



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development and Communications

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

Employment and Retention Strategy

2020 – 2022



We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to the land and waters. We value the contribution and rich cultural heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We are committed to empowering and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through our work and our actions.



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OUR STRATEGY



We recognise embracing the rich cultural heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through the acknowledgement of their connection to land, water and country broadens our perspective to develop better policy and program outcomes for all Australians. Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and Retention Strategy (the Strategy) is based on this principle.

Our Strategy is reflective of the belief that generating meaningful career opportunities and pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is a department-wide responsibility and we, as individuals, each have a critical role to play in ensuring its success.

As at 31 July 2020, the department comprised a total of 44 staff members who chose to identify as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, which equates to 2.8 per cent of the department's workforce.

Our Strategy is designed to be equal parts ambitious and achievable, with a goal to see a sustainable increase in the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in our workforce to five per cent by December 2022.

Through the remainder of the Strategy, the term 'Indigenous' has been used to collectively refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. However, we acknowledge the differences in culture, history and language, not just between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, but also between communities.



OUR COMMITMENT

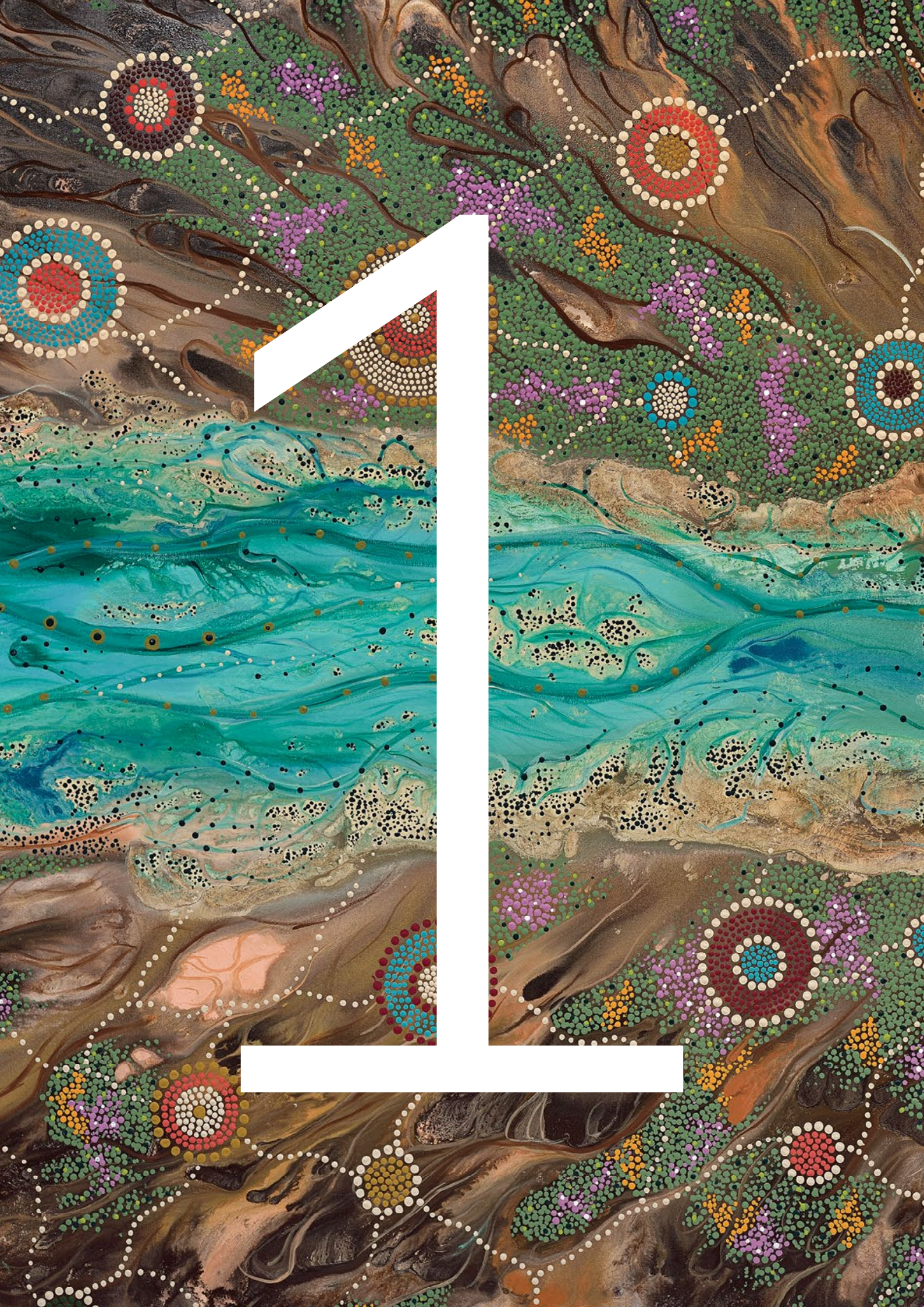


To be successful, we recognise we will need to assess and refine our Value Proposition for Indigenous employees and actively test, review and refine our accepted systems, processes and structures during the implementation of this Strategy.

We believe we can achieve our goal if we as a department are committed to action across three critical areas of focus:

- Creating, increasing and sustaining employment opportunities
- Providing meaningful career pathways and capability development opportunities
- Building and sustaining a culturally capable and culturally safe workplace

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting in relation to our outcomes as we implement the Strategy is critical. To ensure the Strategy becomes part of the ongoing conversation with our senior leadership cohort, our Indigenous Champion, on behalf of the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group, and supported by the Human Resources Branch, will report quarterly to the Operations Committee, through the Diversity and Inclusion Committee on progress.



1. CREATING, INCREASING AND SUSTAINING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Ensuring we have an ongoing range of employment opportunities to attract and retain Indigenous employees is key to building our brand as an employer of choice. We will offer employment opportunities that are fit for purpose and tailored to help us achieve our organisational objectives.

