attracting and recruiting an increased number of Indigenous employees, particularly through the Indigenous Graduate Program, Indigenous Cadetships and the Indigenous Traineeship Program. Encouraging Indigenous employment in 'mainstream' positions is essential to improving attraction and recruitment.

Retention

Progress made through recruitment has been eroded by high separation rates of Indigenous employees. Effective retention measures are required within agencies to address the issue.

Like all employees, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees benefit from a range of practical and innovative retention strategies. For example:

- **Induction**—a welcoming approach, clear expectations, meaningful work from Day 1, general support and delivering on the agency image sold during the recruitment phase are key to establishing early engagement.

- **Professional development**—provide access to opportunities which develop people for their current role, and help build their future career pathway. Career growth is important in engagement and an employee's sense of being valued by their agency.

- **Mentoring**—a valuable method for guiding new employees in their learning about the public sector, and their agency's business and culture, as well as helping them achieve their professional goals.

Highly effective initiatives for eliminating factors that impact negatively on an employee's experiences will be essential in the bid to retain Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees.

The following sections provide further detail on the three focus areas: Workplace Environment, Attraction and Recruitment, and Retention. In addition to the advice provided below, the Indigenous Employment Strategy Checklist and trouble-shooting guide in the Resources section may provide you with further assistance.
FOCUS AREA 1: WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT

Key Points

- Embed your IES as part of your corporate priorities, Human Capital Strategy, Reconciliation Action Plan and Workforce Diversity Plan
- Understand and utilise the experience of Indigenous employees who are working/have worked in your agency
- A good IES depends on
  - a strong rationale
  - workable agency-specific strategies
  - a senior leader to progress initiatives and reinforce agency expectations
  - line manager support to moderate the workplace experience
  - an active Indigenous Employment Coordinator

Planning your Indigenous Employment Strategy

Consider the following points when planning your IES:

- Have a clear rationale—what is the IES for, and what you hope to achieve with it.
- A business case is important for achieving Executive endorsement. It could include:
  - your agency’s staffing profile and employee survey data (both current and historical trends)
  - reference to operating in a tight labour market, and needing to become an employer of choice by adopting innovative recruitment and retention strategies to attract employees from non-traditional labour pools, including Indigenous people
  - drawing attention to your business role and customers, and linking this with the unique skills and experiences of Indigenous Australians. You could also stress that Indigenous employees’ varying perspectives, experience and knowledge can add substantial value to your agency’s business outcomes.
  - What support tools and initiatives your agency can provide Indigenous employees within your organisation.
  - Embed an IES as part of an agency’s corporate priorities, so it becomes part of the everyday ‘way we do business’.
  - Make the links between the IES, existing agency plans and public sector-wide initiatives.
  - Include a commitment to meeting the 2.7% Commonwealth Indigenous employment target. What is your agency’s target and what will be your agency’s role in delivering meaningful employment opportunities?
  - Understand what barriers may exist in your agency which could impact on the IES’ development or implementation.

These elements help map where you are and where you want to go, and they communicate that position and direction clearly to management and employees.
Engagement of Key Stakeholders

Key stakeholders are central to a successful IES. Knowing who they are, why they are important, and how to use them effectively, can shift a plan from ideas to actions. Key stakeholders may include:

• Indigenous employees—A unique perspective on what issues need to be addressed and how to go about it. Engage early during development, and keep in touch during implementation.
• Senior Management—Integral for establishing expectations and influencing the workplace culture. Find a ‘champion’ who can push the business case.
• Line Managers—Integral for moderating a range of factors which impact on retention, engagement, being valued and career experiences. Engage early, maintain contact and define their contribution as part of the IES. If they are aware of the support available to them, your IES is more likely to be effective.
• Agency Working Group—Include Indigenous employees, HR representatives and line managers to develop a realistic and achievable plan.
• Agency staff—Realise the agency’s culture through their actions and working relationships. Provide updates and drafts for consultation prior to implementation. Include information on the IES and agency commitment in the induction process for all new employees.

Getting Started

Start by thinking about the key outcomes to be achieved through the IES. Initiatives and actions need to be realistic and achievable. Some questions to help identify where to start include:

• What do we want to achieve through the IES?
• What commitments have already been made?
• What is the agreed Indigenous employment target for the agency? If the agency is already exceeds 2.7%, what is the agreed (increased) proportional target? How are we tracking?
• What are our current Indigenous representation statistics? (including separation rates and classification profile)
• What current programs/initiatives do we have in place? How effective have they been?
• What are our Indigenous employees telling us we need?
• Where could we improve?
• Where could we link to our workforce plan?
• Where are the opportunities to recruit more Indigenous employees? Are there business areas who aren’t engaged? Do we have any regional locations? Do we need people with a particular skill set? Could we develop a program to develop these skills and qualifications for Indigenous people?
• Develop a reporting framework (an example of what needs to be captured can be found in the Resources section in the Agency ‘snapshot’ report).
There are different ways to approach putting together your IES and some options may be to:

- start identifying the key initiatives that will form the action items of your IES and then develop the business rationale behind the strategy, or
- develop the business rationale behind the strategy and then identify the initiatives for your IES, or
- discuss workforce planning needs with line managers and work with them to develop some tailored strategies to improve Indigenous representation and the workplace culture in their area, or
- look at your agency workforce plan and identify where Indigenous employment fits within that and develop initiatives for your IES.

**Developing your IES Project Plan**

As part of your project plan, you could include:

- an assessment of the agency's business needs
- a list of the agency's stakeholders, as well as a proposed consultation plan
- an evaluation of the costs for developing and implementing an IES, as well as what the cost could be for your agency if it did not do so
- timelines for both the development of the IES and its implementation
- evaluation measures, such as adding questions to staff surveys around staff knowledge of the IES and its relevancy to your agency’s needs.
- evidence of the Agency’s accountability for their target through the rigorous collection of data and reporting.

**Agency Champion**

Executive and management support is essential to the success of an IES. An agency head’s message in an IES is a visible demonstration of their personal commitment to the strategy and their expectation that this commitment is carried throughout the agency. However this is only a starting point.

Manager behaviour has a significant influence on workplace culture and employee behaviour. Managers seen to be actively supporting Indigenous employment can significantly improve outcomes of an IES.

An Agency Champion is the human face of your IES—someone who reinforces the agency’s commitment to support and develop its Indigenous employees.

