

# NTPS Aboriginal Employee Forum – Darwin 2023

## Evaluation Report



<b>Document title</b>	NTPS Aboriginal Employee Forum Evaluation Report – Darwin 2023
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Acronyms	Full form
AAPA	Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority
AEF	Aboriginal Employee Forum
AEMP	Aboriginal Employee Mentor Program
AEP	Aboriginal Employment Program
AEOR	Aboriginal Employee Opportunity Register
ALO	Aboriginal Liaison Officer
ASCAP	Aboriginal Student Career Aspirations Program
CDU	Charles Darwin University
CF	Capability Framework
COA	Confirmation of Aboriginality
COORD	(CEO) Coordination Committee
CPE	Commissioner for Public Employment
CREC	Community Resilience and Engagement Command
DAGJ	Department of Attorney-General and Justice
DCMC	Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet
DCDD	Department of Corporate and Digital Development
DIPL	Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics
DITT	Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade
DOE	Department of Education
DOH	Department of Health
DEPWS	Department of Environment, Parks, and Water Security
EBA	Enterprise Bargaining Agreement
ELDF	Executive Leadership Development Framework
EOI	Expression of interest

Acronyms	Full form
M MDF	Middle Management Development Framework
NAIDOC	National Aboriginal and Islanders Day Observance Committee
NT	Northern Territory
NTG	Northern Territory Government
NTPFES	Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services
NTPS	Northern Territory Public Sector
OCPE	Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment
PSAGR	Public Sector Appeals and Grievance Reviews
PWC	Power and Water Corporation
SARG	Senior Aboriginal Reference Group
TFHC	Territory Families, Housing and Communities

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## Forum Overview

The Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment (OCPE) hosted the twelfth Northern Territory Public Sector (NTPS) Aboriginal Employee Forum (AEF) in Darwin on 11 & 12 October 2023 at Rydges, Palmerston.

OCPE received 104 nominations, with 92 employees attending from a range of agencies.

OCPE would like to thank Larrakia Entrepreneur and Consultant Nicole Brown for her warm Welcome to Country.

Agencies had the opportunity to share their good news stories with participants hearing from the following guest speakers:

- **Minister for Public Employment address** The Honourable Paul Kirby MLA
- **Images of First Nations NT People – For Our Elders**  
Don Christopherson, First Nations Education and Engagement Coordinator
- **Applying for NTPS Employment Opportunities**  
Courtney Mabey, Grievance Manager, Public Sector Appeals Grievances and Reviews, OCPE
- **Aboriginal Liaison Officer, Community Resilience and Engagement Command (CREC)**  
Louise Poulson, Aboriginal Liaison Officer, Northern CREC, NTPFES



# Evaluation Responses

Forum Attendees



Nominations Received



Total Attendees  
(26 Males & 66 Females)

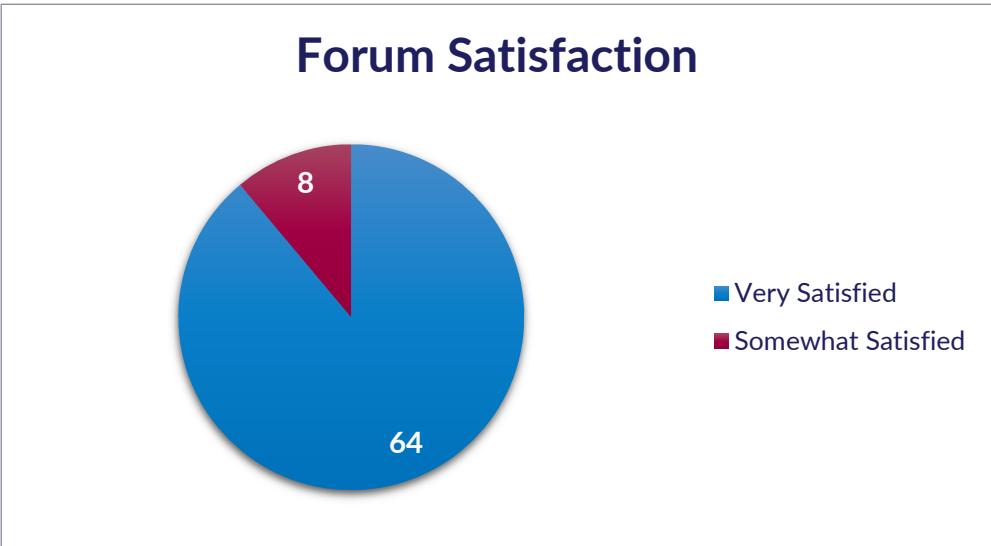
78% (72) participants completed the evaluation form.

90% (65) participants were very satisfied with the forum.

From the 92 participants; 72 completed the evaluation form (78 per cent).

From the completed evaluations, 90 per cent stated that overall, they were ‘very satisfied’ compared to 10 per cent who were ‘somewhat satisfied’, as displayed in the following graph.

There were no participants that were ‘somewhat dissatisfied’ or ‘very dissatisfied’.





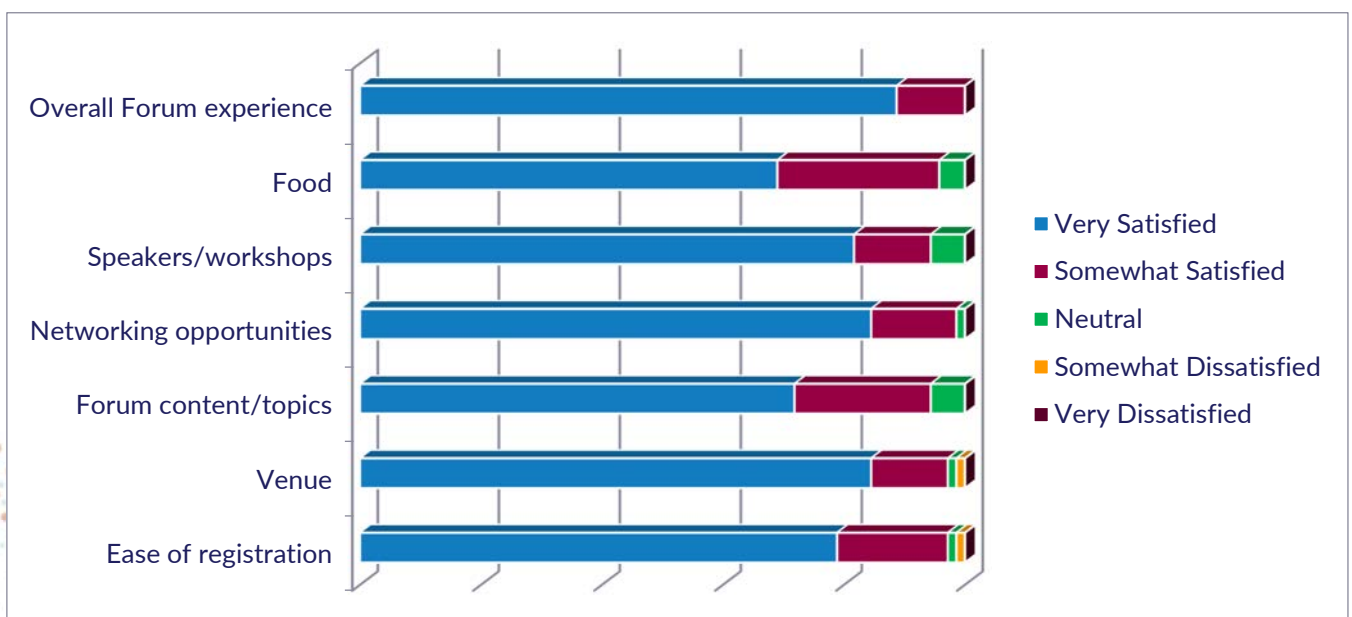
## The Aboriginal Employee Forum Experience

The forum topics, design and set up was based on feedback from the 2022 Darwin forum and more recently the 2023 Alice Springs forum evaluation.