OUR ACTIONS

- Explore the application of Identified Position criteria to positions across the department, to reflect the level of involvement with developing policies and/or programs targeted at Indigenous people, or the level of direct involvement with Indigenous communities
- Ensure that an appreciation of, and commitment to, cultural learning forms part of the development pathway for all positions across the department including introducing a suite of cultural awareness and capability training for all employees. All Senior Executive Service employees and Executive Level 2 Supervisors will be required to undertake mandatory cultural awareness training with training recommended as highly desirable for all other staff
- Embed the use of the Indigenous – Affirmative Measure and Identified Position provisions into our recruitment activities at all levels
- Identify critical positions across the department and their level of engagement with Indigenous communities to understand where significant employment opportunities exist and where we can leverage the expertise of Indigenous staff
- Evaluate Indigenous recruitment initiatives and capability development programs to ensure we are investing in approaches that will see us recruit Indigenous staff across all classifications

We are committed to creating, increasing and sustaining representation of Indigenous employees in our workforce with a target of five per cent representation by December 2022



OUR INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

- Employees demonstrate the level of cultural awareness and capability required if the Identified Position criteria is applied to their position
- We are appropriately leveraging the use of the Indigenous – Affirmative Measure provision and the Identified Position provision becomes business as usual in all recruitment processes, including utilising experienced Indigenous employees on all interview panels for Indigenous – Affirmative Measure positions
- We are advertising all Indigenous – Affirmative Measure positions in Indigenous-focused media and providing an Indigenous contact person in our advertisements
- We have reviewed positions and determined if they need to be undertaken in a certain location and promoting opportunities where employees may be able to fulfil positions from an alternative location
- Our employees demonstrate a well-informed understanding of the critical engagement points within our business with Indigenous communities
- We participate in APS-wide Indigenous employment and capability development programs and initiatives at all levels, in line with broader workforce planning initiatives
- We see an increase in Indigenous peoples applying for positions with our department



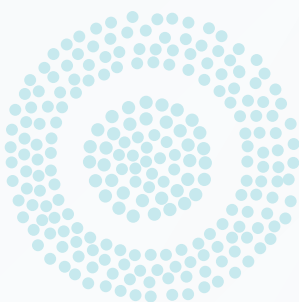
2. PROVIDING MEANINGFUL CAREER PATHWAYS AND CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Our representation of Indigenous employees should more closely resemble non-Indigenous representation at each classification. When compared to the Australian Public Service as a whole, our Indigenous representation across classification levels is positive¹, and we want this trend to continue.

