

# NTPS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employee Forum

Darwin 25 October 2016, Hilton Hotel

The Northern Territory Public Sector (NTPS) held its first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employee Forum in Darwin on 25 October 2016. The Forum was a key initiative from the NTPS *Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy 2015-20*, under theme three “Attraction and retention of Indigenous people”. The Forum was based on a workshop style to allow participants to discuss current issues and challenges and contribute ideas on future employment and career development opportunities. The Forum explored three main priorities from the strategy: Cross Cultural Training, Career Development and Attraction and Retention.

## Forum Attendees:

170

Applications received

123

Successful applications

122

Total attendees  
(43 Males & 79 Females)



## Evaluation Respondents:

**78.7%** Evaluation was completed by (96) attendees

**92%** (88) attendees would be interested in attending the next Forum

There were a total of 122 attendees at the Forum; of these 96 completed the Evaluation form. The majority of respondents (88 out of the 96) said they would be interested in attending the next Forum.

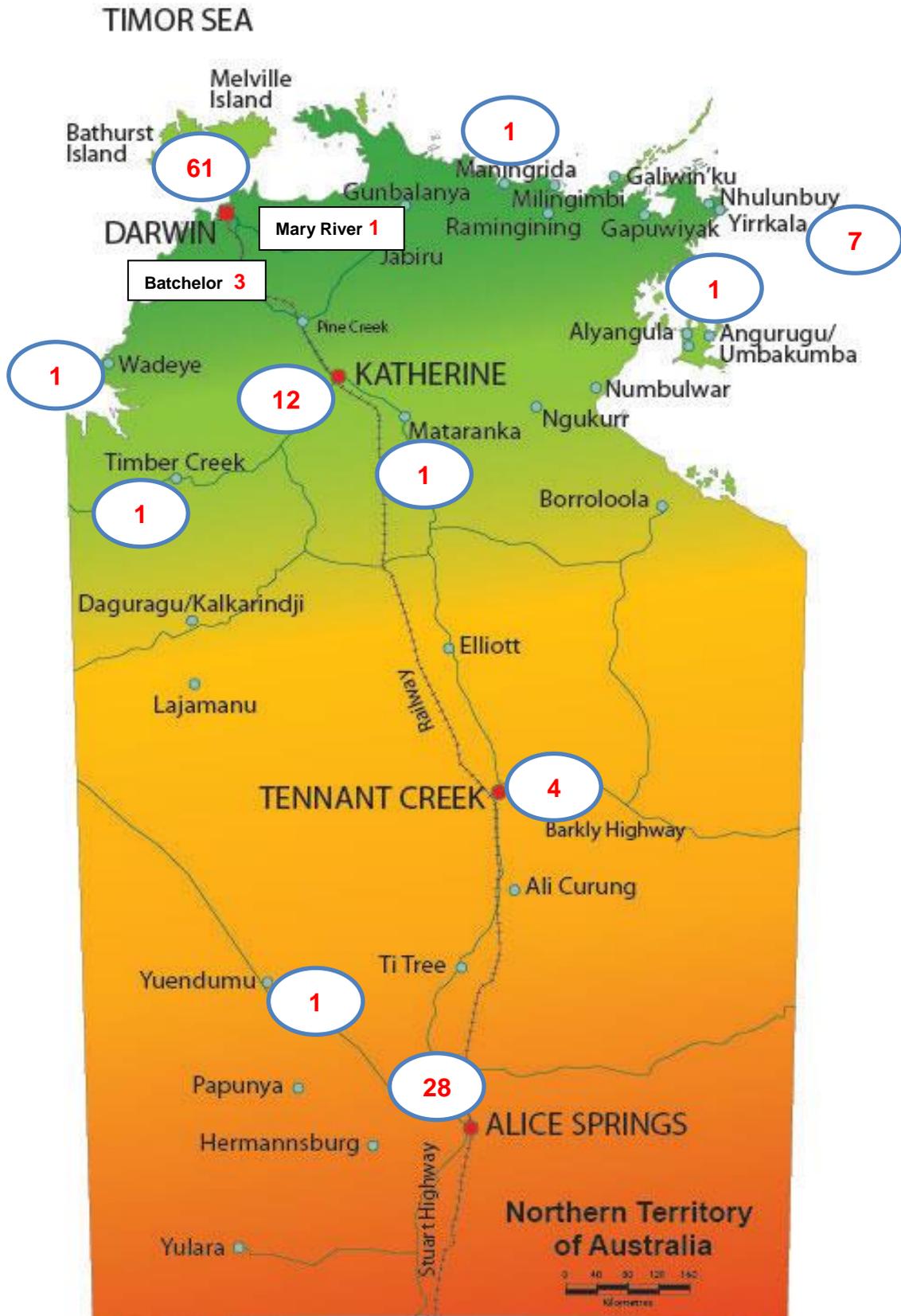
Some positive comments from the evaluations:

