

Aboriginal Employment and Career Development Strategy Refresh

2015–2020



Minister's Foreword



It is with great pleasure that I present the refreshed Aboriginal Employment and Career Development Strategy 2015-20 (the Strategy). The refreshed Strategy has provided the opportunity to reflect on our achievements, process and programs developed since the commencement of the strategy in 2015, with the continued objective to increase and retain Aboriginal employment, participation and capability at all levels across the Northern Territory Public Sector (NTPS).

A critical objective of the Strategy is to work towards a global target of 16 per cent Aboriginal employment within the NTPS by 2020, including working towards a target of 10 per cent Aboriginal representation in senior and/or executive levels by 2020.

Understanding the community we serve is key to the NTPS delivery of efficient and responsive public policies and service delivery outcomes. Whilst this understanding is already a strong characteristic of the NTPS, the Strategy provides support to agencies in the practical matters of building an

organisation that more closely resembles the community it serves.

I am pleased to announce that as of December 2018, Aboriginal employment was at 10.5 per cent within the NTPS, an increase from 10 per cent in June 2016 and from 8.8 per cent in 2015 when the strategy first started. There has been a significant increase of Aboriginal employee participation in senior and/or executive levels at the SAO1 (or equivalent and above) which has increased to 5.3 per cent in December 2018 from 3.9 per cent in June 2016 and from 2.3 per cent in 2015. Although this is a fantastic achievement, there is much work still to be done.

Half of our Aboriginal population have not yet turned 21, therefore there is a great need to engage our youth to start thinking about their futures and careers. Creating jobs and opportunities is one of the most important things, we as a government can do, to provide a bright future for all Territorians.

Hon. Gerald McCarthy,
Minister for Public Employment

Message from the Commissioner for Public Employment



I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we operate. We pay our respects to the Elders, past, present and emerging, acknowledging their history and continued connection to Country.

The NTPS strives to achieve a public sector that reflects the community it serves through culturally appropriate programs, policy development and service delivery strategies. As we are all aware, Aboriginal Territorians represent over 30 per cent of the Northern Territory population and is likely to reach 41 per cent by 2041. Aboriginal Territorians also represent over 70 per cent of the NTPS clientele in a range of services from health, housing, education and justice.

The refreshed strategy includes a section dedicated to post 2020 programs as well as the 2016 Election Commitment of '500 more Aboriginal people filling a role as a teacher, police officer or nurse by 2026'. This is an innovative approach to grow

our Aboriginal workforce and meet the Northern Territory Government's commitment of working towards a global target of 16 per cent Aboriginal employment.

I would like to thank all NTPS agencies for their continued support and positive contribution to the Strategy in working towards these targets. I encourage you to consider how you can best give effect to the initiatives and goals outlined in the refreshed Strategy and develop a workforce that employs more Aboriginal people across all occupations, levels and locations.

Craig Allen,
Commissioner for Public Employment

The NT Public Sector Context

The NTPS is the largest employer in the Northern Territory. As at December 2018, there were approximately 23,000 people employed in 15 agencies and authorities, across regional and remote centres.

Darwin is the largest hub of NTPS staff with 68.1 per cent of the workforce in the Darwin and Palmerston region. Alice Springs region follows with 18 per cent and the remaining 13.9 per cent are in remote and very remote areas.

A primary objective for the NTPS is the delivery of high-quality services to the Northern Territory's population of close to 248,000. A significant proportion of the Northern Territory's population, around 41 per cent, reside in remote and very remote areas. Around 70 per cent of the remote and very remote population are Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people also represent over 70 per cent of the NTPS clientele through a range of services.



