



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Training**  
and **Workforce Development**

# 2019

# ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY



## Message from Corporate Executive

The Department of Training and Workforce Development acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to their cultures and to elders past and present.

Corporate Executive are pleased to endorse the Department's Aboriginal Employment Strategy. This Strategy supports our vision for Reconciliation, delivering on a number of action items under our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2017-2019. The Strategy aligns to and advances the objectives of the Public Sector Commission's *Attract, appoint and advance: An employment strategy for Aboriginal people*.



The Department plays an important role in helping to reduce disadvantage and improve economic participation among Aboriginal people. We are actively engaged in providing services that assist Aboriginal people to gain vocational skills and qualifications, find employment or further their career. The Department is proud of the work in this space as it is an important contribution to 'closing the gap' between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

As an employer we are committed to growing and developing our Aboriginal employees. The Strategy reflects the Public Sector Commission's key priorities to **Attract** Aboriginal people to work for the Department, **Appoint** Aboriginal people to positions commensurate with their skills and expertise, **Advance** the careers of Aboriginal employees and develop Aboriginal leaders.

The Department will continue to grow our consultation and engagement with the Aboriginal community on employment and training initiatives. This Strategy has been developed in consultation with members of the Department's Aboriginal Employees Reference Group (AERG) and will be driven by Corporate Executive and the Corporate Leadership Group.

All employees have responsibility to engage in and support initiatives to improve Aboriginal employment opportunities in the Department.

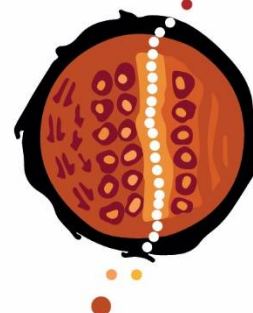
Corporate Executive  
February 2019

### Statement

*We respectfully refer to Torres Strait Islander Australians as Aboriginal throughout the Aboriginal Employment Strategy.*

# Birak

**Birak season – hot and dry**  
Noongar burned sections of scrubland to force animals into the open.



## Background

The Closing the Gap framework was established in 2008 to address Indigenous disadvantage. The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to a national target of “halving the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people within a decade (by 2018)”.

The Government announced a Commonwealth public sector target of 3% Aboriginal representation by 2018. In response, the Western Australian public sector agreed to a target of 3.2% of Aboriginal people represented in public employment to be achieved by 2019.

### *Current Status*

The Department has 11<sup>1</sup> employees that have identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, representing 2.64% of the workforce. The majority of Aboriginal employees are located in the Service Delivery directorate.

Historically, the Department’s representation of Aboriginal employees exceeded the employment target for a number of years. As part of the State Government announcement to develop the Jobs and Skills Centres seven Department Aboriginal employees transferred to the TAFE Colleges.

## Our Vision for Aboriginal Employment

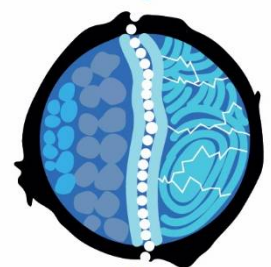
The Aboriginal Employment Strategy has been developed as an action from the Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2017-19 as a measure to improve and increase Aboriginal employment outcomes within the workforce. The Department is committed to attracting and retaining Aboriginal people to improve equal opportunity outcomes for employees. The Department will adopt innovative and culturally appropriate attraction, recruitment and retention strategies to become an employer of choice for Aboriginal people. It is acknowledged employees who feel they are supported and valued are more likely to remain with the Department.

The Strategy will provide a set of actions to inspire more Aboriginal people to work across directorates and levels of the organisation. This is a live document where strategies and objectives can be adjusted to meet employment targets and the requirements of the Department.

The Strategy focuses on sustainable employment pathways for future and existing Aboriginal employees. It endeavours to achieve this by increasing the number of Aboriginal people applying for positions and achieving career aspirations through three key priorities as outlined below.

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<sup>1</sup> DWTD Workforce Profile report as at 7 January 2019



# Key priority areas

## Attract

In accordance with the Public Sector Commission's *Employing for diversity: Equal opportunity in public employment*, the Department will implement human resource practices that optimise opportunities for Aboriginal people. The Department will create a workplace environment that is culturally secure and makes Aboriginal employees feel welcome, supported and respected.

### Current Status

The Department builds culturally secure workplaces through:

- Supporting Aboriginal employees to network and contribute towards raising awareness of workplace policies, practices and actions that impact on Aboriginal employees.
- Promoting and celebrating Aboriginal culture and key events.
- Engaging staff in the development and implementation of the Reconciliation Action Plan.
- Providing regular Aboriginal Cultural Awareness training.

Strategies currently in place to attract Aboriginal people to job vacancies include:

- A link in job adverts to career advice and development services provided by the Jobs and Skills Centres.
- Advertising all vacancies on JobsWA and the Aboriginal Jobs Board.
- Diversity statement in all jobs adverts encouraging applications from Aboriginal people.
- Encouraging Aboriginal employees to attend recruitment panel training and to participate on recruitment panels for the Department and other Government agencies.
- Government Traineeship program.