The 2023 Darwin forum received great feedback about the guest speakers and workshops, comments from the evaluation form:

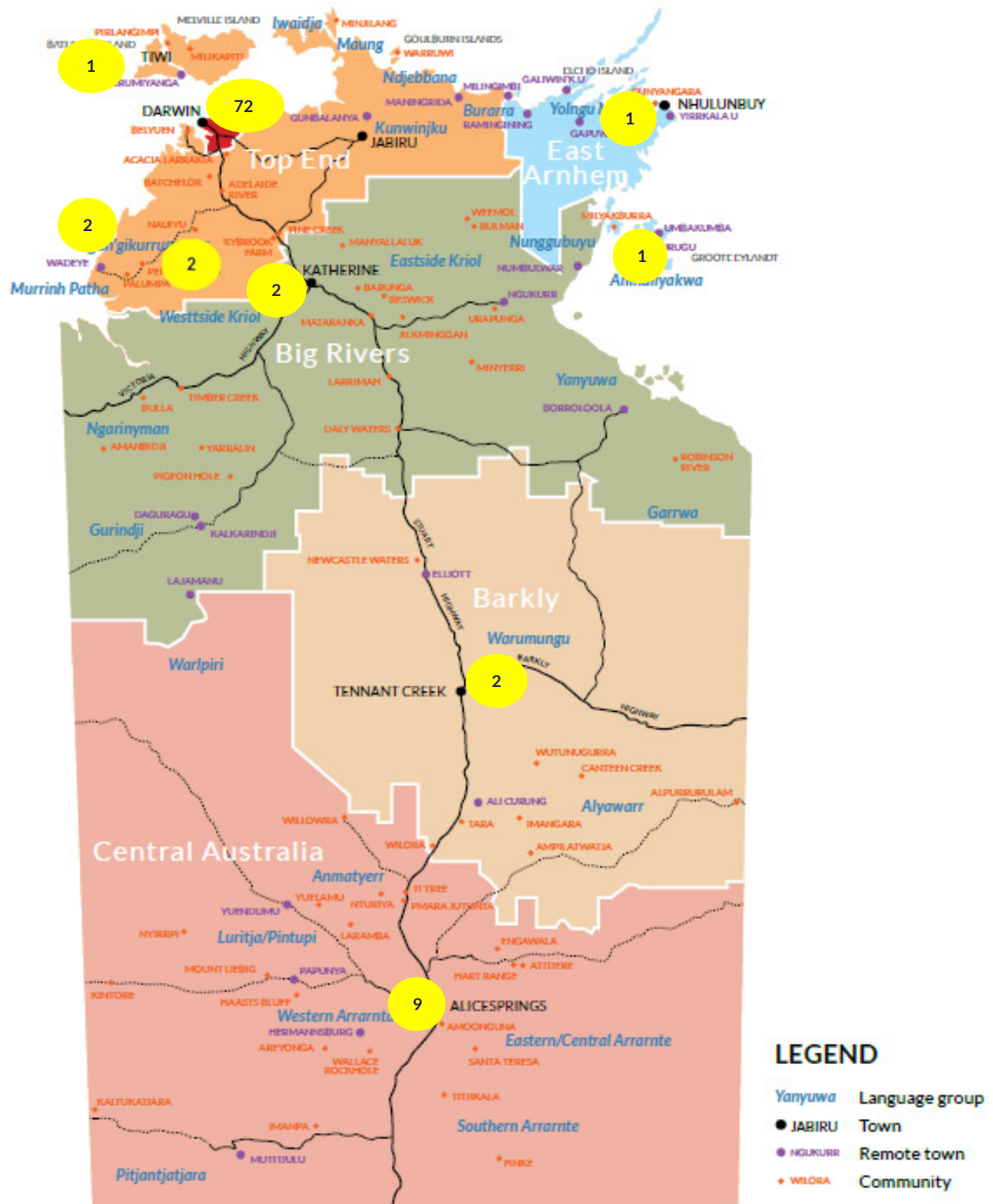
- *Networking with other Aboriginal colleagues from various agencies/regions and always meeting new people and reconnecting with others that I haven't seen for a while.*
- *Getting to meet other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and learning about different workshops.*
- *The entire forum was amazing with so many goose bump and heartfelt moments.*
- *Information was on point and there were confident answers provided to group member questions.*
- *Hearing about other people and stories, and their journey. The entire forum was really great.*
- *It was well organised. Great questions were asked by those who attended the forum, and the facilitators were experienced and able to provide a lot of knowledge when answering questions.*
- *As a new NTPS employee it was great to hear about what is available to us and networking.*
- *Being able to contribute through guest speakers and the resume component, it was helpful and gave very practical advice.*
- *Archives presentation was good, all agenda items was good. Knowledge of presenters and AECD team. Well organised – on time, friendly and respectful.*
- *The key speakers, the updated info each forum and the team taking away every comment and putting action to it.*

The graph below details the level of satisfaction of evaluation respondents regarding the workshops, forum content, venue, food, registration process and overall forum experience.