This role can be filled by a senior executive, Deputy Secretary or by the Agency Head. It is not essential that the Agency Champion is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, it is important that they are committed to promoting Indigenous employment.

Agency Champions:

- promote Indigenous employment both within the agency and externally
- provide strategic direction, support and encouragement for initiatives under the IES
- ensure that Indigenous employment issues are on the agenda in high level planning, including as an ongoing agenda item at Senior Executive meetings
- work closely with the agency’s Indigenous Employment Coordinator, the person responsible for the day to day coordination of the strategy.
Indigenous Employment Coordinator (IEC)

An Indigenous Employment Coordinator (IEC) signals to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people that an agency is serious about its commitment to the employment and development of its Indigenous employees.

In smaller agencies, the IEC’s function may be a part of other responsibilities; in larger agencies, it may be a single purpose role.

The IEC’s main role is keeping the IES on track—helping an agency to ‘walk the talk’ and refine/develop solutions as issues occur.

A key role of the IEC is to support the Agency Champion. While the Agency Champion provides strategic direction and support for the IES, the IEC ensures that initiatives are undertaken in the agency to give practical daily effect to the strategy on the ground.

IECs’ activities may include:

- contributing to the development of the agency’s IES
- evaluating the effectiveness of the IES
- keeping the Agency Champion informed of progress of the IES as well as any other issues that may need highlighting to the senior executive
- working with HR staff to develop and implement effective, targeted recruitment and retention strategies
- engaging team leaders and supervisors
- working closely with other agencies to ensure that the agency’s strategy and programs draw on best practice
- contributing to the induction process of new Indigenous employees, including introducing them to other Indigenous staff and advising them about relevant networks
- advising employees of their rights and obligations, and the relevant policies
- helping identify Indigenous employees’ learning and development needs
- supporting Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees in times of need
- raising issues of concern when needed, through appropriate channels
- networking with other agencies’ IECs.

IECs are usually located with the HR areas of agencies to ensure that the IES is an integrated component of corporate and workforce planning.

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27 IECs are sometimes referred to by other titles, such as Indigenous Liaison Officer or Indigenous Development Coordinator.
Engaging Senior Managers

Gaining the attention of senior managers can be challenging. The Agency Champion can fulfil part of the role of engaging senior managers. However, a targeted strategy to engage senior leaders can assist HR and/or the IEC to support the messages from the Agency Champion, and promote Indigenous employment in the agency.

A strategy to engage senior managers needs to clearly and concisely:

• outline the issue
• state the goal
• provide evidence
• identify solutions that take into account the core business and structures of your agency.

Other options for engaging senior managers are:

• the use of a ‘snapshot’ report on the progress of Indigenous employment in the agency. An example of a Business Area ‘snapshot’ report is provided in the Resources section. This can be multifunctional; it can assist the HR practitioner to have a conversation/s within the organisation, as well, it can serve as a report card for line areas to assess progress towards agreed actions.
• through the Agency Champion, ensure discussions at executive meetings occur on progress and actions. Embed these commitments into the IES.

Engaging Line Managers

Managers are essential stakeholders due to the key role they play in recruitment, employee management and influencing the workplace culture. They have a significant impact on whether or not the IES will be successful. Line managers who value and support the contribution of Indigenous employees are likely to contribute to the delivery of positive employment outcomes.

Options to engage line managers could include:

• scheduled face to face consultations to outline the agency’s commitment to improving Indigenous employment, the role of the IES and developing options for managers to demonstrate their commitment to the IES
• developing and disseminating specific advice around recruiting and managing Indigenous employees
• assisting managers to identify possible employment opportunities and plan the recruitment process
• linking Indigenous employment initiatives to business outcomes
• including information on the IES and the role of the manager in the induction process.

It is important for managers to understand that while there are some specific actions they can take to improve Indigenous employment in the agency, these actions fall within the scope of good people management and workforce practices. Use the Business Area ‘snapshot’ report to facilitate these discussions and identify opportunities for managers to become involved.
Supporting Indigenous employees

Most new starters tend to experience a degree of culture shock when they begin working in the public sector, and even when they move from one agency to another. Indigenous employees who may have moved from familiar communities to urban centres may undergo an even greater shock.

It is important for agencies to acknowledge that Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people's backgrounds and life experiences often differ from those of non-Indigenous employees.

The 2009 Census found that Indigenous employees in the APS often face significant work-life balance challenges due to family and community responsibilities that are unique to their cultural heritage. Findings also indicated that 72% of employees were satisfied with their supervisor's support in assisting them to meet their cultural and community responsibilities. Seventy-eight percent were satisfied with the support made available to assist them with their caring responsibilities.

However, lack of understanding and support in managing these commitments can lower job satisfaction, raise frustration and anxiety levels, and contribute to employees deciding to leave their agency.

Your agency can demonstrate its commitment to supporting Indigenous employees achieve work-life balance in a number of ways, and making sure that all members of the agency understand the importance of Indigenous employees’ needs and expectations is a good start. Providing empathetic and ongoing support to Indigenous employees will play a key role in increasing their confidence, competence and retention. This is not a case of creating unfair advantage for Indigenous employees. Rather, it is an example of working with each employee’s individual needs, and practising principles around good people management.

It may also provide an opportunity to talk clearly and openly about the expectations that your agency has of the performance, conduct and responsibilities of each of its employees. As with similar conversations with other staff, this conversation provides the opportunity to advise any personal circumstances that may impact on their performance so that they can be effectively managed.

Like all staff members, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees need professional support, especially at the beginning of their careers, or when they join an agency. It’s important for your agency to include in its IES initiatives the provision of a safe and appropriate environment for Indigenous employees to communicate and share information. This may include encouraging Indigenous employees to network with other Indigenous employees in the agency, and to participate in external Indigenous APS Employee Network (IAPSEN) activities, and other events.

Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination

The 2009 Census highlighted some major concerns:

• 27% (or one quarter) of Indigenous employees reported they experienced bullying or harassment in a 12 month period.

• Indigenous employees are more likely than all APS employees (17%) to say that they had experienced bullying and/or harassment in their workplace.

28 2009 Census Report: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander APS Employees, p.38–39
29 Some IAPSEN groups are open to Indigenous employees in non-APS Commonwealth agencies
30 2009 Census Report: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander APS Employees, p.40
31 2009 Census Report: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander APS Employees, p.40–41
Bullying and harassment was reported to include:

- humiliation through sarcasm, criticism or insults (52%)
- persistent and unjustified criticism (50%)
- intimidating or aggressive body language (45%)
- deliberately withholding information so that they are less able to do the job (35%).