- *“Well done and congratulations to the OCPE staff for a well delivered forum”.*
- *“Very interesting and it was really good hearing everyone’s input and problem associated with Indigenous employment”.*
- *“I enjoyed sharing and discussing ATSI employment and having the conversation around the opportunities available”.*
- *“I enjoyed the discussions and networking”.*
- *“The Forum was great and a great start”.*
- *“Thank you – all the guest speakers were great and inspiring to listen to”.*
- *“All staff involved in putting together the forum deserve a big pat on the back, job well done!”*



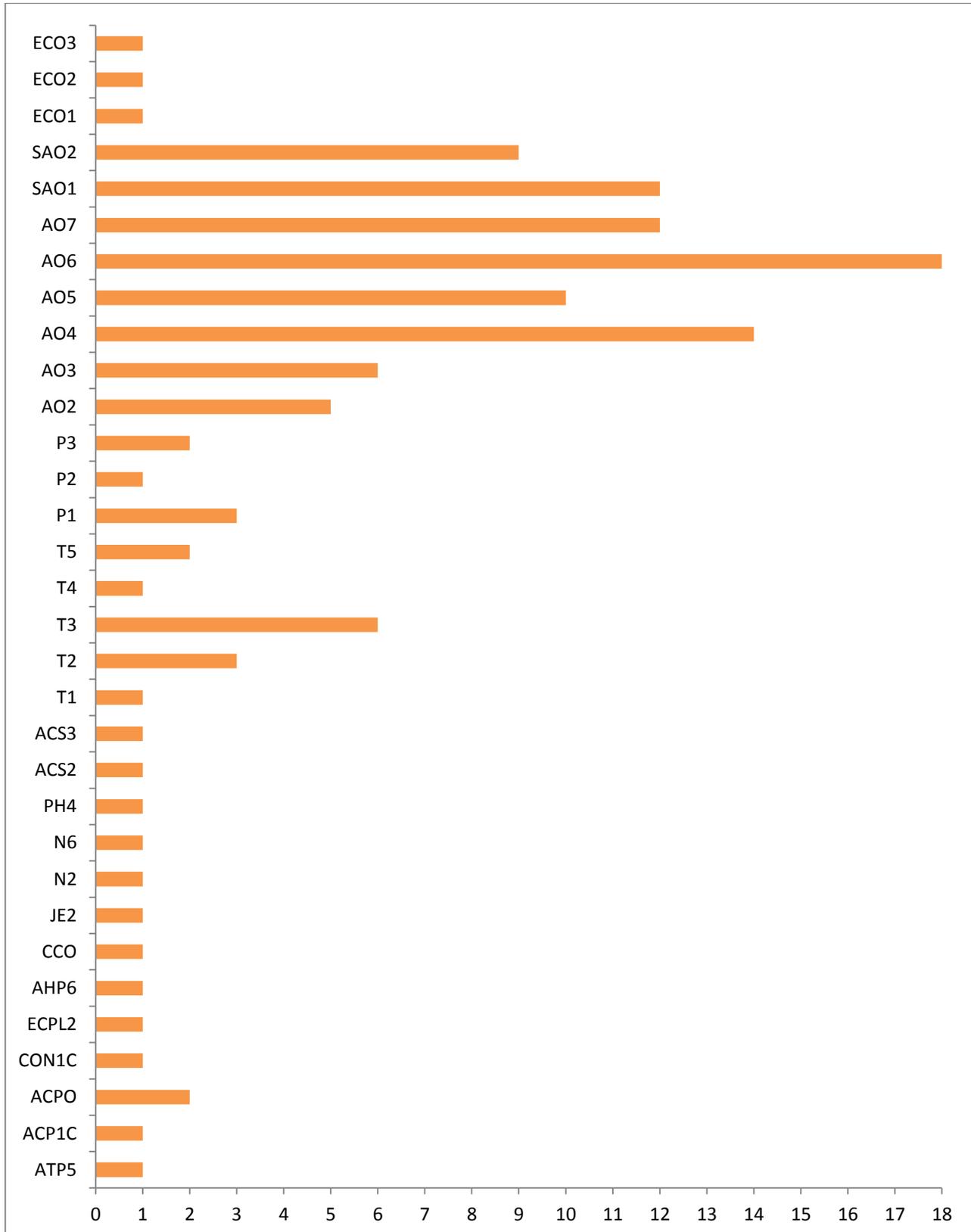
## Attendees Workplace Location

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees who attended the Forum came from all over the Territory covering Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs, Mary River, Maningrida, Nhulunbuy, Groote Eylandt, Wadeye, Batchelor, Timber Creek, Mataranka and Yuendumu.