Aboriginal Representation

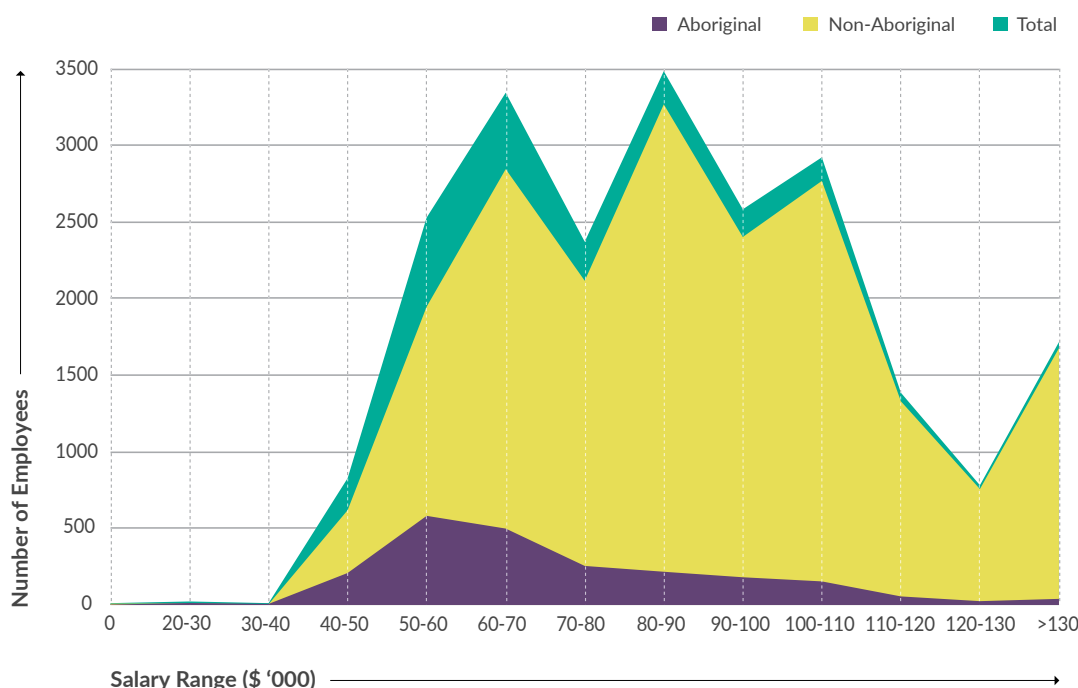
Approximately 30 per cent of the Northern Territory's population is Aboriginal, compared to the national average where Aboriginal people comprise around 3 per cent.

Aboriginal employees in the NTPS numbered 2483 in 2018, which equates to 10.5 per cent of the total NTPS workforce. In 2015 Aboriginal employment in the NTPS was at 8.8 per cent.

Over the past three years we have seen a significant movement in the number of Aboriginal employees at the senior level (SAO1 level or equivalent) and above rise from 1.1 per cent to 5.3 per cent.



Figure 1: Comparison of NTPS Employees per Salary Range (2018-19)



In contrast to the Northern Territory's non-Aboriginal population, Aboriginal Territorians are quite mobile within the Territory, being less likely to move interstate or overseas due to their strong connection to land and culture. This represents a stable pool of potential employees for the Northern Territory workforce, and where the return on investment in adult training and professional development is more likely to be returned to the Northern Territory economy.

There are currently 34,150 students in the Northern Territory, 44 per cent being Aboriginal students. Aboriginal students in Year 10 are currently close to 50 per cent. Taking these statistics into account, the future workforce of the Northern Territory will increasingly become more reflective of the population statistics with the implementation of effective strategies and practices.

As the major employer, the NTPS is in a unique position to contribute to improved social and economic outcomes for Aboriginal people. This can be achieved through increased employment across all levels of the NTPS, and subsequently deliver more relevant and effective services.



Valuing Aboriginal Culture and Contribution

Valuing and understanding the diversity of Aboriginal cultures, knowledges, experiences and histories has the potential to inform and shape how the NTPS engages with and provides services to Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory.

The population of the Northern Territory reflects a rich Aboriginal culture with more than 100 languages and dialects spoken. An increased Aboriginal workforce will enrich service delivery through cultural brokerage and practices, traditional knowledge and language.

It is important for the NTPS to promote a diverse range of employment pathways where Aboriginal people are an integral part of front-line service delivery through to the executive level. Incorporating the unique cultural skills Aboriginal people bring to the service will drive improvements and influence policy change in the Northern Territory.