Bullying, harassment and discrimination have an adverse impact on retention. Indigenous employees who had experienced discrimination were almost twice as likely as those who did not experience discrimination to say they intend to leave the APS in the next three years.

In the APS context, the APS Values and Code of Conduct outline expectations around behaviour in the workplace. However, familiarity with the Values and the Code does not necessarily mean that employees always fully understand and apply them in practice.

An overt, clear statement about what is, and is not, acceptable is essential for everyone. A minimum standard of professionalism, good work, and good behaviour should form the basis of a supportive workplace culture for everyone.

**Respecting culture**

By demonstrating a respect for Indigenous cultures, your agency can raise its profile in Indigenous communities and enhance its reputation as an employer of choice for Indigenous Australians.

Your agency can demonstrate respect for Indigenous culture by:

- Observing cultural protocols that recognise the position of Indigenous Australians as the traditional owners of the land. This might include acknowledging the traditional owners of the land at the opening of key meetings, including staff meetings.
- Inviting a traditional elder to give a Welcome to Country at the beginning of a major function, such as a conference.
- Recognising cultural days of significance, such as the anniversary of the Apology to the Stolen Generation, National Reconciliation and NAIDOC Weeks, and celebrate these in the workplace. In regional areas, there may be other days of cultural significance that employees can recognise and observe. It is recommended that responsibility for acknowledging significant days and events are shared across the agency to foster a strong culture of understanding and respect.
- Using inclusive language and avoiding terms that are offensive to Indigenous people.
- Encouraging respectful, voluntary, two-way discussions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees about their cultural backgrounds and expectations.

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32 2009 Census Report: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander APS Employees, p.42–43
33 2009 Census Report: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander APS Employees, p.43
34 For more information or support on this issue, refer to the Commission’s publication *Respect: Promoting a Culture Free from Harassment and Bullying in the APS* available at [http://www.apsc.gov.au/ethics/respect.html](http://www.apsc.gov.au/ethics/respect.html).
Indigenous culture

Indigenous cultures are not one and the same. Torres Strait Islander people are a separate group from Aboriginal people with their own distinct identity and cultural traditions.

There are hundreds of different language groups and many different cultural ways across Australia. It is important to acknowledge what customs are practiced in your local areas and respect those practises.

Indigenous cultures are not necessarily the same as they once were. They have adapted dramatically across Australian history. They are a rich and resilient culture that is a strong part of Australia's identity.

Some of the features of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people's culture are the special connection to land and sea, commitment to family and community, kinship, recognition and respect as distinctive people and preservation of customs, laws and languages.

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) is Australia's premier institution for information and research about the cultures and lifestyles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, past and present. Visit www.aiatsis.gov.au.

Cultural Awareness and Cultural Competency

Cultural awareness and cultural competency continue to be important in building workplaces which are respectful and understanding of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and communities. The idea behind cultural awareness training is to provide staff with a base level understanding of Indigenous cultures.

Cultural competency on the other hand is focussed more on information and tools to work towards building mutually respectful relationships and ensure that all employees are working effectively and sensitively with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. Working with and learning about Indigenous cultures is not a static process. Rather it is ongoing and focused on bringing about change to the way in which people, and agencies, work.

Cultural awareness, and more so cultural competency training may be a valuable component of your IES, and assist your agency to deliver better outcomes around Indigenous employment.
Some agencies have incorporated training as an online tool that is easily accessible for all staff in combination with access to face-to-face training.

Cultural competency is particularly important to those agencies that provide services and advice to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.
FOCUS AREA 2: ATTRACTION AND RECRUIT

Key Points

- Understand where Indigenous applicants find out about your job opportunities and target advertising effectively.
- Encourage Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people to apply for positions in your agency.
- If you promote yourself as an employer of choice to Indigenous Australians, make sure you deliver the promise.
- Be aware that Indigenous applicants may perform differently at interview due to cultural expectations.

Attracting applicants

Anecdotally, it is believed that many Indigenous Australians find out about employment opportunities through word of mouth, reputation or referral in addition to APS Jobs or national newspapers.

An agency’s website can greatly influence a potential applicant’s opinion about that agency and whether they want to apply for a job. Actions which may have a positive effect include:

- messages about your agency’s commitment to Indigenous employment
- visual images of Indigenous Australians engaged in diverse employment within your agency or in the Commonwealth public sector
- posting your agency’s Indigenous employment strategy on your website
- communicating the benefits of working in your agency—do you provide career pathways, professional development, flexible working practices, a positive workplace culture?

The Commission website includes the Public Calling pages for specific information about Indigenous employment in the APS, such as bulk recruitment rounds for Indigenous graduates, trainees and cadets.

Other activities to consider for attracting applicants include:

- Using career and job fairs, particularly if they are based in regional areas where you can provide job opportunities.
- Using social media to promote your agency
- If your agency requires a specific skill set, consider taking a role to encourage Indigenous Australians to enter these areas. This could include:
  - engaging with universities or other educational institutions to find students
  - establishing a scholarship to encourage people into a particular field of study
  - identifying the core skills and experiences you require, and providing a targeted program to upskill to specialised roles.
• Identify recruitment pathways by:
  • considering alternative pathways into the agency which can be complemented with training applicants to be ‘skill’ or ‘qualification’ ready
  • grow your own talent by identifying existing employees to fill future vacancies (gain promotions), providing career development, training and acting opportunities.
  • considering cadetships, traineeships (including school-based trainees)
  • consider the use of APS Indigenous Pathways Program and opportunities to implement your own centralised recruitment processes where pools of positions are being filled.

**Good recruitment practices**

• Advertise a variety of mainstream positions, not only positions dealing with service delivery to Indigenous communities, through Indigenous media such as Indigenous newspapers like the *Koori Mail, National Indigenous Times*, and *The Torres News*. The National Indigenous Radio Service and regional Indigenous radio stations are also effective ways to tap into specific audiences. Monitor the effectiveness of your advertising to ensure you are targeting potential candidates effectively.


• Identify ways to better engage with Indigenous communities when promoting your agency and job opportunities. Are there current community engagement activities that you could tap into within your agency or other agencies?

• Provide recruitment information to Indigenous community organisations, as well as Indigenous support units at education institutions, employment service providers and Indigenous Coordination Centres. Also consider using local community networks.