OUR ACTIONS

- Provide targeted professional development opportunities to meet the needs of Indigenous employees at all levels
- Build cultural confidence in managers enabling them to engage proactively with their Indigenous employees to understand their needs and support them in their everyday work and careers
- Implement an Indigenous Career Coaching Program in partnership with an Indigenous Coaching provider to enable employees to articulate their career aspirations, map the appropriate pathways to achieve them, identify a meaningful mentor, and involve their managers in the discussions
- Create leadership opportunities, provide stretch opportunities and encourage Indigenous employees to aspire to senior leadership positions through visible mechanisms such as the use of the Indigenous – Affirmative Measure provision when advertising Executive Level and SES positions

We are committed to ensuring Indigenous employees are supported to develop their careers, and increasing the representation of Indigenous employees in senior leadership roles



OUR INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We see an increase in Indigenous employees undertaking periods of higher duties, and an improvement in the retention and subsequent promotion of our Indigenous employees• Our Indigenous employees indicate, through sources such as the APS Employee Census, that their manager confidently engages in performance and career planning discussions• We increase the number of Indigenous employees in Executive Level and SES positions• We pilot an Indigenous Mentoring Program that meets the needs of Indigenous employees across all classification levels | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We see an increase in Indigenous employees participating in secondment and mobility opportunities• We support our Indigenous Staff Network to organise at least one event per year for cultural or professional development, including cross-agency networking and off-site activities• We promote targeted career development initiatives, including scholarships, for Indigenous employees at the middle management level who demonstrate consistent high performance |
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¹ According to the APS State of the Service Report 2018-19, Indigenous representation across levels has a single peak at the APS levels 3 and 4 with a dramatic drop at the Executive Level and Senior Executive cohorts.



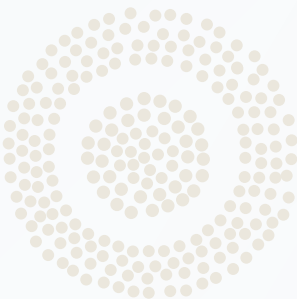
3. BUILDING AND SUSTAINING A CULTURALLY CAPABLE AND CULTURALLY SAFE WORKPLACE

We recognise the importance of acknowledging the rich cultural heritage of Indigenous peoples and we are committed to building cultural capability within our workforce. However, we must also ensure we create and sustain a workplace that is truly culturally safe, and our work practices must recognise and respect the cultural identity of our Indigenous employees. We cannot underestimate the behavioural change that may be required to be successful in this commitment but we will strive for a workplace that visibly models shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge, and experience of learning together.²

OUR ACTIONS

- Ensure our leadership pathway to the SES has a specific focus on fostering inclusive leadership behaviours
- Pilot pastoral care initiatives to support Indigenous employees relocating to work with the department and recognise they may need additional support to adjust, not only to a new workplace but also to a new city away from country and family
- Acknowledge the inequality that continues to exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians by committing to working collaboratively, transparently and accountably in relation to our employment initiatives on our path to reconciliation
- Recognise the contribution Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees bring to the workplace and celebrate Indigenous cultures as a vital part of workplace inclusion and diversity