The Northern Territory Government is committed to working with Aboriginal people and communities through Local Decision Making (LDM). Local Decision Making is a Northern Territory Government commitment to provide opportunities to transfer government service delivery to Aboriginal people and organisations based on their community aspirations. Working together, policies and practices for service delivery areas such as housing; local government; education; children and families; training and jobs; health; and law and justice can be developed.



Strategy Refresh Overview

In 2015 the Aboriginal Employment and Career Development Strategy was released for the period covering 2015 – 2020.

New Government policy and initiatives demonstrate a continued focus on the importance of Aboriginal representation through all levels of Government.

The issue of under-representation of Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory workforce clearly needs to be addressed. As the largest employer in the Northern Territory the NTPS needs to lead the way. This strategy will support working towards a global target of 16 per cent Aboriginal employment by 2020.

Further to this, a commitment to work towards a 10 per cent target for Aboriginal participation in the senior management/executive levels of the NTPS by 2020.

All NTPS agencies will contribute towards the achievement of the targets, through agency's individual set targets for Aboriginal employment, having regard for their staffing numbers and proportion of Aboriginal employees.

The strategy identifies four key themes which continue to be our focus. Each of these themes identifies a set of strategies which will guide the actions and implementation of the strategy.

Each agency has different needs, clients and services. In recognition of this, each agency will use this overarching strategy to develop actions that best suit their needs in working towards our 2020 targets.





The Objective

The objective of the strategy is to increase and encourage Aboriginal employment, participation and capability at all levels of NTPS work activity, and in all areas within agencies. The strategy also aims to enhance professional development and career opportunities for Aboriginal employees, to enable them to determine their own employment and career paths.

The Principles

The following principles are considered critical to the success of the strategy:

The NTPS must **commit**: A long-term commitment to improving Aboriginal employment, participation and capability in the NTPS must come from all levels of staff and across NTPS agencies.

The NTPS must **innovate**: The NTPS must be prepared to find new ways of attracting, developing and retaining Aboriginal people in the NTPS workforce if we are to achieve our objective.

The NTPS must **engage**: Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal employees must work together to develop an organisational culture which values and respects Aboriginal culture and cultural differences.

The application of these principles will:

- Establish a clear plan to address the under-representation of Aboriginal people in the NTPS workforce;
- Create a framework for monitoring the effectiveness of sector wide and specific agency-led actions;
- Commit the NTPS to the development of an Aboriginal workforce that reflects the general population.

ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT AND

The Objective

This will be achieved through

A LONG-TERM COMMITMENT →

With activities in the key focus areas of

Targets →

- The NTPS will work towards a total workforce comprised of 16 per cent Aboriginal people by 2020
- The NTPS will work towards a total workforce comprised of 10 per cent of senior management/ executive roles by 2020
- Every agency will work towards their individual Aboriginal employee targets

Engagement & Support →

- Continued focus on the objective and implementation of the strategy
- Embed current human resource management practices to support staff in accessing development opportunities
- Maintain a consolidated approach and method to cross cultural learning outcomes through the Cross-Cultural Training Framework
- Promote participation in mentoring and development programs, access to mentors and participation in resource/reference groups

CAREER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The objective of the strategy is to increase and encourage Aboriginal employment, participation and capability at all levels of NTPS work activity, and in all areas within agencies. The strategy also aims to enhance professional development and career opportunities for Aboriginal employees, to enable them to determine their own employment and career paths.

INNOVATION



ENGAGEMENT

Attraction & Retention →

- Adoption of innovative and culturally appropriate recruitment and retention strategies
- Promotion of employment and career options in the NTPS to Aboriginal school students and target groups
- Enhance Aboriginal employment accessibility points including: online capability; internal recruitment and use of external professional services
- Increase focus on Regional and Remote needs

Career Development →

- Whole of career (entry level through to senior management/executive levels) learning pathways framework to develop capability and careers specifically for Aboriginal employees
- Training and professional development programs that feed into the whole of career learning pathways framework
- Identify, review or develop Aboriginal mentoring programs across all levels of the NTPS
- Expanded focus on career development at the higher levels of NTPS

2015–2020 Strategy Themes and Initiatives

Four key themes have been identified to attract and retain Aboriginal people in the NTPS with a strong focus on increasing employment, encouraging participation and building capability to develop their careers in the NTPS.