• Display eye-catching, poster-size advertisements with an Indigenous focus, e.g. using identifiable Indigenous art styles.

• Make sure all job ads are written in inclusive plain English designed to attract a wide pool of suitable applicants. Avoid jargon, bureaucratic language or terms that are not familiar to the general public.

• Include the tag line ‘Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people are encouraged to apply’ in advertised positions, where applicable.  

• Be prepared to be flexible about application periods. In some cases confining yourself to two weeks may restrict your pool of potential applicants. Longer application opening times can be achieved without compromising overall recruitment timeframes. If application must be tight, can you do anything to raise awareness of the opportunity before it is advertised?

• Use selection criteria based on behavioural indicators rather than capability descriptions, as behavioural indicators are easier understood for people with limited/no public sector experience.

• Be flexible about recruitment practices. Depending on the role, you may be able to adjust your recruitment practices to draw out the best in the candidates. For example, informal discussions may reveal more about the candidates suitability than a formal interview.

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36 For example, consider the behavioural indicators for an APS 6 available at www.apsc.gov.au/ils/ilsaps6profile.pdf.

Selection practices

Public sector application and selection process are daunting for people with little or no public service experience. Consider supplying applicants with information explaining how your agency conducts selection processes, and what the purpose of each step is. Having a contact officer—such as the IEC—to talk potential applicants through what they need to do, and what they can expect through the various steps of the process, may also be helpful.

Every agency has specific needs from its recruitment processes. The approach described in Better, Faster: Streamlining Recruitment in the APS can be used for individual or bulk recruitment processes to accurately analyse, diagnose, define and implement meaningful enhancements to recruitment in any agency. Some of the approaches explained in this publication may assist you to identify more effective recruitment practices when recruiting Indigenous Australians in your agency. Some innovative approaches include job applications that only require a resume and cover statement, with no need for a written application.

Selection panels

Indigenous panel members should be used for Special Measures and Identified Positions. For all other positions, having an Indigenous staff member on a selection panel, particularly if that panel is assessing an Indigenous applicant, is desirable. This simple step can send a message that your agency is an organisation that employs Indigenous people and values their contribution. Providing selection training for relevant Indigenous employees is a good way of ensuring that a pool of experienced and skilled Indigenous panel members is available. You may also be able to locate an Indigenous panel member through your internal Indigenous staff network, IAPSEN, or from another agency.

In some cases, insisting on having an Indigenous person on the panel might not be realistic. For non-Indigenous employees on the selection panel, appropriate backgrounds, training and experience can help to ensure that panel members have the right skills to communicate effectively with Indigenous applicants.

Supporting Indigenous applicants during job interviews

Like many people, Indigenous people often find presenting themselves at an interview with a government agency intimidating, and may be uncomfortable with disclosing personal information. Providing support during the interview can assist the applicant to feel more comfortable and relaxed, helping them to present their claims effectively. Support for Indigenous (and other) applicants can be achieved in various ways:

- providing advice on the interview process in advance so that applicants can prepare themselves adequately, and decide what support they need to participate in the interview process
- allowing applicants to bring a support person with them to the interview who can support them by explaining (although not answering) questions, or just by being there
- allowing the applicant extra time to become comfortable and not feel rushed through the interview
- using appropriate language.
**Special Measures and Identified Positions**

Special Measures provisions and Identified Positions\(^{38}\) can be used by agencies to ensure they have people with the right skills working on programs and policies that impact or engage with Indigenous Australians. In addition, Special Measures provisions can be used to target recruitment activities when recruiting Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

Special Measures provisions are open only to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander applicants. Identified Positions are used for positions that involve the development or delivery of policies, programs and services that impact on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and/or require interaction with Indigenous communities. It does not mean that this position has to be filled by an Indigenous Australian.

Further advice is available from Commission Circular 2010/4: Revision of Special Measures and Identified Positions.\(^{39}\)

**Special Measures**

The *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* enables employers to create employment or promotion opportunities that are only open to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Recruiting under the Special Measures provisions is a direct employment strategy to recruit more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to your agency.

Directions 4.2, 4.3 and 4.6A of the *Public Service Commissioner's Directions* work with the provisions of the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* to enable agency heads to make available employment opportunities that are open only to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants.

When advertising a Special Measures position it is recommended agencies advise what a *special measure* is as other employers use different terminology. You could explain that this position will constitute a *special measure* under the Section 8 (1) of the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* and therefore is open only to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people to apply. Selection document should also make this clear.

Special Measures can be used to recruit to any position including non-ongoing engagements and ongoing engagements, promotions and movements at any level. It is possible to apply Special Measures provisions to SES positions with approval from the Public Service Commissioner prior to advertising.

It is a requirement for applicants for Special Measures positions that they provide proof of their Indigenous heritage and agencies need to be satisfied that this documentation supports that the applicant is:

- of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander decent
- identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- is accepted as such by their community.

The merit selection process is still applied for Special Measures positions. Applicants must demonstrate their relative suitability for the position through a competitive merit selection process.

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\(^{38}\) In some jurisdictions, the term Identified Positions is used to describe positions that can only be filled by an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person. This is not the case in the Commonwealth.


If you would like further information on how the Special Measures provisions could be applied in your agency please contact the Australian Public Service Commission Employment Advice line at [employmentadvice@apsc.gov.au](mailto:employmentadvice@apsc.gov.au).

**Identified Positions**

Identified Positions have generally been used where government work relates to the provision of programs and services to Indigenous Australians. They are not created under any special provision. Their use is based on long-standing convention, and an understanding that careful consideration can lead to the use of selection criteria that explicitly recognise the value of skills and knowledge relevant to working with Indigenous people and communities. The key requirements of the criteria usually are:

- demonstrated knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander societies and cultures, and the issues affecting Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people
- demonstrated ability to communicate sensitively and effectively with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

Identified criteria are consistent with the merit principle and reasonable opportunity values under the *Public Service Act 1999* and do not raise issues of discrimination under the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*, because employment opportunities advertised in this way remain open to all eligible applicants (whether or not they are Indigenous), and the criteria are simply part of the skills set required to do the job.

Agencies have the flexibility to expand or add to the core criteria and are strongly encouraged to do so. Your agency, for example, could modify a criterion to include the ability to communicate with a particular community group. Agencies can adapt these criteria as they see fit for a particular position—they are a guide rather than a prescription.