## Participants Workplace Location

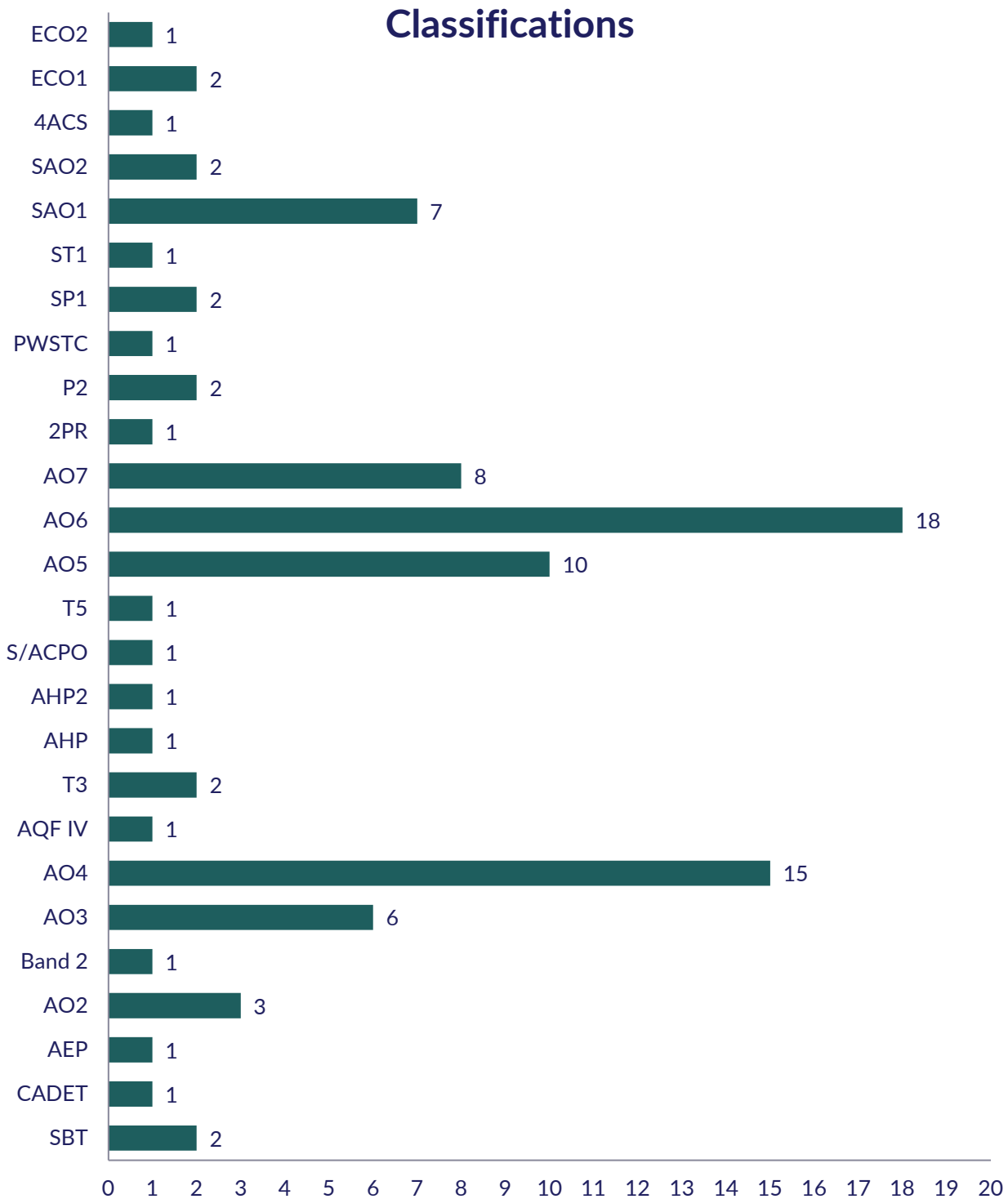
Participants travelled from Alice Springs, Groote Eylandt, East Arnhem, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Nauiyu, Tiwi Islands, Wadeye and the majority based in Darwin.





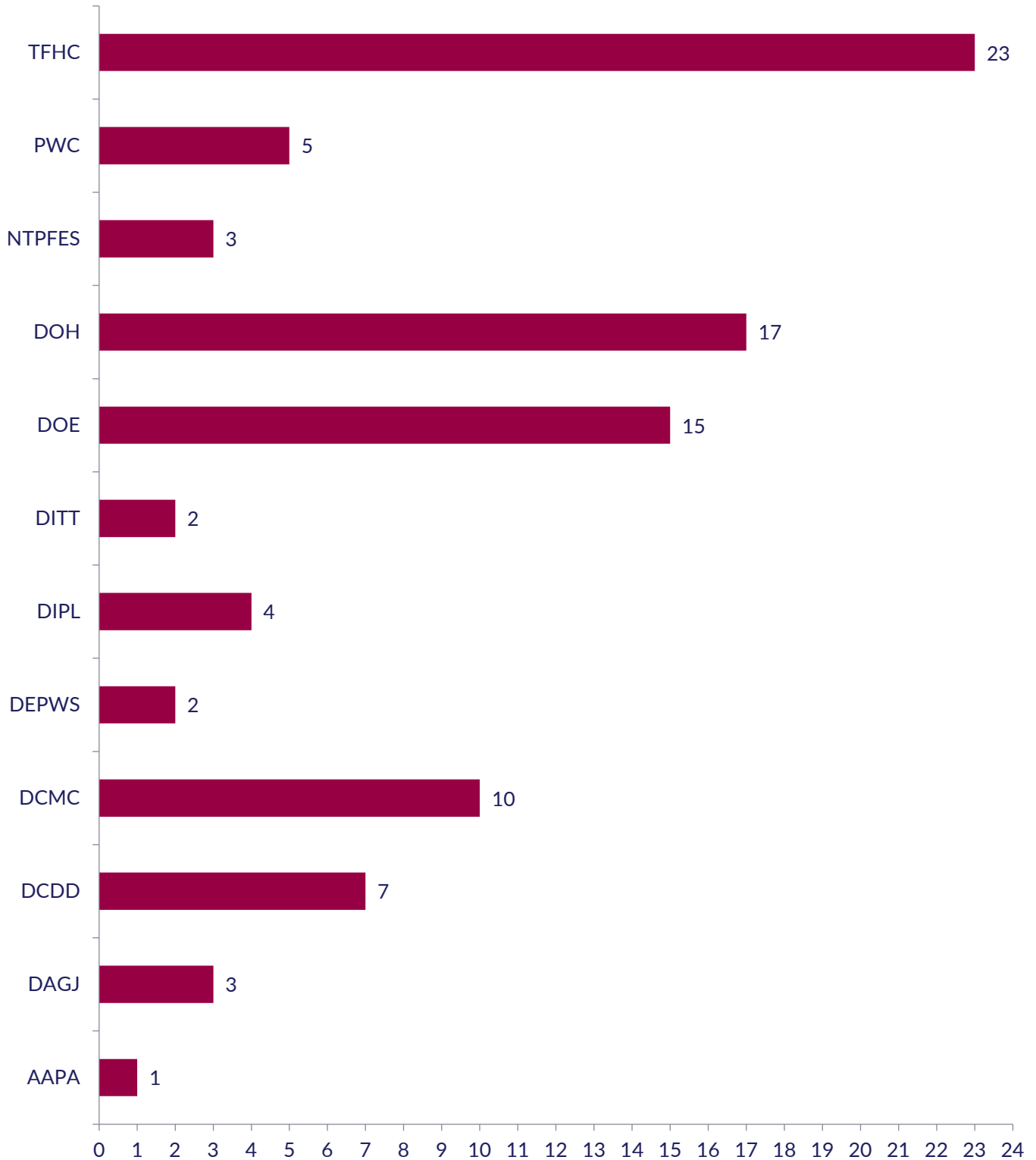
## Participants Classifications

The participants classifications ranged from a School Based Trainee (SBT) to an Executive Contract Officer level 2 (ECO2) level and included various streams (Administrative, Professional and Technical). The highest number of participants were at the AO6 and AO4 level.



## Agency Representation

There were 12 NTPS agencies represented at the forum. TFHC had the highest number of attendees with 23, followed by DOH who had 17 staff in attendance.



## Setting the Scene

### Welcome to Country

The forum commenced with a warm Welcome to Country by Larrakia woman, entrepreneur and consultant, Miss Nicole Brown.

### Aboriginal Employment and Career Development Strategy

Ursula White, Director AECD provided an update on OCPE's achievements against the 2021-2025 AECDs key focus:

#### Targets

- From June 2023 to September 2023 (Quarter 1) the total number of Aboriginal employees in the NTPS rose by 35 and is sitting at 10.9% (2623 Aboriginal employees) and the total number of Aboriginal employees in senior positions at September 2023 is 189 (4.7% of all senior roles).
- AECD work collaboratively with agencies and Agency Executive Sponsors to maintain commitment to the strategy and Monitor agencies' Aboriginal employment and progress towards their agency specific targets.
- The majority of agencies have an Aboriginal Employment Action Plan for 2023/24, these action plans can be found relevant agency intranet site.