THEME 1

Targets for Aboriginal employment and participation

- The NTPS will work towards a total workforce comprised of 16 per cent Aboriginal people by 2020
- The NTPS will work towards a total workforce comprised of 10 per cent of senior management/executive roles by 2020
- Every agency will work towards their individual Aboriginal employee targets

The OCPE will be responsible for:

- Working collaboratively with agencies to maintain focus and monitor progress on working towards the 2020 targets
- Lead the review of current data systems and processes used for inputting and capturing information in relation to Aboriginal employment and development
- Provide feedback and reporting to agencies on a regular basis on progress towards the 2020 targets
- Lead improved education and communication on the aim and appropriate use of Special Measures in the NTPS

THEME 2

Engagement and Support

- Continued focus on the objective and implementation of the strategy
- Embed current human resource management practices to support staff in accessing development opportunities
- Maintain a consolidated approach and method to cross cultural learning outcomes through the Cross-Cultural Training Framework
- Promote participation in mentoring and development programs, access to mentors and participation in resource/reference groups
- Every agency will ensure all Aboriginal employees (ongoing or on a temporary contract of 12 months or more) has a career development plan in place

The OCPE will be responsible for:

- Continuing to drive implementation of the strategy and provide guidance through the Aboriginal Employment and Career Development division
- Continuing to facilitate and participate in champion/resource and reference groups to maintain commitment and momentum
- Marketing and promoting access to the NTPS Cross Cultural Training framework across agencies
- Collaborating and co-designing programs which provide career pathways, professional and leadership potential of Aboriginal employees
- Leading a review of the processes, uptake and monitoring across agencies on capability/career planning



THEME 3

Attraction and Retention of Aboriginal people

- Adoption of innovative and culturally appropriate recruitment and retention strategies
- Promotion of employment and career options in the NTPS to Aboriginal school students and target groups
- Enhance Aboriginal employment accessibility points including: online capability; internal recruitment and use of external professional services
- Increase focus on Regional and Remote needs

The OCPE will be responsible for:

- Working in partnership with the Department of Corporate and Information Services (DCIS) review, develop and promote current recruitment accessibility points, exit surveys, entry level programs and career opportunities across the NTPS
- Leading the development of a Cultural Skills Framework aligned to the CLF which recognises the cultural skills sets which are essential and desirable for inclusion in position descriptions
- Promoting the NTPS as an employer of choice for Aboriginal people through the engagement and strengthening of networks across the Northern Territory
- Engaging with Regional and Remote Aboriginal staff to inform on service delivery practices and recommendations to increase local Aboriginal employment

THEME 4

Whole of career development to build capability and careers

- Whole of career (entry level through to senior management/ executive levels) learning pathways framework to develop capability and careers specifically for Aboriginal employees
- Training and professional development programs that feed into the whole of career learning pathways framework
- Identify, review or develop Aboriginal mentoring programs across all levels of the NTPS
- Expanded focus on career development at the higher levels of NTPS

The OCPE will be responsible for:

- Working in partnership with DCIS to look at ways to extend the development of past Aboriginal employment program participants in the NTPS to assist in their career progression
- Promoting the opportunities to participate in programs and development opportunities for Aboriginal staff
- Working in partnership with agencies to explore strategies to increase access to secondment positions for Aboriginal staff
- Implementing an Aboriginal employee mentoring program, including the provision of guidelines, support and assistance to agencies to deliver structured mentoring for Aboriginal staff
- Lead a review of the achievements of current Aboriginal development and leadership programs



2016 Election Commitment

‘Have 500 more Aboriginal people filling a role as a teacher, police officer or nurse by 2026’

The commitment to achieve 500 more Aboriginal people filling a role as a teacher, police officer or nurse by 2026 has been included in the individual agency targets for Department of Education, Department of Health and NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services.