Current practice in some agencies is to include the identified criteria into all job roles in certain regions in recognition of the strong Indigenous client base (these roles may or may not be advertised as identified positions—that is a decision for each agency to make in each case). The inclusion of the criteria in such cases recognises the importance of knowledge of and communication with Indigenous communities.

The use of identified criteria is not restricted just to those roles where work relates to program and service delivery to Indigenous Australians. Agencies could consider the use of identified criteria more broadly across work groups where applicable. For example, “the ability to communicate effectively with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people in the workplace”.

Further advice is available from the Commission *Circular 2011/4: Revision of Special Measures and Identified Positions.*

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FOCUS AREA 3: RETENTION

Key Points

- Managers play a key role in employee retention and engagement, and should see people management as a key responsibility.
- A good induction process and supportive workplace contribute to retention.
- Career pathways and development opportunities are essential for growing and retaining the future workforce.
- Understanding why Indigenous employees leave your agency will help address negative workplace factors.

Induction

Coming to terms with public service workplace environments can be a challenge for any new recruit. For many Indigenous people, workplace cultures can be very different from their own cultural and family experience—for example in terms of language, social affinity, and family and community obligations.

A thorough induction process is the first step in building a two-way relationship between the agency and the employee. It can help new starters feel valued, included and supported in the workplace from the first day.

It may be particularly useful to bring in an existing Indigenous employee to help with the induction—perhaps an additional role for the IEC.

Effective induction starts during the recruitment phase:
- clearly articulating what the job is and what is expected of the person working in the position
- what supports are available during the process (eg Indigenous Employment Coordinator)
- what assistance will be provided for study and training
- what to expect if relocating e.g. wages and cost of accommodation and groceries compared to where the person is currently living.

As for all new staff, effective induction programs for Indigenous employees should cover:
- the public sector—its structure, agencies and relevant legislation, general conditions, expectations in relation to duties, and learning and development opportunities, and for those in the APS, the APS Values and Code of Conduct
- agency-specific information—the culture of the agency; the roles, structure, and functions of the whole agency; and the particular work undertaken by line areas
- performance agreements—detailing job expectations, clearly articulated measurable work objectives, and skill and career development opportunities
- teaming your new employee with another Indigenous employee as a buddy
- providing details of local Indigenous organisations and other key service providers in the area, particularly if the person has moved to take up the role
- providing local area advice that includes public transport, local eateries, car parking etc and how they can find out more information about local Indigenous networks, sporting clubs and special interest clubs will assist the employee to find their ‘home away from home’.
For APS agencies, the Commission offers an online APS induction program to ensure that new starters in the APS are equipped with a broad understanding of the Australian Government and the roles and responsibilities of the APS. This can complement effective agency induction.

**Cultural Awareness Induction for all Employees**

Part of providing a culturally respectful workplace is ensuring that all employees value and respect the cultures of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. A good way to do this is to include a cultural awareness component to general induction processes, either face to face or online.

Some agencies also incorporate cultural awareness and competence into their performance management systems, ensuring that all staff are required to demonstrate their ability to be socially inclusive in the workplace.

**The importance of good managers**

Line managers play two important roles—delivering outcomes for their agency, and managing people. Their success in the first role is highly dependent upon their ability to effectively manage an engaged and productive team. Their people management skills have a direct influence on the team environment, and employee experiences. Options to support improvement in people management practices include:

- referring managers to a range of support tools that are available to assist them in their people management role\(^41\)
- inclusion of people management measures in performance agreements.

**Providing career and development opportunities**

Career and development opportunities improve retention rates for all employees.

Support from managers is pivotal in identifying development needs and career aspirations. Supervisors have a significant impact on employee retention. It is important that supervisors have the necessary skills to perform their roles in a culturally respectful manner.

Results from the 2009 Census show that Indigenous employees in the APS need to be encouraged to apply for a wider range of job opportunities, and have improved access to career development opportunities.\(^42\) Most comments made through the Census included the need to have more regionally focussed learning and development opportunities rather than always Canberra-centric (which require more time out of the office). Consider the possibility of locally based development opportunities.

A lack of necessary qualifications and experience is one of the most commonly identified factors hindering or preventing Indigenous staff from seeking higher positions.\(^43\)

An important approach through the IES could be to include strategies that address the following:

- Appropriate personal and professional development opportunities to equip Indigenous employees with the skills and confidence to work in the area of their choice.
- Providing assistance to Indigenous employees to map their career pathways and to consider where greater mobility can be achieved.

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\(^{42}\) 2009 Census Report: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander APS Employees, p.67.

\(^{43}\) 2009 Census Report: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander APS Employees, p.66.
**Talent Management Program**

You may wish to consider the implementation of a talent management program, outside of the performance management program. A talent management program would identify those Indigenous employees with potential to become managers or senior executives, and formulate a career development plan to help employees reach those goals. It could also include the implementation of a senior coach and mobility opportunities.

Agency size and development needs would determine whether an ‘in-house’ or externally sourced program would be more beneficial.44

**Indigenous Career Pathways/Capability Development Programs**

Mobility across organisations is fundamental to expanding employee skills and capabilities. Options may include secondment opportunities to portfolio agencies or externally to the private or community sectors.

There are also Indigenous-specific pathways for career advancement opportunities for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees. APS agencies can access a range of generic and Indigenous-specific training courses developed by the Commission, including career development through the Career Trek program. This has been designed particularly for regionally-based staff and those employed by small to medium sized agencies.45

Some agencies run their own Indigenous development programs or general trainee and graduate programs with nominated places for Indigenous Australians. For example, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) coordinates an Indigenous Australian Government Development Program. The program is open to all Australian Government Departments and agencies to participate and provides a pathway to employment for Indigenous Australians. Participants on the program are employed as ongoing APS 3 employees and undertake a Diploma of Government in Contract Management, Community Capacity or Project Management. More information about this program can be found on DEEWR’s website [http://www.deewr.gov.au/Indigenous/Employment/Programs/IAGDP/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Indigenous/Employment/Programs/IAGDP/Pages/default.aspx).

Your agency can also support Indigenous employees undertaking formal studies or tertiary qualifications in fields which link to agency objectives, or which meet employees’ career development needs. That support might include:

- paid leave to travel to attend classes, undertake examinations, or for study purposes
- additional leave to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees who undertake part-time study
- payment of HECS fees
- scholarships, study awards or other mechanisms which allow employees to undertake their studies full-time.

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Mentoring

Mentoring aims to help individuals achieve their full potential, and includes guidance and advice on specific agency business challenges, including strategy and policy.