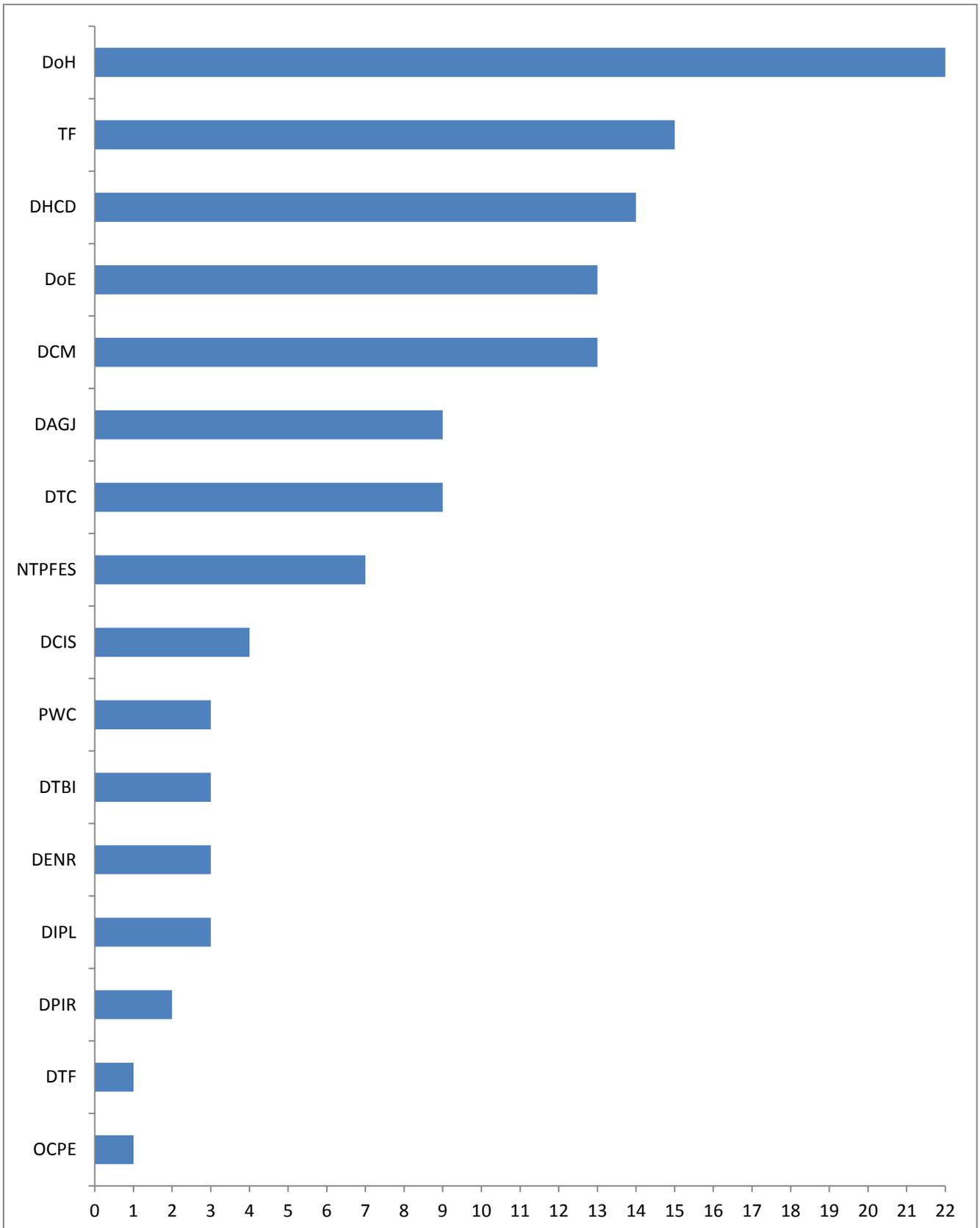
## Attendees Classifications

The attendees who participated in the Forum ranged from AO2 to ECO3 and included various streams (Professional, Technical and Physical). The highest numbers represented by attendees were AO4 and AO6.



## Agencies Represented

The attendees who participated in the Forum were represented by 16 NT Government Agencies.



## The 2016 ATSI Forum Experience

As illustrated in the graph below, evaluation respondents perceived an overall high quality of the Forum.