The Department's cultural competence framework has delivered a sound baseline of cultural competence and awareness across the Department. Actions in this section will enrich the cultural proficiency of the workforce and allow staff to gain a deeper understanding of Aboriginal culture.

## Actions

1. Implement a Cultural Awareness Learning Strategy to broaden employee's knowledge and support line managers of Aboriginal employees.
2. Promote and support flexible workplace practices.
3. Explore graduate and internship programs, school-based traineeships and work experience opportunities for Aboriginal people.
4. Update the Internet to promote the Department as an employer who encourages, celebrates and promotes diversity and inclusion.
5. Establish an Aboriginal Employment register to give the Department a database of Aboriginal candidates who have expressed an interest in working in the Department.
6. Explore the option for the Department to have a presence at job expos to promote the Department and current vacancies.
7. Continue to fund the Government Traineeship Program to attract Aboriginal people to employment within the Department.
8. Connect with the Jobs and Skills Centres to identify suitable job applicants.
9. As a measure to achieve equality encourage managers to use section 50(d) and 51 of the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* to fill relevant positions.
10. Ensure recruitment practices provide equal employment opportunities for diversity groups.
11. Encourage staff to attend cultural awareness training to develop better ways of working and engaging with Aboriginal people.
12. Promote Public Sector Commission's Sharing Culture online mandatory training.

Djilba

### Djilba season – cold time with lessening rains

Usually the coldest part of the year, with clear, cold days and nights, and warmer, rainy and windy periods. Roots were collected. Emus, possums and kangaroo were hunted.





## Appoint

As outlined in the [Public Sector Commissioners Circular: Measures to achieve equality in human resource management](#) the Department will use initiatives under the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* to optimise opportunities for Aboriginal people.

### Current Status

Strategies currently in place to appoint Aboriginal people to job vacancies include:

- Aboriginal employees are encouraged and supported to apply for promotional opportunities within the Department.
- Aboriginal employees participate in job application and interview skills training.

Our strategies to build a culturally secure workplace are having a positive impact. Staff have acknowledged that the Department is welcoming of people from diverse backgrounds and those employees from diversity groups are treated with equal respect. A review of recruitment practices will ensure there are no barriers that may be preventing Aboriginal people from applying for job vacancies.

The actions in this section are aimed at providing improved employment opportunities for Aboriginal people and will contribute to 'closing the gap' in employment participation for Aboriginal people.

## Actions

1. Implement a rotation system in the Traineeship program to provide Aboriginal trainees with a good understanding of the role and responsibilities of each directorate.
2. Continue to provide Aboriginal employees with training in job applications and interview techniques.
3. Provide opportunities for Aboriginal employees to participate on selection panels.
4. Allocate a mentor/buddy for all new Aboriginal staff.
5. Promote job vacancies under section 50(d) and 51 of the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*.
6. Encourage Aboriginal employees to complete selection panel training and establish a list of employees interested in being on a selection panel.

# Kambarang

### Kambarang season – warming and finishing

Longer dry periods and fewer cold fronts cross the coast. The height of the wildflower season. Noongar moved towards the coast where frogs, tortoises and freshwater crayfish were caught.



## Advance

Key to the success of this Strategy is the need to provide opportunities for career development and employment pathways for Aboriginal employees to equip them with the skills and experience to progress their career. The Department will allocate resources towards professional and leadership development for Aboriginal employees to develop and build knowledge of the business of the Department and Government. This will be achieved through the 70-20-10 learning model, a blend of formal learning, mentoring and career planning and development.

The Performance Development system will be the mechanism for Aboriginal employees to discuss and agree on career plans that will be used to support career aspirations.

The Department will continue to encourage Aboriginal employees to participate in the Interagency-mentoring program to ready themselves for leadership opportunities and to share knowledge and experience.

### Current Status

The majority of Aboriginal employees hold a Certificate III level qualification and have expressed an interest in obtaining further qualifications, with leadership and management, career advising and Government qualifications rating highly.

To support Aboriginal employees to progress further in their career, the Department will provide support for employees to develop and progress career plans and identify professional development opportunities and employment pathways.

## Actions

1. Fund Aboriginal employees to attain formal qualifications in Government or Leadership.
2. Encourage Aboriginal employees to participate in the Department's mentoring program.
3. Establish a list of staff that would be willing to participate in informal mentoring arrangements with Aboriginal employees.
4. Continue to strengthen the Aboriginal Employees Reference Group and encourage members to submit Good Oil articles highlighting the achievements of Aboriginal employees.
5. Promote and encourage Aboriginal employees to apply for advertised vacancies.
6. Investigate options to provide employment pathways for trainees post traineeship.

## Monitoring and Reporting

Human Resources will report annually to Corporate Executive on the progress and achievements and targets outlined below:

- Analysis of the equity index;
- Progress in the achievement of Aboriginal employment targets;
- Filling of vacancies using measures to achieve equality; and
- Career development and professional development initiatives provided.



**Bunuru season – warm easterly winds**  
 Hottest part of the year, with sparse rainfall throughout.  
 Noongar moved to estuaries for fishing.