#### Attraction

- The NTPS values diversity and is committed to growing the Aboriginal workforce to be more reflective of the community it serves, as at June 2023 the recruitment data indicates 10 per cent of vacancies are filled under a Special Measure Plan.
- Professional development opportunity with PSAGR to lead and champion projects related to Special Measures and assist with the handling of grievances.
- AECD has a database to record details of trained Aboriginal employees who have completed Merit Selection training in the last 3 years and are willing to participate on selection panels.
- AECD are looking for employees to be featured in promotional and marketing materials.

#### Retention

- The 2023 Stay Survey has been enhanced to capture data and insights across six domains to enable comparison to the 2022 responses and identify areas to further enhance services, programs, and initiatives for our Aboriginal workforce. The stay survey is now open, and all attendees encouraged to provide their feedback.
- AECD continue to host the NTPS Aboriginal Employee Forums in Darwin and Alice Springs. For 2024, AECD are investigating hosting a regional forum.
- AECD have been working to improve the way we connect with Aboriginal employees in the NTPS and created a SubscribeMe NTPS Aboriginal Employee Mailing List. AECD sends out updates to share information and promote a range of topics including the AECD Strategy 2021-2025, training and development programs, employment opportunities, sector wide employment updates, sharing inspiring stories and cultural days of significance.



- The AEMP was launched in 2019 and aims to support aims to support the mentee's personal and professional goals by matching them with a suitable mentor for a period of up to 12 months. Currently, there are 66 trained mentors and 33 mentees.

### Leadership

- The NTPS provides a range of leadership and management programs that aim to build the leadership and managerial capability across the sector, including Kigaruk and Lookrukin Aboriginal Leadership Development Program
- AECD will support 5 participants to have a career discovery session.
- SARG members were introduced to participants and provided a brief background about themselves.

### Workplace Culture

- AECD launched the 2023 Key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Days of Significance for sector wide use and is available on OCPE website. AECD are working with SARG to develop specific NT calendar for release in 2024 along with the national days of significance.
- AECD worked with DCMC Regional Executive Director's and their leads to organise NAIDOC / NTPS community events in Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs and Nhulunbuy.
- AECD presented the Central Australia Region their own NAIDOC banner at the Alice Springs forum. Attendees signed their name and added a message about what NAIDOC means to them.



### Remote

- AECD continues to promote the NTPS as an employer of choice and developed a 'Grow your Career in the Territory' handout for public facing events.
- AECD continue to waiver registration fees for remote Aboriginal employees to attend our forums.

## A/Commissioner for Public Employment



The Acting Commissioner for Public Employment (A/CPE), Adjunct Professor Joanne Norton, introduced herself and welcomed participants to the Darwin NTPS AEF.

The A/CPE informed participants that all agencies have specific Aboriginal workforce targets and the majority have provided their 2023-24 Aboriginal Employment Action Plans highlighting their commitment to grow and develop an Aboriginal workforce. The A/CPE stated that her focus will be to work in partnership with agencies to strengthen this commitment to see real outcomes.

The A/CPE mentioned that the NTPS does well to attract and recruit Aboriginal people but need to do better in retaining Aboriginal employees and that we still have a long way to go if we are to reach our target of 16% Aboriginal employment and 10% Aboriginal employees in senior levels by 2025.

The A/CPE advised participants that the AECD team are planning to host a forum and mentor training in a regional location.

One of the strategy key actions is the NTPS Aboriginal employee 'Stay Survey' and the A/CPE was proud to announce she opened the Stay Survey on the 10 October 2023. The feedback from last year provided valuable insights into what impacts you being able to perform to the best of your ability, and what should be our priorities to improve your workplace experience and your choice to stay in the NTPS. The A/CPE was adamant about hearing from Aboriginal employees across the NTPS.

## Minister for Public Employment

The Minister for Public Employment, the Honourable Paul Kirby MLA spoke to the government's commitment to Aboriginal employment and investment across both public and private sector. At the time of the NTPS AEF, Minister Kirby was the Minister for Small Business, Minister for Jobs and Training, Minister for Recreational Fishing, Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Minister for Public Employment, and Minister for Corporate and Digital Development.

Minister Kirby began working as a Linesman with Power and Water in 1997. He was elected as a workplace representative by his colleagues, where he worked collaboratively with management to ensure those who couldn't speak up for themselves had a strong, united voice.

Minister Kirby is especially passionate about helping young people when they first enter the workforce, addressing gender inequalities in the NT and ensuring there is adequate support in place for local workers and their families.



All attendees were reminded that the million-dollar fish will go off this season, so register to be in it to win it.

## Q & A Senior Panel

A standing agenda item of each forum is to establish a panel of senior and youth NTPS employees to share their career journey with participants.

### **Ann Vincent – Principal Reconciliation, Diversity and Inclusion, PWC**



Ann was born and raised in Alice Springs and is a proud Yawuru descendant from Broome in Western Australia. Ann started her career in the NTPS in Alice Springs 40 years ago as an Aboriginal trainee on the National Employment Scheme for Aboriginals.

Ann continued in various administration roles before permanently transferring to Darwin in 1986. Ann has worked for many different agencies and roles over the years but found her passion with Aboriginal employment when she commenced in the Aboriginal Interpreter Service in 2000.

Ann has furthered her education and has completed the Lookrukin Aboriginal Development Program with a Diploma in Business Management as well as an associate degree and a bachelor's of Applied Science in Indigenous Community Management and Development.

Ann has been involved in developing and managing various Aboriginal programs over the years and has only just recently transferred from the AECD team in OCPE to PWC.

### **Victor Williams – Assistant Director, Student Engagement, Inclusion & Engagement Services, DoE**

Victor is a Darwin local, of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent. He has strong connections to the land and sea from the country of his ancestors, the Larrakia.

Victor, a product of Moil Primary School, Nightcliff High School and Casuarina Secondary College has a 25year employment background within the Northern Territory. Most of these years were spent with Correctional Services working in the day-to-day operations of a number of secure facilities.



Victor has managed and guided the strategic direction of both Youth Detention Centres in the NT as the Director of Youth Detention and in his time with Correctional Services, he also undertook the role of Manager of the Staff learning and Development Centre.

In 1991, Victor left school and relocated to Alice Springs, where he enjoyed 12 years living, working, playing sport and engaging in community activities. While in Alice he spent 3 years working at Yeperenye School, initially as a teacher's assistant/bus driver and then later as the sports coordinator. He then was employed at Tangentyere Council as the Manager Youth Activity Services and then the rest of his time in Alice he was employed as a prison officer before securing a transfer back to Darwin in 2003.

Although most of his employment was in the adult custodial sector, Victor remained passionate about working with youth and developing leadership, resilience and confidence through his engagement with youth that he coached in multiple sporting codes over the last 26 years. He also provided mentorship to youths when opportunities presented, in the workplace or in the community.

Victor is now employed with the Department of Education as the Assistant Director Aboriginal Partnerships, where he manages the Department's relationship with school base engagement programs, such as the Stars Foundation and Clontarf Foundation.