Workshops were valued though all the employees would have liked to see extended time allocated for these sessions.

- *“One day is not enough time for these very important issues and discussions”.*
- *“Longer forum over two days so there’s more time to network in workshops to get more in-depth with workshop topics”.*
- *“Enjoyed Mark McCrindle’s presentation and the stories from the IEP”.*
- *“I enjoyed sharing and discussing, ATSI employment and having the conversation around the opportunities available”.*
- *“I enjoyed the discussions and networking”.*

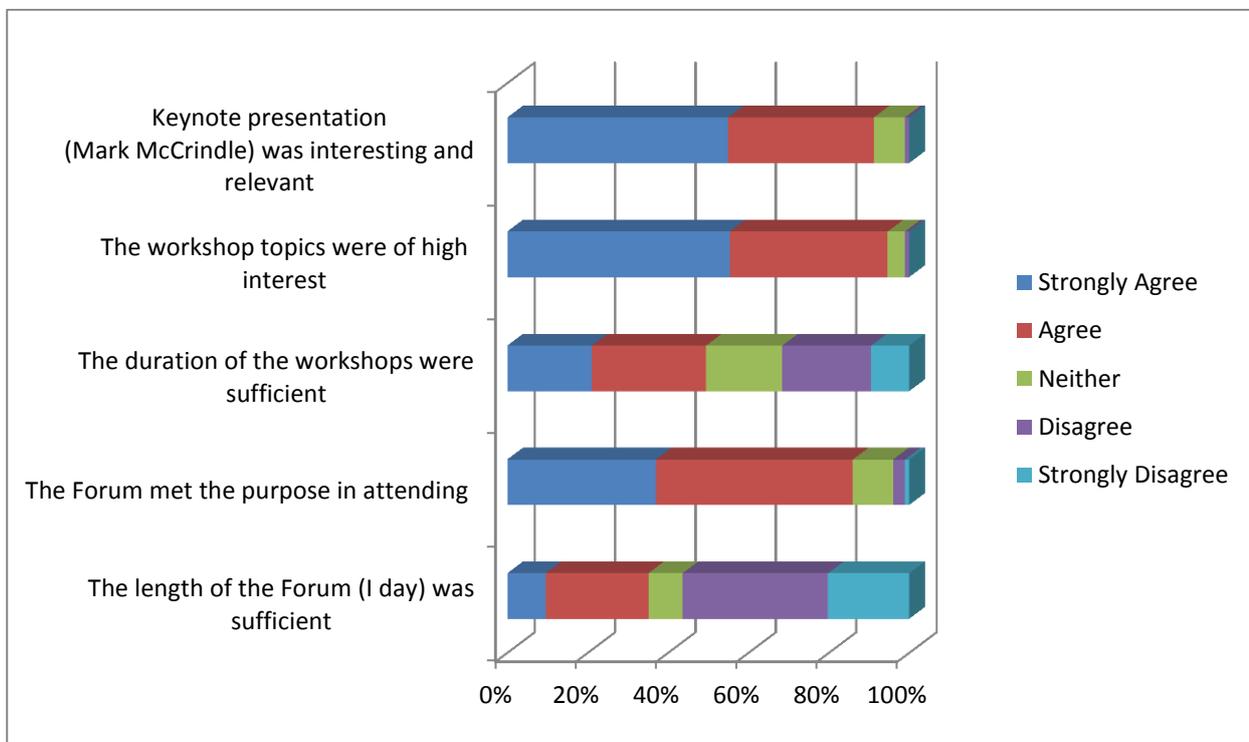
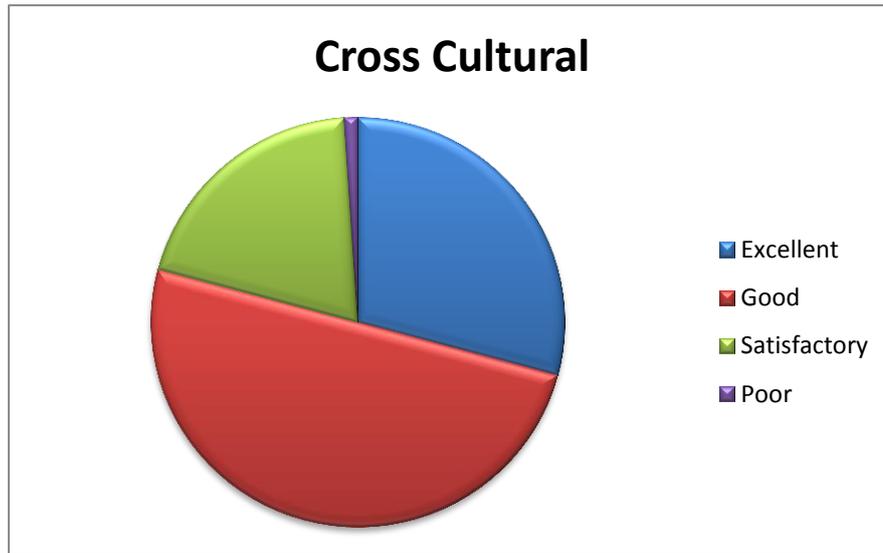