Through your IES, your agency can establish formal mentoring arrangements for Indigenous employees. You might consider including mentoring training for interested employees, or people from outside the agency may be approached to take on a mentoring role.

I started in the Australian Public Service in the late 80s. Back then my only career aspiration was to become an Aboriginal Liaison Officer, which was at the ASO4 level. I did not know how I was going to get there, but I knew that was where I wanted to be in the long term. But how would I get there?

I discussed with a senior member of staff how I could become an Aboriginal Liaison Officer. It was through this informal chat that my career plan and the required skills set were identified and mapped out. This senior staff member was my very first Mentor.

My Mentors have provided me with open and honest discussions, constructive feedback, assisted with looking at what skills I needed to improve and celebrated my successes along the way. I truly believe that I would not be where I am today without the advice, guidance and support of my Mentors.

Mentors need to:

• be able to provide useful advice, drawing on their own experience and knowledge
• generate respect and trust in their relationships
• communicate openly and honestly about personal, often difficult, issues
• know where the boundaries are and not play an advocate role.

Mentors for Indigenous staff don’t have to be Indigenous people. Often the provision of a different perspective is useful in itself.

I have Mentors that are employed with the APS and some that come from my Aboriginal community. I find that this approach to my Mentor selection provides me with the balance I need. On occasions, I have found myself implementing polices that do not sit well with my Aboriginal value system. Through my Mentor relationships, I have been able to discuss this conflict from both angles. I might not always come up with a solution but sometimes just talking about how I am feeling with my Mentors is enough.

Mentors can have a remarkable and long-lasting impact on those they mentor.

My career journey has been a challenge but very rewarding. I have come a long way from being an ASO1. I am happy to say that I did become an Aboriginal Liaison Officer. I am now an Executive Level 1. I would not be here without the help of my Mentors.

My Mentors encourage me, inspire me and keep me humble. My Mentors have been with me every step of my career to date and they will be definitely with me in the future.
Staff networks

Networking and peer support is important to the wellbeing and morale of many Indigenous employees. Establishing and/or providing access to an Indigenous network is a positive way for your agency to show support to Indigenous employees. Employees may also find the mentor who is right for them through attendance in networks.

A number of agencies have their own agency-specific Indigenous staff networks. Indigenous agency-based staff networks can provide opportunities for Indigenous employees to share experiences, provide support, and be a sounding board. They can also help identify areas where employees need or wish to increase their skills.

Network meetings can be either formal or informal. Formal meetings can provide greater structure and direction for the Indigenous employee network and could have a learning component. They may involve a HR representative, and may also be used to gain feedback on the effectiveness of the agency's IES. Informal meetings may provide all of the above, be just as effective, and be run completely by your Indigenous staff. They may provide a relaxed way to welcome new employees to your agency, farewell old employees, and for employees to share experiences and insights.

Indigenous Australian Public Service Employee Network (IAPSEN)

The IAPSEN consists of a number of individual APS Indigenous employee networks in capital cities and regional locations around the country. The IAPSEN was established to provide a supportive environment, and to create a sense of community that is empathetic to Indigenous employees. The network can also be used to discuss broader issues that may be impacting on Indigenous employees in the public sector.

While predominately targeted towards APS employees, some IAPSEN groups include Indigenous employees from non-APS Commonwealth agencies.

Providing Indigenous employees with permission and encouragement to attend IAPSEN meetings is one way that managers and agencies can show their support and commitment to Indigenous employment.

RESOURCES

The Resources section includes the following:

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<td>A quick reference guide which provides a range of solutions to common issues</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>agencies may be facing around Indigenous employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency ‘snapshot’ report</td>
<td>An agency-level report for reporting progress against Indigenous employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business area ‘snapshot’ report</td>
<td>A report to engage senior managers by identifying issues around Indigenous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>employment at the business area level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Useful links and support</td>
<td>A list of websites, publications and support available to assist in your</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>agency’s approach to Indigenous employment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Indigenous Employment Strategy Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Actions</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| **Planning**| - understand guiding framework (COAG and the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation)  
- link IES to corporate documents, including workforce plan, diversity plan, RAP  
- review employment data and staff surveys to develop understanding of starting point  
- understand the current workplace experience for Indigenous employees  
- investigate which factors impact on Indigenous employment rates in your agency  
- develop agency rationale—what you want to do and why, identify agency target  
- identify tools and initiatives to support your IES  
- develop business case                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|             | (Further information is available in the Introduction, and Focus Area 1: Workplace Environment)                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| **Development**| - identify Agency Champion and agree on role  
- engage Indigenous employees to provide input on issues and assist in developing strategies  
- engage Senior Managers—use snapshot report combined with key messages from Agency Champion  
- engage Line Managers—use snapshot report combined with key messages from Agency Champion and Senior Managers  
- establishing agency working group – include Indigenous employees, HR and Line Managers  
- draft the IES  
  - rationale  
  - agency challenges  
  - agency goals  
  - agencies strategies (e.g. attraction, recruitment, workplace environment, career pathways, data quality etc)  
  - engage agency staff (via intranet, staff meetings etc) to communicate key messages and commitments  
  - develop IES reporting framework with identified performance measures and timeframes                                                                                                                                 |
|             | (Further information is available in Focus Area 1: Workplace Environment, Focus Area 2: Attraction and Recruitment, Focus Area 3: Retention, and the Trouble-shooting Guide, Agency ‘snapshot’ report and Business Area ‘snapshot’ report in the Resources Section) |
| **Implementation**| - monitor progress of strategies  
- analyse outcomes of strategies  
- communicate results to key stakeholders, highlighting positive improvements, and areas for continued action  
- feed results into sector-wide reporting (as or if required)  
- review IES and amend on an annual basis                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|             | (Information on these actions is available in Focus Area 1: Workplace Environment, Focus Area 2: Attraction and Recruitment, Focus Area 3: Retention, and the Trouble-shooting Guide, Agency ‘snapshot’ report and Business Area ‘snapshot’ report in the Resources Section) |
## Trouble-shooting Guide