Outside of work, Victor is a father to five awesome children, is a grandfather to two beautiful granddaughters and has been married to his wonderful wife for the past 20 years.

### Briony Crummy – Principal Policy Officer, NT Health



Briony was born in Shepparton Victoria and grew up in the country town of Seymour. Briony's first job was at the local fish 'n' chip shop as a teenager. Growing up Seymour meant there weren't a lot of opportunities, so she had to seek opportunities elsewhere.

Briony's sister while at Melbourne University, saw an opportunity for a trainee Dental Nurse program for Aboriginal people. Briony's family encouraged her apply for the position, which was the start of her career in the dental field for 15 years.

During her career as a Dental Nurse (DN), she worked a number of general dental clinics and a specialised Orthodontic clinic in Bendigo, Victoria. Briony has a passion for travel, and after spending a few months travelling overseas in 2006, Briony returned to Seymour to work and manage her mother's café for a short time, before traveling to Darwin to spend some time with her sister and family.

Briony decided to stay in Darwin and that's when her career with the NTPS started. Briony commenced working with NT Oral Health Services as a casual Dental nurse, before securing the role permanently and a promotion as a Senior Dental Nurse. While working with Oral Health Services, Briony completed a Certificate IV in Leadership in Management managed by DoH Learning and Development. Not long after graduating, a short-term opportunity came up as a Learning and Development Coordinator, Briony was successful to secure the position on an ongoing basis - working in the corporate environment was completely different to the clinical setting.

While working with the L&D team, Briony took on any opportunity that came along.

Briony won a place on the Stepping Up program, which provided Aboriginal staff an opportunity to work in nominated work units across DOH on projects on to develop skills and capabilities – through this opportunity Briony gained broader insight across the DOH and the confidence to apply for position in other areas of interest. During her NTPS career, Briony has also worked as Senior Policy Officer with Aboriginal Health Policy, a Principal Policy Officer with Aboriginal Workforce Development and a Senior Advisor with OCPE. Briony has recently returned to the DOH as a Principal Policy Officer in the newly established First Nations Health & Wellbeing.

Briony is very passionate about Aboriginal employment and is most proud of the work she has done to date which have created learning and development opportunities specifically for Aboriginal staff across the NTPS to increase their career opportunities. Briony's advice is to 'take any opportunity that comes your way' -you never know where it will lead you.



## Q & A Youth Panel

### Peter PangQuee – Cadet, NT Health

Peter is currently studying to be a physiotherapist and is a recipient of a NT Health Aboriginal Cadetship program. The NT Health Aboriginal Health Cadetship program supports Aboriginal Territorians to complete higher education health studies, as well as being a key initiative to increase employment of Aboriginal people as health professionals.

Peter is studying a Bachelor of Exercise and Sport Science at CDU as his pathway into Physiotherapy. A keen sportsman, Peter's ambition is to eventually work in elite athlete performance with the help of his cadetship.

Peter mentioned that having a cadetship is good opportunity to reduce stress whilst studying and it gives financial, personal and professional support and gives him great work experience opportunities in the public health system.



### PJ Andrews – First Nations Collections & Content Coordinator, TFHC



PJ is a Central Arrernte man and has spent most of his working career helping First Nations youth across Western Australia, South Australia and the NT.

PJ is currently the First Nations Collections and Content Coordinator at the NT Library and Archives NT Team, based at Parliament House. PJ's role is to educate library users and the public on Aboriginal historical stories and collections. PJ ensures that those stories are told in a culturally safe manner through the digital and physical collections the library preserves.

Since PJ has been employed at NT Library and Archives, he now has a newfound love and highly respects and values the history, stories, bloodlines and lineage that has been preserved by our First Nations ancestors.

### Larissa Mills – Executive Assistant, TFHC

Larissa is the Executive Assistant to the General Manager for Sport Recreation and Strategic Infrastructure, TFHC that provides support services across child protection, domestic and family violence, youth justice services, housing, homelessness, social inclusion, sport and active recreation and celebrates arts, culture, heritage, libraries and archives.

Larissa was previously the Administration Manager at Cross Cultural Consultants for a couple of years where she was able to learn skills around cultural competencies and cultural diversity which assisted her to develop her interpersonal skills whilst assisting clients and staff.

Larissa is looking forward to what the future holds for her.



## Workshop – Training and Development Opportunities



### Symonne Robinson – Acting Director, Strategic Workforce Planning and Development, OCPE

The NTPS provides a range of frameworks and pathways that can assist employees with their career development and building their leadership and managerial capability.

The Middle Manager Development Framework (MMDF) outlines the skills and capabilities required for management roles. The MMDF and the Capability Framework (CF) should be used together to help middle managers to develop individualised development pathways based on their strengths and areas for growth.

The MMDF clusters learning outcomes into: Managing Self; Managing the Business and Managing Teams across two areas – New Manager and Experienced Manager. The framework suggests skills and attributes that manager should acquire to be successful and build their careers.

The Executive Leader Development Framework (ELDF) provides a clear view and a benchmark for executives to reflect on, evaluate and understand their strengths and focus areas for professional growth and development.

A suite of contemporary development options, including career discovery sessions, professional coaching, and leadership events and programs can be used to create a personalised and relevant executive development plan.

The Aboriginal Leadership Development and Career Pathways provides an opportunity for Aboriginal middle managers who have the capabilities and potential to become senior leaders in the NTPS and is an extension of the MMDF.

The pathways incorporate development options for Aboriginal middle managers who have the capabilities and potential to become senior NTPS leaders.

1. Short courses targeted to specific learning needs to suit time and budget.
2. Kigaruk and Lookrukin Aboriginal Leadership Development Program – Diploma in Leadership and Management
3. On-the-job assessment (recognition of prior learning/micro credentialing)

If you are not sure which pathway option to take, you can book a career discovery session with a personal career consultant to map out your career aspirations and explore your professional development needs. The career planning session is suitable for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander middle managers (CF5-CF8)

The Kigaruk and Lookrukin Aboriginal Leadership Development Program (ALDP), is an accredited training program delivered in a fully supported learning environment. Participants who successfully complete the program and all assessment requirements will graduate with the Diploma of Leadership and Management qualification. The course units are mapped to the MMDF.

The Kigaruk and Lookrukin Aboriginal Leadership Development Programs are a part of the Aboriginal employee career learning Framework and is a key element in developing senior managers across the NTPS. The program will be delivered in 4 one-week workshop blocks over 24 months.

The OCPE website has a training calendar which lists training opportunities monthly.



## Presentation – 2023 NTPS People Matter Survey, Aboriginal Employee Data

Symonne Robinson – Acting Director, Strategic Workforce Planning and Development, OCPE

The findings from the 2023 People Matter employee survey, with a focus on Aboriginal employee's perceptions of the workplace was presented.

Data from a few indices, including employee engagement was explored in context of service delivery and engagement.

The Aboriginal employee engagement score is sitting at 66 per cent which is below the engagement score from the 2021 survey, however higher than the NTPS score for 2023.

The questions that make up this index score are based on the say, stay and strive model which is well researched and used globally and in other jurisdictions.

- Say – is based on your pride in working for the organisation.
- Stay – is about the personal attachment you have to the organisation.
- Strive – is about the inspiration and motivation you have in working for your organisation.