We are committed to being an employer of choice for Indigenous employees



OUR INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

- Our staff feel our senior leadership cohort is accountable for their leadership behaviours
- We see an increase in our Indigenous employees indicating, through sources such as the APS Employee Census, they feel the department is committed to creating a diverse workforce, and the people in their workgroups behave in an accepting manner towards people from diverse backgrounds
- We see a decrease in our Indigenous employees indicating, through sources such as the APS Employee Census, they have experienced bullying and/or racism
- We see an increase in our Indigenous staff formally identifying through our Human Resources Information System
- Our Executive ensures each Division identifies how they will contribute to Indigenous employment outcomes through workforce and/or business planning initiatives
- Ensure the Indigenous Liaison Officer supports all Indigenous employees and liaises with the SES Indigenous Champion and Executive on matters concerning Indigenous employees, peoples and communities

² Williams, R. (1999). Cultural safety – what does it mean for our work practice? Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, 23(2), 213-214.



OUR SUCCESS

While we have identified our targets, the success of this Strategy is not based on numbers, but in the cultural change within our department that will occur throughout implementation that will see us retain current Indigenous staff and become an employer of choice for Indigenous peoples.

Our success is defined by how our employees feel, through sources such as the APS Employee Census, with a broader focus on cultural change and inclusion. This can only happen through a unified effort to acknowledge and celebrate the unique capabilities Indigenous peoples bring to our workforce, and increasing our cultural capability to create a safe and inclusive workplace for all Australians.

We hope to set an example across the APS to challenge the way we think about Indigenous employment, and start to focus on the internal cultural change that is required to attract the right Indigenous employees into the right roles, at the right time.

Definitions

- **Identified Positions** are positions that require the employee in that position to have an understanding of the issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and have the ability to communicate sensitively and effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Identified Positions are open to all eligible Indigenous and non-Indigenous applicants.



ARTWORK CREDIT

CONNECTING FOR RECONCILIATION

Connecting for Reconciliation is an artwork that represents Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as well as the other cultures residing in Australia. The artwork is an aerial representation of the land, rivers, coast and oceans found all across Australia.

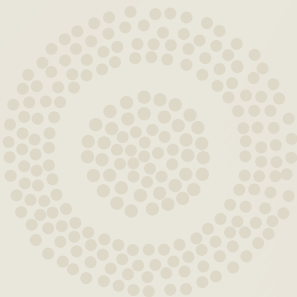
- The dot circles represent the different cultures and people of Australia. While they are all unique, when you look closer at them, you start to see similarities.
- The dotted lines show the pathways travelled, and the connecting of tribes and different groups. It's the connecting of people and working together, that will make reconciliation successful.
- The river and the flow of the water shows a journey that society has taken – where we are now, and where we are headed in the future (as most of the population live by the rivers and coast).

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Bradley Kickett is a local Noongar artist. He was born in Northam and grew up in Perth. He is descended from the Kickett clan in York, Western Australia.



▲ Connecting for Reconciliation



BRADLEY KICKETT

He began painting in 2007.

Bradley's style of art is abstract, with paintings depicted from an aerial view and illustrated in a fluid style that he has developed over the last three years. His art pieces are influenced by experiencing Noongar country, from the oceans to the rivers and seeing the wildflowers and the land from the air and showing the flow and the shapes of the earth. These images are all interwoven with the history and the stories that are shared and passed down to him from his family and elders.

Since 2007, Bradley has exhibited and sold work at True Blue Gallery, Maaliup Aboriginal Art Gallery, Kings Park Aboriginal Art Gallery, Yonga Boodjah Aboriginal Art Gallery and the Walliup Cultural Centre in Fremantle.

Further to this, Bradley has also exhibited and sold work at the Animal Art Awards, 2010, Manjar Art Awards (2010-2016), City of Gosnells Art Awards

(2011, 2015 & 2016), City of Belmont Art Awards

(2015 & 2016) and the City of South Perth, Emerging Artist Award (2015).

Bradley was the winner of the Acrylic Award at the City of Gosnells, 2015 and received the Highly Commended Award at the City of Belmont, 2016.

Bradley is currently studying at Curtin University, towards a Bachelor of Arts majoring in fine art.



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