The following trouble-shooting guide is intended to be used as a quick reference tool, to provide agencies with suggested solutions to address a range of challenges they may be facing. The solutions are a guide only, and may have to be adjusted relative to an agency’s business needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Possible Solutions</th>
<th>Page Ref</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor Corporate Commitment</td>
<td>Ineffective IES</td>
<td>• develop IES with key stakeholders, include a clear rationale and strategies which meet agency needs</td>
<td>14–16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| | Unclear goals for Indigenous employment | • identify agency employment target  
• identify agency goals | 14–16 |
| | Lack of stakeholder involvement | • identify key stakeholders, including Agency Champion to communicate agency commitments  
• engage with ‘snapshot report’ | 15–18 |
| | Poor diversity data | • Improve data quality to support IES rationale and measure progress | 6–7 |
| Attracting suitable candidates | Poor agency reputation | • understand the workplace experiences of current/former Indigenous employees and make changes where required  
• promote your agency’s role in Indigenous employment. Consider putting the following on your website  
• agency commitment to Indigenous employment outcomes  
• Reconciliation Action Plan  
• Indigenous Employment Strategy  
• Images of Indigenous employees working in your agency  
• use social media to market your agency | 7, 22 |
| | Low employee value proposition | • be clear about what kind of experience applicants will have if they work with your agency. Does your agency offer:  
• a comprehensive training and development program  
• broad experiences across a range of fields, or specialised experiences in a niche area  
• career management with opportunities for promotion  
• an open and inclusive workplace culture  
• family friendly practices and support | 22 |
| | Limited links with the Indigenous employment sector | • make contact with employment providers and educational institutions to understand from where potential applicants can be sourced  
• establish networks with the local Indigenous community to promote public sector employment and job opportunities | 22–23, 23 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Possible Solutions</th>
<th>Page Ref</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Attracting suitable candidates       | Limited initiatives to grow pool of potential applicants for vacant positions | Identify recruitment pathways by:  
  • engaging with universities or other educational institutions to find students  
  • establishing a scholarship to encourage people into a particular field of study  
  • identifying the core skills and experiences you require, and providing a targeted program to upskill to specialised roles  
  • considering alternative pathways into the agency which can be complemented with training applicants to be ‘skill’ or ‘qualification’ ready  
  • grow your own talent by identifying existing employees to fill future vacancies (gain promotions), providing career development, training and acting opportunities.  
  • considering cadetships, traineeships (including school-based trainees)  
  • consider the use of APS Indigenous Pathways Programs and opportunities to implement internal centralised recruitment models | 22–23    |
| Recruiting Indigenous employees      | Onerous application requirements                                      | • streamline the recruitment process  
  • use behavioural indicators in selection criteria rather than capability descriptions  
  • provide standardised advice on what to expect during the recruitment process  
  • ensure cultural competency during recruitment process | 22–23    |
|                                      | Short application open times                                           | • extend application open times in recognition that Indigenous people often communicate employment opportunities via ‘word of mouth’ | 22–23    |
|                                      | Ineffective advertising                                                | • understand where and how you can reach the largest number of potential applicants  
  • include the tag line ‘Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people are encouraged to apply’ in your advertising, where applicable  
  • consider increasing the use of quarantined positions within an agency, use of Special Measures provisions and Identified Positions | 22–23    |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Possible Solutions</th>
<th>Page Ref</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Retaining Indigenous employees | Non-supportive practices | • develop an Indigenous Employment Strategy  
• use an Agency Champion to promote Indigenous employment  
• evaluate your IES and suggest changes or new ideas to overcome issues—fellow IECs or agency HR areas may have some ideas for you  
• communicate with all stakeholders on the value and benefits of supporting Indigenous employment  
• gather feedback from Indigenous employees on their workplace experiences, to better inform strategies | 14–16  
16  
15  
16–18  
7 |
| Culture of bullying and harassment | | • embark on a process to bring about positive cultural change, including the use of resources, training and a statement from the Agency Head  
• ensure all employees are aware of what is considered to be bullying and harassment, the processes for dealing with issues and what the consequences are | 19–20 |
| Lack of support for Indigenous employees | | • use an Agency Champion to promote Indigenous employment  
• establish staff networks for Indigenous staff within your agency, or portfolio  
• allow staff to attend Indigenous events and networks in the public sector | 16  
19,31  
19,31 |
| Low levels of cultural awareness and competency | | • embark on a process to bring about positive cultural change, including the use of resources, training and a statement from the Agency Head. | 20–21 |
| Poor managers – low staff engagement and managing for performance | | • include KPIs around people management in performance agreements  
• provide managers with resources and access to training to improve people management outcomes  
• engage with ‘snapshot report’ | 28  
Resources |
| Poor induction process | | • develop a comprehensive induction process at both the team and agency level | 27–28 |
| Limited/no support for career management | | • encourage managers to hold ongoing discussions with their employees around developing and managing their careers  
• ensure managers are aware of programs they are able to utilise to provide career opportunities | 28–30 |
| Limited/no career development | | • strengthen links between performance agreements and learning and development plans to ensure meaningful opportunities can be accessed  
• encourage managers to hold ongoing discussions with their employees around developing and managing their careers | 28–30 |
Agency ‘snapshot’ report

Purpose: This report is designed to assist agencies to track their progress against Indigenous employment, and identify issues which can inform ongoing actions.

Target by 2015

To meet their target of [insert], [insert agency name] will need to increase current ongoing staffing levels by [insert number] Indigenous employees (this requires the retention of all current Indigenous staff). This equates to an additional [insert number] ongoing Indigenous employees each year (from 2010).

Representation over time

The following table shows that [insert agency name] needs to [insert high level action, e.g. improve recruitment, improve separation rates etc)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(30 June YYYY)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indigenous</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indigenous Percentage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indigenous Engagements (total engagements)</td>
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<td>Indigenous Transfers to agency</td>
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<td>Indigenous Separations</td>
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<td>Indigenous Transfers from agency</td>
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<td>No data percentage</td>
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<tr>
<td>APS average</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff (non-ongoing)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-ongoing Indigenous employees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indigenous percentage (ongoing and non-ongoing)</td>
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<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The following table has been developed to summarise the different strategies you can utilise to reach your Indigenous employment target in regards to recruitment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Recruitment program</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APSC programs</td>
<td>Graduate</td>
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<td>Cadet</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trainee</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEEWR programs</td>
<td>IAGDP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agency specific</td>
<td>Graduate</td>
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<td>Cadet</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Trainee</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work experience</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School to work program</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pre-recruitment Course</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scholarship</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bulk round recruitment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Special Measures</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identified Positions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standard Recruitment Process</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Yearly sub-totals**