The area with the biggest room for improvement seems to be around performance management and managers discussing career intentions, what employees are doing well and what are the areas of improvement in their performance.

How Aboriginal employees view communication from senior managers sits slightly higher but stayed the same in comparison to the 2021 survey and sits slightly above the sectors score overall.

Aboriginal employee health and wellbeing has slightly decreased since the 2021 survey and is also slightly below the sector overall.

While the positivity for these questions is relatively high, there was a significant decrease on how people in their workgroup treat each other with respect and slight decreases on managers and senior managers that think wellbeing is important.

## Participant Activity – Group timeline – Years of Service

For the past two years this activity has been a standing agenda item.

Participants form a line on one side of the room, from the participant who has been employed the least amount of time to the participant who has been employed in the NTPS for the longest amount of time. Participants must communicate and listen to each other to ensure they sort themselves in order and it also provides an opportunity to network and get to know each other better.



After completing the activity, it was calculated from 89 employees there was 838 years, 11 months, and 8 days of NTPS working experience in the room.

## Presentation – 2023 NAIDOC Runway Event

Darren Johnson - Regional Director, Darwin, Palmerston and Litchfield Office, DCMC

This year's NAIDOC theme 'For Our Elders' was celebrated from Sunday 2 July to Sunday 9 July.

NAIDOC Week is an opportunity for all Australians to come together to celebrate the rich history, diverse cultures and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the oldest continuing cultures on the planet.

This year all agencies were strongly encouraged by the CPE to get involved in NAIDOC and be represented, in regional community events organised in Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs and Nhulunbuy.

The 2023 NTPS NAIDOC Runway Event was hosted by DCMC, the event acknowledged and celebrated NTPS Elders (living legends) as part of this year's NAIDOC theme 'For our Elders'. The event was held at Goyder Square, Palmerston on Wednesday, 5 July 2023.

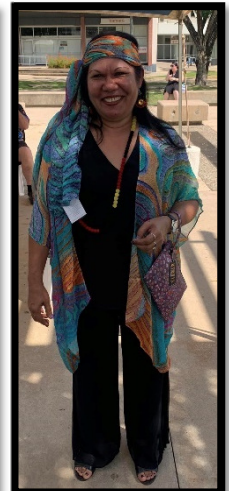
Being an Elder is not defined by age but rather Elders are recognised because they have earned the respect of their community through wisdom, harmony and balance of their actions in their teachings.

An Elder is also someone who has been trained to be an Aboriginal leader by a Mentor or several Mentors who were Elders before them.

The NAIDOC Runway event showcased the central role our Elders play in our communities and families, with Elders from NTG agencies modelling contemporary Indigenous fashion, their agency's uniform, or a local Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation's uniform.

NTG agencies had stalls set up to showcase their work, and all NTG staff members were encouraged to attend and show their support.

NAIDOC 2023 video – <https://youtu.be/GrYKpsSI-Ko>



## Sharing My Story

### NTPFES – Aboriginal Liaison Officers, Community Resilience and Engagement Command (CREC)

Louise Poulson, Aboriginal Liaison Officers (ALO) and Bettina Danganbarr, Senior ACPO, CREC, Darwin, NTPFES

Louise has been employed as an ALO since February this year and is loving her role. Louise was born and raised in Darwin and was encouraged by her mother to become an ALO.

Community Resilience and Engagement Command (CREC) is responsible for recruitment, development, and supervision of ALO. CREC is comprised of two teams: CREC Northern and CREC Southern.

CREC supports ongoing development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff within their roles as Constables, Aboriginal Community Police Officers, and ALOs.

The role of an ALO is to strengthen relationships between local community and local Police through promoting awareness and education of community issues and assist in developing appropriate solutions, provide local police with cultural knowledge and protocols such as Men's/ Women's Cultural Ceremony, Death and Sorry Business. ALO's also provide Kinship / Community family structure understanding and assist with administrative duties such as effective telephone screening service, front counter assistance and airport courier duties.

There have been 7 ALO courses in the last 2.5 years and NTPFES have over 51 ALOs employed across remote communities and within urban centres, ALO's are a two-way conduit between the community and Police.

Louise reminded everyone that ALOs are AO2 NTPS employees and DO NOT hold police specific powers! In no circumstances are operational duties to be undertaken by an ALO.



## Presentation - DCDD/OCPE – Project Partnerships

**Christina Walker, A/Assistant Director, Early Careers Team**

**Kaye Whiting, Manager, Workforce Planning, DCDD**

**Terese Kelly, Principal Advisor, Aboriginal Employment and Career Development**

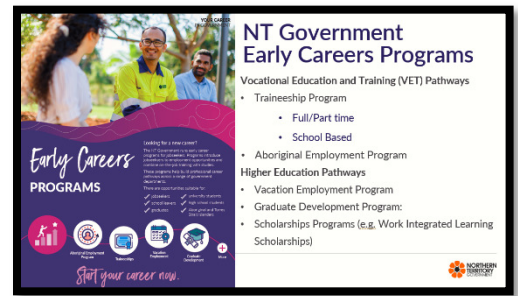
OCPE and DCDD provided an update on the initiatives, programs, and projects co developed and coordinated across the sector.

OCPE delivers policies and strategy and coordinates several initiatives and programs across the sector. DCDD provides support to agencies to embed policies and strategies and coordinates several initiatives and programs across the sector. Agencies have primary responsibility to ensure the actions occur and resources are provided to achieve outcomes.

Besides supporting agencies with their reporting obligations and development of their annual plans, the team in DCDD also acts as a bridge between agencies and workforce services centres of expertise. A new referral framework is on its approval chain that will not only provide a link to services but also allow a governance and oversight over any solutions/projects (risks and opportunities) that are coming out of the AECDS action plan.



The NTPS Aboriginal Employment Opportunities Register (AEOR) was developed in 2017 with the objective to improve retention of the NTPS Aboriginal workforce by providing a mechanism for mobility and development. The existing AEOR was under-utilised by agencies, and key action under the NTPS Aboriginal Employment and Career Development Strategy 2021-2025 was to review the AEOR. DCDD has been leading this work, as the owner of the existing AEOR, with OCPE as part of the working group.



The Aboriginal Student Career Aspirations Program (ASCAP) was developed in 2015 as an initiative to attract Northern Territory school leavers to consider a career within the Northern Territory Government utilising the early career pathways of either Traineeship, School based Traineeship or the Aboriginal Employment Program (AEP).

ASCAP was designed to assist students explore careers aspirations, identify career pathways and further develop their confidence, self-worth, resilience and employability skills, by facilitating structure delivery of the Coaching Young People for Success modules.

A comprehensive review of the AEP has been completed. The AEP offers increased opportunities for Aboriginal Territorians to gain entry to NTG and specifically targets entry level positions. Whilst ongoing employment is not guaranteed, when considering participating in the AEP agencies must consider the intended long term career path and employment outcome for the participant.

DCDD Early Careers team coordinates several early careers programs that support government initiatives, these programs include:

- Traineeship Program
- Aboriginal Pre-Employment Program
- Graduate Development Program
- Graduate Excellence Program (2<sup>nd</sup> Year Graduates)
- Scholarships
- Vacation Employment
- Student Placements – noting this is not currently centralised program and for one specific agency only.