Photo: Camille Lew Fatt (OCPE)

## Workshop Rating



Seventy nine per cent of completed evaluations stated the Cross Cultural Training workshop was excellent/good as displayed in the above graph. The feedback highlighted that it was a good session and would like it to be one of the workshop topics again for the next forum.

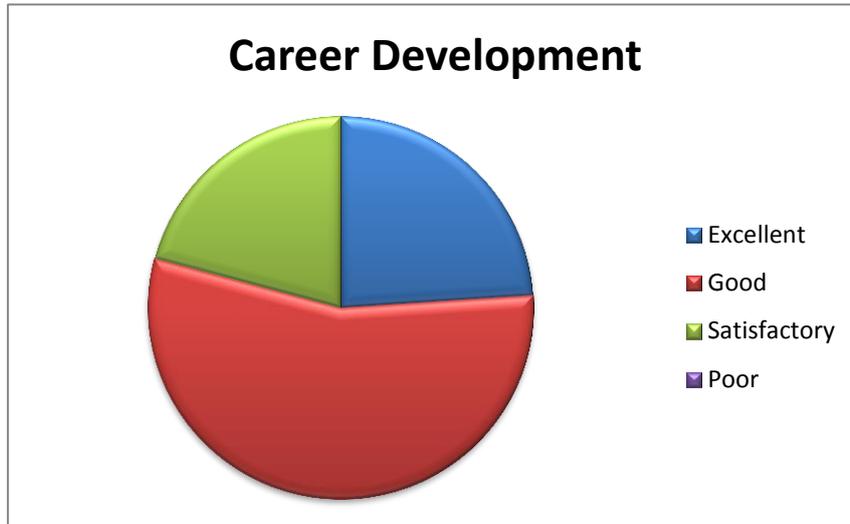
There was a poor rating (1%) for this workshop and was based on the comment *“who was this aimed at as it’s not put into practice as a majority of our clients are ATSI people”*.

Other comments received about this workshop:

- *“I enjoyed the presentations especially Jason Elsegood being MC and his discussion about Cross Cultural topic”*.
- *“Further talk at the next forum on Cross Cultural Training”*.
- *“A topic suggested for the next forum ‘in the cross cultural area’ – look at cultural awareness of an Indigenous person in main stream employment”*.



Photo: Kevin Tilmouth (DCM) and Greg Williams (DTC)



Seventy nine per cent of completed evaluations stated the Career Development workshop was excellent/good as displayed in the above graph. The feedback highlighted there was limited time for this workshop and was also one of the suggested topics/workshop discussions for the next forum.