**Yearly impact planned recruitment will have on target of [X] new ongoing positions**

---

### Indigenous separations by Classification*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Trainee</th>
<th>Grad</th>
<th>APS 1</th>
<th>APS 2</th>
<th>APS 3</th>
<th>APS 4</th>
<th>APS 5</th>
<th>APS 6</th>
<th>EL 1</th>
<th>EL 2</th>
<th>SES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number in YYYY/YY</td>
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<td>Number in 2010/11</td>
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<td>Number in 2008/09</td>
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</table>

*Non-APS agencies can substitute relevant classifications.
### Indigenous representation by Classification (at 30 June YYYY)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Trainee</th>
<th>Grad</th>
<th>APS 1</th>
<th>APS 2</th>
<th>APS 3</th>
<th>APS 4</th>
<th>APS 5</th>
<th>APS 6</th>
<th>EL 1</th>
<th>EL 2</th>
<th>SES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Indigenous in YYYY</td>
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<td>Number of Indigenous in YYYY</td>
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### Age profile of Indigenous employees (at 30 June YYYY)

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<td>Number</td>
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</table>

### Employment opportunities by geographic location (optional)

Where agencies provide employment opportunities across a number of regions, it may be beneficial to capture data by geographic location including, how many positions have been filled, and the number filled by Indigenous employees.

### Key Indigenous Census/Survey results

What are the key issues from the APS Indigenous Employees Census that are relevant to your agency (eg retention initiatives, job satisfaction). If Census results aren't available for your agency, have internal agency surveys been conducted?

### Summary of progress towards the target and achievement of strategic improvements

Provide statements and information to demonstrate progress and achievement towards target and strategy implementation. This may include the following:

1. Policies and strategies that are in place to support achieving the targets.
2. Demonstration projects, pilots or new initiatives which would fill the gap.
3. An improvement in data quality to monitor progress towards the public sector Indigenous employment target through: increased voluntary disclosure of diversity data by Indigenous employees; and enhanced reporting arrangements.
Business Area ‘snapshot’ report

Purpose: This report is designed to assist in engaging senior managers, by identifying issues around Indigenous employment at the group level. Agencies are encouraged to adapt the report to meet their needs. The Australian Public Service Commission can provide assistance in identifying strategies to address challenges.

Indigenous employment in: [insert agency name]

Commonwealth Target: Increase Indigenous representation to 2.7% by 2015.

Agency Target: Increase Indigenous representation to [insert percentage] by 2015. This equates to an additional [insert number] ongoing Indigenous employees each year (from 2011)

AGENCY LEVEL: Representation over time

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indigenous Employees</td>
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GROUP LEVEL: Recruitment

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of positions advertised</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Number of Indigenous applicants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Indigenous appointments</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

GROUP SNAPSHOT—KEY INDICATORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>[YEAR]</th>
<th>[YEAR]</th>
<th>[YEAR]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Indigenous employees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support and development activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of separations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for separation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key challenges for Group: [insert challenges which could include attracting applicants with the right skill sets, improving workplace culture, improving people management, etc]

Key strategies for Group: [insert key actions which could include linking to the Indigenous employment sector, addressing cultural competency, reinforcing senior management commitment etc.]
Useful Links and Support

**Policy**


**Workplace Environment**


**Attraction and Recruitment**

Behavioural indicators, examples of individual profiles (e.g. APS 6) are available at [www.apsc.gov.au/ils/index.html](http://www.apsc.gov.au/ils/index.html).


**Retention**


**Indigenous cultures**


Support from the Commission

The Commission has developed, and continues to develop, a range of products and services to support Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people to gain APS employment, and help agencies to employ and retain Indigenous employees.

Objective 1—Facilitating Pathways to Employment

• Indigenous graduate and cadetship programs are targeted to attract and support Indigenous university students and graduates to a variety of APS agencies, across a range of disciplines.
• The APS Indigenous Traineeship Program which runs over 12 months, and is designed to prepare participants for a career with the APS.
• The publications Cracking the Code and Getting a Job provide advice on how to apply for jobs, address selection criteria, and what to expect during the interview process.

Objective 2—Development of existing Indigenous employees’ skills and career pathways

• Career Trek is a series of professional development workshops specifically designed for APS 1–6, with EL employees able to attend as well. The Career Trek workshops are delivered across Australia, including in most capital cities and remote areas at no cost to the participants in APS agencies.
• The Commission has implemented some targeted development opportunities for EL employees. Contact the Indigenous Liaison Officer to discuss these opportunities.

Objective 3—Increased retention of existing Indigenous employees

• An annual national conference for Indigenous APS employees to share experiences, celebrate successes and develop strategies for staying and succeeding in the APS environment.
• Indigenous APS Employees Network (IAPSEN) is an integral part of the APS Strategy by providing opportunities for Indigenous APS employees to share experiences, network and support one another.
• The second Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander census was undertaken in 2009 to gain greater insight into Indigenous Australians’ experience of employment in the APS.

Objective 4—Support for employers

• An APS Indigenous Liaison Officer has been appointed within the Commission to provide advice to agencies and Indigenous people on a range of Indigenous employment issues.
• The Commission will coordinate the Indigenous HR Forum with the support of a working group of participating agencies. The forum is designed to provide a mechanism to communicate initiatives that will help attract, recruit, develop and retain Indigenous employees.

To support all four objectives the Commission has established an Indigenous Governance Network to operate as an informal reference group that can be consulted on issues relating to the implementation of the APS Strategy. The network consists of all Indigenous SES officers with experience in, and understanding of, the issues confronting Indigenous employees in the agency workplaces.

APPENDIX A

Key elements of the APS Strategy

The *APS Employment and Capability Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employees* (the APS Strategy) has been operational since 2005. An independent evaluation in 2008 found that the APS Strategy has been a significant factor in arresting the decline in the representation of Aboriginals and/or Torres Strait Islanders in the APS, and has succeeded in boosting the profile of the APS as an employer of choice for Indigenous Australians.

The APS Strategy has been aligned to the COAG commitments, and consists of four key objectives:

1. Attract more Indigenous Australians to the APS and facilitate pathways to their employment through the Commission's centralised recruitment programs.
2. Provide current Indigenous employees with opportunities for skills and career development across APS agencies, including staff in regional and remote areas.
3. Assist agencies to create and maintain supportive and culturally respectful workplaces to ensure Indigenous employees’ enjoy a positive experience in the APS leading to improved retention rates.
4. Support employers to enhance their own and their agency’s skills in working with and sustaining Indigenous staff.

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