The OneNTG Orientation program is the across government orientation program that provides employees with a high-level overview of the Northern Territory Public Sector (NTPS). All employees are required to complete the orientation within 3-months of commencing in their roles.

Remote employment project will look at simplifying recruitment for designated positions in remote/regional areas. Including exemptions for Confirmation of Aboriginality requirements in remote areas for entry level roles utilising available tools and mechanisms that simplify it.

## Sharing Our Agency Story

### Don Christopherson, Library and Archives NT, TFHC

Don Christophersen is a well-known local historian, filmmaker, cross-cultural consultant and Flinders NT academic, and his family comes from north-west Arnhem Land.

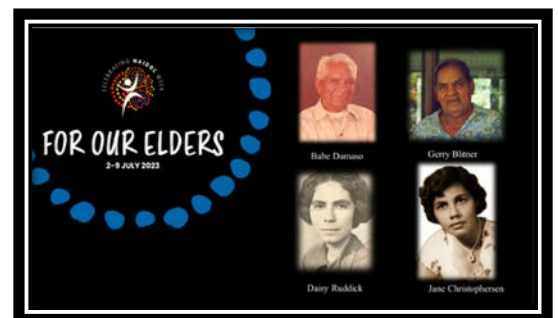
Don Christophersen was born and lived his entire life in the NT. Don is a descendant of the First Nation's language groups of the Cobourg Peninsula and Kakadu National Park and has been employed with Library and Archives NT for the last four years as the First Nations Education and Engagement Coordinator. Don's passion is the researching and telling of the history of the NT, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous.



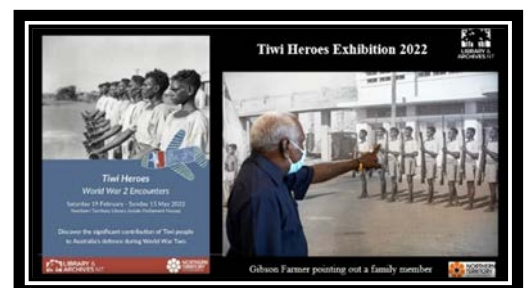
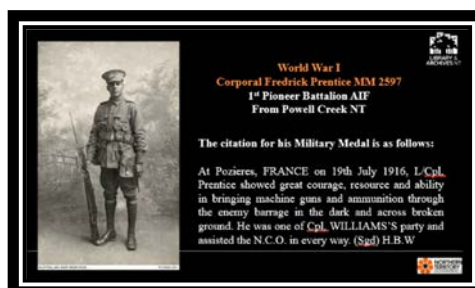
Don discussed and showcased his new book, *A Little Bit of Justice*. The story of Charlie Flannigan, a young Aboriginal stockman and a renowned horseman from Queensland who worked at various cattle stations in the NT. Events at Auvergne Station in 1892 resulted in his incarceration at Fannie Bay Gaol and his execution the following year. Charlie was the first man to be executed in the Northern Territory of South Australia.

During his ten months' imprisonment, Charlie was kept in chains in solitary confinement. He was also given pencil and paper with which he produced a startling collection of images of people and places he had known. Don shared many of Charlie's drawings throughout his presentation.

Don coordinated an event at the library in response to this year's NAIDOC Week theme 'For Our Elders'. Tasked with the enviable job of delving into the library's back catalogue of recorded oral histories, from tales of old Darwin to experiences of being removed from and reconnecting with family, the event was rich with history and stories of survival. The oral histories date between the late 1970s and 2009, offering a rare opportunity to catch a glimpse into snapshots of Territory life through the ages.



Don also showcased the roles and contributions NT Aboriginal people made to Australia's defence during World War II.



## Workshop - Applying for NTPS Employment Opportunities

**Courtney Mabey, Grievance and Training Manager, Public Sector Appeals and Grievance Reviews**

Courtney provided an overview of PSAGR roles and objectives as well as provide forum participants information and tips on how to write a strong resume and cover letter and were reminded that their resume is the place to brag about their accomplishments. A good resume highlights all relevant achievements, education, and skills. Take advantage of this unique opportunity to show your best professional self.

The most important part of your resume is your work experience.

- Include your job title.
- Include what level you are working at.

Selection panels specifically want to know about your jobs, experiences, or skills and how they relate to the role you're applying for. Participants were also advised to talk to their referees and provide them a copy of the job description before applying for a role.



A referee should be your current and previous direct line managers who are able to talk to your knowledge, skills, experience and potential for future development. **Remember a selection panel may go to non-nominated referees!**

When applying for a role in the NTPS, along with a detailed resume, applicants are requested to provide a one-page cover letter, writing a cover letter is simple, if you know its purpose. Courtney's message is to think of a cover letter as a direct message to the selection panel, you get to briefly explain why you're such an awesome fit for the position and how your skills and work experience relate to the criteria.

It was also explained to participants that applicants selected under a Special Measures plan must meet all essential selection criteria and be suitable at the level of the vacancy and must provide proof of eligibility for the special measure.

The proof required to satisfy these criteria is:

1. A statutory declaration – declares they are Aboriginal; they identify as an Aboriginal person, and they are accepted as an Aboriginal person in the community in which they live or formerly lived; and
2. A Confirmation of Aboriginality (COA) – from a recognised Aboriginal organisation (or other satisfactory proof of Aboriginality as approved by OCPE)

### Proof of Eligibility for SM

The proof required to satisfy this test is:

1. Statutory Declaration; and
2. Confirmation of Aboriginality (COA) from a recognised Aboriginal organisations (or other satisfactory proof of Aboriginality as approved by OCPE).

 A screenshot of a form titled 'Statutory Declaration of Eligibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Status'. The form includes sections for 'Declarant', 'Witness', and 'Declaration'. It also has a section for 'Confirmation of Aboriginality (COA)' with checkboxes for 'Yes' and 'No'.

The Confirmation of Aboriginality (COA) is required upon being offered the role and before commencement.

Regarding expressions of interest (EOI) and development opportunities agencies generally advertise their EOI's on their own intranets. Applicants are asked to provide a resume and cover letter (much the same as when applying for an advertised vacancy). Agencies may advertise the EOI as a development opportunity, meaning that an applicant does not necessarily have to meet all the essential selection criteria. Agencies undertake their own internal EOI selection process. These processes are not appealable (as they are not an advertised vacancy)



## Employee Feedback

To ensure continuous improvement of the forums, employees are asked what they liked the most about the forum, the least and suggestions for the next forum.