Attendees were asked on their nomination form if they have a Career Development Plan currently in place (e.g. MyPlan, WPP, CEP, MyDP etc). From the 170 applications received, the response was:

- 58 - Yes
- 50 - No
- 14 - Unsure
- 48 - Did not say

Employees wanted to know more about Professional Development opportunities and would like to see this as one of the topics for the next forum.

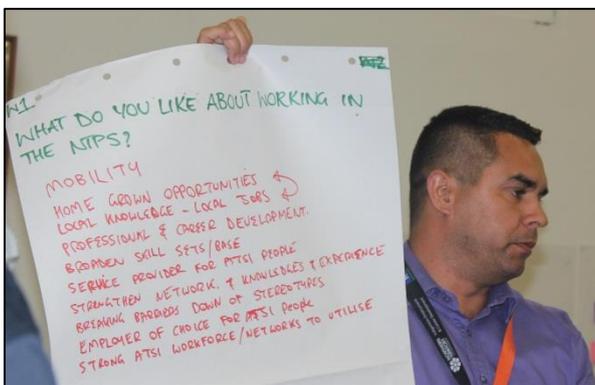


Photo: Robbie Lynch (TF)

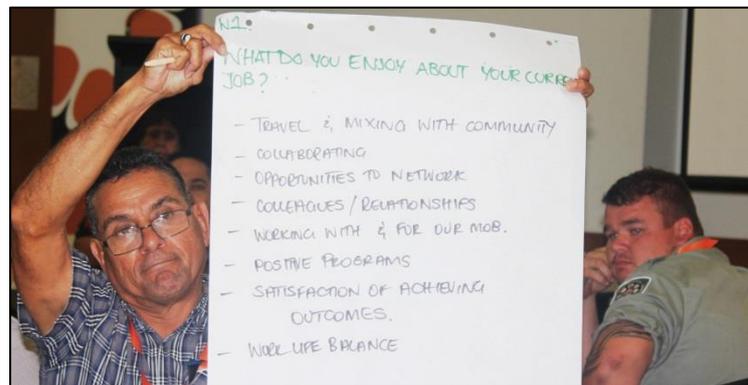
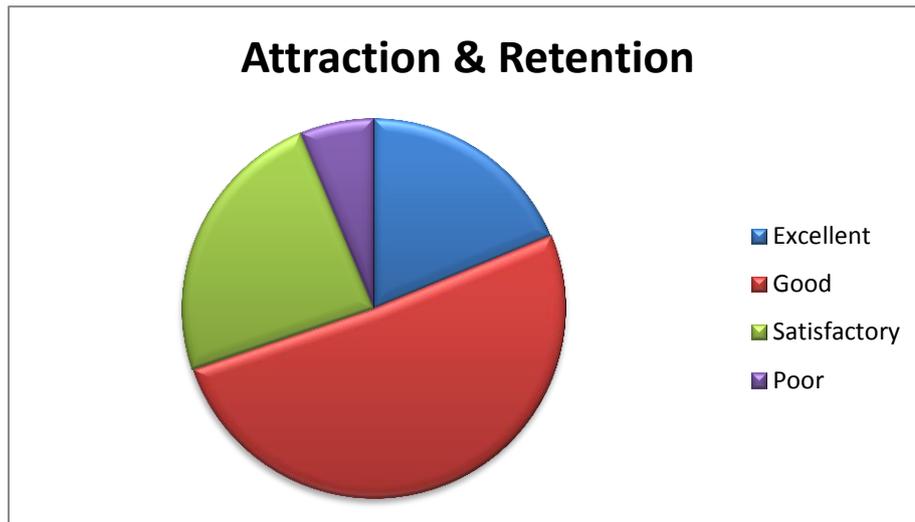


Photo: Mark Motlop (DCM)



Attraction and Retention was a hot topic in the workshops and various comments were made and would like to see this topic again at the next forum, but a little more in depth conversation especially around 'Special Measures'.