### What did you like most about the forum?

There was a good mix of responses but the two topics that were most common was networking and hearing people's personal journeys/stories. Below are some of the other comments made by participants:

- *I really enjoyed listening to the NTPS staff who shared their stories. I found the speakers very motivational and inspirational 😊*
- *The safe space to ask questions and get open and honest answers.*
- *Networking and stories of other Indigenous employees within the NTPS. Openness of everyone to share experiences.*
- *The introduction to NTG programs and policies. The chance to meet some mid-senior Aboriginal employees at other agencies.*
- *Networking. Guest speakers, especially Don Christophersen's talk and listening to people's career journey.*
- *NAIDOC presentation. Hearing from Courtney, PSAGR. Hearing from Don Christopherson. Great MC. Hearing from Christine Walker, DCDD.*
- *Networking, Don Christopherson and PJ Andrew's presentations, plus the youth panel.*
- *I enjoyed listening to everyone's work journeys from the new starters to people who had worked for NTG for many years.*
- *Getting to meet other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and learning about different workshops.*
- *The activities with others, introducing ourselves*
- *Story telling about experience with NTPS and connecting with other people from different regions*
- *MC Darren Johnson was deadly 😊 need to showcase his dancing live though. Thanks, team, for a deadly forum.*
- *The interaction, networking, and general involvement of everyone! Good to see new people coming this year and the younger generation.*
- *Networking, myth busting and stories. Really enjoyable being with mob and sharing NTPS experiences.*
- *Presentations – need more young people to attend and remote are a must!*
- *Great panel member stories. Louise Poulson, an inspirational young woman. Don Christopherson – history/stories was unreal to know what work is being done.*
- *Employment opportunities session – the networking to build new connections and support systems*
- *Sharing stories, networking opportunities, connection, Q&A panel, laughs*
- *Discovering information on professional development, that I had not been aware of, such as websites and courses. NT archives presentation.*
- *Hearing from everyone. Having a chance to speak to the Minister and feeling heard by him.*
- *Don Christopherson's presentation. Networking opportunities! Culturally safe space, inspiring and revitalising.*



## What if anything, did you dislike about the forum?

Although there was a lot of great feedback, we appreciate receiving constructive feedback. Majority of the feedback stated that participants were very happy with the forum and would not change it, we acknowledge that the audio was not great, but will ensure we have a better system at the next forum.

Below were some other comments made by participants:

- *The People Matters survey breakdown, I think it needed to be more specific and speaker seemed unsure.*
- *In terms of training options, the public sector management program (PSMP). More focus on the retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, well-being session - living and working in two worlds. Presentations from different departments to understand wider NTG.*
- *Sometimes speakers dragged on.*
- *N/A I absolutely enjoyed meeting new people*
- *Not 'dislike' but would like more fun workshops where we physically interact with each other, like an ice breaker activity.*
- *Maybe just more guidance on staying on track/topic in question times.*
- *Some people chose to use this time to air issues. Some more structure/guidance to attendees about how to form questions and feedback to speakers.*
- *Maybe have a suggestion box for people to leave suggestions/notes throughout the day and make people use mic so everyone can hear easily.*
- *No mention of riskman or systems like myHR to do with risk.*
- *Not enough time 😊*
- *Some speakers needed to rush as there wasn't enough time for them.*
- *Move guest speakers talking about successes/obstacles along the way.*
- *There's nothing that I don't like but it will be great to embed workshops, where there is a topic/issue/situation that the AECD team would like to explore. This way the information collected can contribute to future programs and or processes.*





## Do you plan to attend this forum in the future, and why?

Participants were asked if they plan to attend another forum in the future. There was an overwhelming response with 99% (71 people) stating yes, they do plan to attend another forum in the future, one person (1 per cent) did not answer the question. Again, networking and sharing information were the top two responses. Below are some comments from forum participants:

- *Yes, I enjoyed networking and would enjoy sharing more on my journey in the future (then vs now).*
- *Yes, see the progression.*
- *Yes, changing content and people.*
- *Yes, great learning, networking, and opportunities to share.*
- *Yes, great way to meet new people*
- *Yes, meet new people*
- *Yes, networking*
- *Yes, if my section will let me*
- *Yes, to stay updated*
- *Yes, very positive and moving*
- *Yes, more learning and discussions*

Participants were also asked if they would recommend the forum to their family, friends and peers with 88% stating yes.



## What topics would you like to see covered at future forums?

Participants requested that at the next forum OCPE provide information on career development opportunities and advice on career pathways for existing employees, provide an update on available training offered through OCPE.

Other suggestions were:

- *Workshopping on what as Indigenous employees we would like to see some more of, and seeing what's been implemented from previous suggestions, what's in progress and what couldn't be implemented.*
- *In depth of selection criteria.*
- *If we met our targets*
- *Get Courtney Mabey back to further discuss special measures, grievances and appeals.*
- *Special measures, career development strategies and training*
- *Entry level training opportunities*
- *Discussion on applying for and moving around to jobs in other agencies. Crash course in the different departments/agencies within the NTG*
- *Retention rate for Aboriginal employees, especially the early career programs and data on special measures impact.*
- *Conflict of interest / NTG wellbeing aimed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.*
- *In house training*
- *Breakout sessions to talk about challenges and provide ideas/requests to the Commissioner.*
- *Riskman training and leave entitlements etc.*
- *More information about mentor/mentee programs.*
- *Q&A, long serving NTPS employees*
- *Workshops on what are the key challenges faced by Indigenous employees in their workplace and what is/can be done to reform/support/improve safety in the workplace.*
- *Positive stories from communities.*
- *Whatever are the local issues that are occurring in the region's leading up to the forum and how we can address or be proactive in spreading the work back in our own agencies.*
- *Different leave entitlements available under the updated EBA so people are aware.*
- *The new mentally healthy workplace toolkit - psychosocial hazards and risks in the workplace*
- *Maybe more activities/workshopping directly towards AECD Strategy priorities*
- *Workshop to focus on topics and ways to improve or ways to access and review documents and procedures.*



## Do you have any suggestions on how we could improve the next forum?

Participants were asked to provide general feedback and suggestions on how the forums could be improved. Many participants commented that they thoroughly enjoyed the forum and would like to see more networking opportunities and more participant interaction activities. Below are some other suggestions and general feedback from participants.

- *Maybe moving to other tables (directed by number?) and to workshop ideas from the AECDS*
- *Have a suggestion box, post it note wall to add questions, suggestions and comments.*
- *Jobs board (?)*
- *I really enjoyed the forum and got a lot out of it.*
- *interactive/fun workshops.*
- *Time management for the speakers.*
- *Professionally manage questions to stick to agenda items.*
- *Maybe change the youth panel requirements to young in NTPS (2 or 3 years)*
- *You all did a fantastic job to bring this together. THANK YOU.*
- *Make breaks slightly shorter with more 3–5-minute breaks.*
- *Encourage all line managers to support their staff to attend.*
- *If maybe another day as time limited when more discussion could have happened. Very positive.*
- *Breakout sessions for relevant content topics (if more experienced might not need resume/covering letter information).*
- *Variation in activities*
- *Keep balance between presentations about NTPS and panel/networking. This is a good balance of information and connect. More networking with other tables as well.*
- *Maybe speakers/guests' timeframes.*
- *More remote representation. Outside activity – something on country.*
- *Have some additional activities for groups/tables to do to keep people engaged and awake after big feeds*





## Participants Recommendations

There were a range of comments and suggestions to take into consideration for future forums with the following recommendations accepted by OCPE:

1. Instead of the bags and accessories, have an NTPS Aboriginal Employee Forum polo shirts.
2. Have more workshops
3. Include a forum networking dinner after the first day.
4. Change the youth panel requirements to new to the NTPS (employed less than 2 or 3 years)
5. Add an additional day to allow for more discussions as there not enough time to discuss relevant topics.

Participants advised they would like:

- to see more Aboriginal employees from remote areas attend the forums.
- hear about key projects from each agency that is contributing to the AECDs.
- more activities/workshopping directly towards AECD Strategy priorities
- have a suggestion box, post it note wall to add questions, suggestions and comments and a job board.

## Next forum

The next forum will be held in Alice Springs in 2024.