There was a poor rating of (6%) for this workshop and was based on the following comments:

- *"The retention, money that P stream get doesn't reflect what it is for. Especially when ATSI staff are long term".*
- *"A lot more time should have been allocated to such a hot topic! Poor implementation of this program has led to a lack of understanding, myths and ultimately racism in the workplace" (in reference to Special Measures).*

Above all the workshop was perceived well and the constant theme of not enough time for this workshop, which required more time for in-depth discussion. Some of the comments that came through were the following:

- *"I would like to see an anonymous survey be sent to all NTPS about Special Measures. My experience is that a lot of non-Aboriginal staff think it's unfair and are taking it out on us".*
- *"Special Measures – A lot more time should have been allocated to such a hot topic!"*



Photo: Tanyah and Joanne Nasir (Tanyah Nasir Consulting)



Photo: Terri Lisson (OCPE)

## What did you enjoy most about the Forum?

When employees were asked what they enjoyed most about the Forum, networking was a definite consistent theme. There was a variety of comments that employees made on the specific areas on what they enjoyed which were the following:

- “Networking with other NTPS ATSI staff”.
- “Mark McCrindle’s presentation”.
- “Learning about strategy/statistics”.
- “The presentations especially Jason Elsegood being the MC”.
- “Special Measures and Career Development”.
- “My Stories, stories from the IEPs”.
- “Hearing about increase in ATSI employees”.
- “Level of engagement, the range of topics”.



Photo: Jason Elsegood (MC)



Photo: Mark McCrindle (Keynote speaker)



Photo: Jetheth Lammon (Post IEP, DENR)



Photo: Amber Cadell (Post IEP, DoH)

## What did you least enjoy about the Forum?

The main theme that stemmed from the evaluations was mainly the time constraints allocated for the workshops. This was definitely one of the areas that will be taken into account when organising the next ATSI Employee Forum. The following comments were made:

- *“Lack of time to do the workshop”.*
- *“Time allocated to Forum”.*
- *“Special Measures”.*
- *“Some staff were negative and disruptive. They need to be respectful of OCPE staff”.*
- *“The fact that you use the acronym ATSI this acronym is offensive to many Aboriginal people”.*
- *“Some people didn’t listen to what speakers were saying and asked irrelevant questions and tried to turn it into an argument”.*
- *“Not enough time to meet more people”.*

There was a divide in reference to using the acronym ATSI – some comments were made around that it is offensive; however a majority of the evaluations used the acronym ATSI.

## What topics would you suggest for the next Forum?

Many topics were suggested for the next forum and it looks from the following comments that there is a definite need to touch on the same topics for the workshop as per the following comments:

- *“Special Measures”.*
- *“Professional Development opportunities”.*
- *“Regional and remote employment”.*
- *“Cross Cultural Training”.*
- *“Establishing more support networks for ATSI employees to encourage inclusion and mentoring”.*
- *“Flexible Work Arrangements for Aboriginal staff”.*
- *“Training packages to develop employees to the next level”.*
- *“Recruitment processes”.*
- *“Transition from one classification to another, utilising By Law 41 and promoting early entry level programs inc cadetships & scholarships”.*
- *“Career Development Progression”.*
- *“Wider guest presenters – maybe a CEO & how & what influences them re ATSI issues”.*
- *“Stepping stones to Career Development” – “More in depth how to climb the ladder and team building”.*
- *“Recruitment, Retention and Special Measures – standalone topic”.*
- *“Split workshops for senior managers A07 – ECO”.*
- *“Attraction and Retention”.*
- *“Emotional Intelligence”.*

## Recommendations for Future

Feedback from all the sessions highlighted both strengths and room for improvement and some comments were made as per the following:

- *“I think the Forum should be held biannually”.*
- *“One day is not enough time for these very important issues and discussions”.*
- *“Longer forum over two days so there’s more time to network in workshops to get more in-depth with workshop topics”.*
- *“Lack of time spent to do the workshops in the afternoon”.*
- *“More good news outcomes as given by the MC and Mark and the trainees”.*
- *“Alternate Forums between Darwin and Alice Springs to assist with cultural competencies”.*
- *“Have ATSI guest speakers (staff) that can talk about their journey from when they first started and where they are now in the NTPS”.*

Participants Recommendations to OCPE:

1. Hold ATSI Employee Forum biannually (1 x Alice Springs and 1 x Darwin).
2. Increase Forum duration from one day to two days.
3. Allow longer allocated times to cover the workshops more in depth.
4. Invite ATSI guest speakers to share their journey/career in the NTPS.
5. Complete the ATSI Employee Forum with a networking dinner.
6. Invite a senior Indigenous keynote speaker (government or non-government).