These roles have been expanded to include Education and Health professionals as well as Police, ACPO's and Police Auxiliary staff. Each of the three agencies have a commitment to increase the number of Aboriginal people delivering services across the Northern Territory and have developed strategies towards this achievement. A summary of the commitments, programs and initiatives is provided below:

Education

Commitments

- Increase investment in employment pathways that transition Aboriginal students from education and training into teaching jobs in NT schools
- Create workplaces that value the skills, knowledge and experience Aboriginal employees bring to their positions, schools and teams

Programs

- Increase Aboriginal student participation in the School Based Traineeship Scheme through marketing and promotional campaigns at schools across the NT
- Increase Aboriginal participation in the Aboriginal Teacher Education Scholarship program through marketing and promotional campaigns

Initiatives

- Develop Aboriginal leadership capability to lead and manage complex reform in a changing environment and to maximise student outcomes
- To have Aboriginal employee representation on all departmental committees to build capacity, leadership and governance skills



Health Commitments

- Embedding governance structures for the effective coordination of activities for building NT Health's Aboriginal workforce
- Improving employment pathways across all clinical and allied health professions for new and existing employees

Programs

- Improving partnerships with training and education providers
- Implementing effective mentoring and support frameworks for Aboriginal staff

Initiatives

- Implementation of an improved Aboriginal Health Practitioner Career Pathway and supporting trainee framework
- Continued support in foundational training to open pathways into health qualifications

Police, Fire and Emergency Services

Commitments

- Increase Aboriginal participation in the Tri-Service Cadetship through focussed engagement campaigns at schools across the Northern Territory
- Identify funding to expand the Aboriginal Liaison Officer Program

Programs

- Establishing a central NTPFES Aboriginal development unit which will include a cadre of staff dedicated to workforce support and planning
- Developing a Reconciliation Action Plan in partnership with Reconciliation Australia (NTPFES)

Initiatives

- Provide developmental pathways and effective mentoring and support frameworks for Aboriginal staff
- Increasing Aboriginal representation in working groups, steering committees and selection panels

Beyond 2020 – Programs, Commitments and Initiatives

The consultative process undertaken during the review and refresh of the current strategy identified areas where future consideration and visioning could be included beyond 2020.

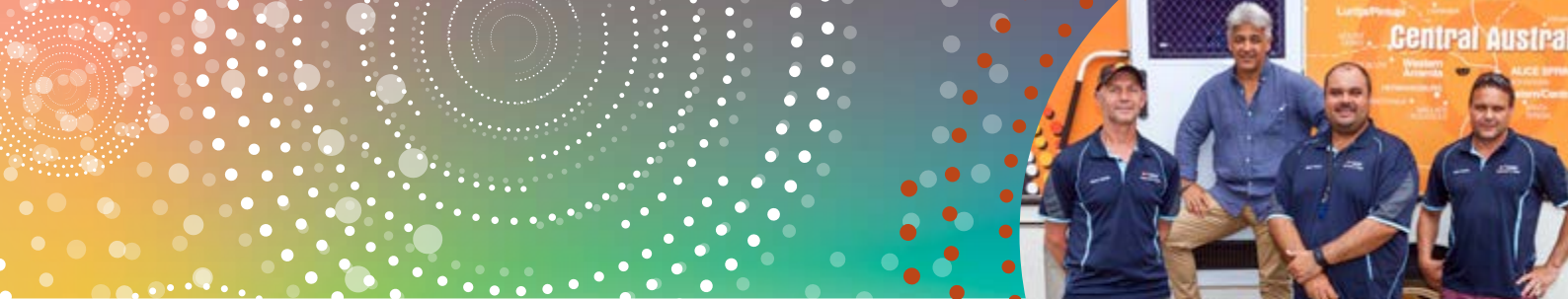
These discussions identified potential future commitments, programs and initiatives as outlined below:

Commitments

- Overarching strategy, budget and governance structure in place to support the strategy
- Performance indicators within Senior NTPS employment contracts
- Accountability to drive and action the strategy
- Targeted recruitment and training to facilitate Aboriginal representation in human resource areas across the NTPS

Programs

- Co-design of programs inclusive of Aboriginal representation to develop a talent pipeline
- A greater emphasis on the development of remote staff with an emphasis on cultural difference and Aboriginal terms of reference
- Develop or access to a range of wellbeing programs with consideration of frontline staff working in Aboriginal trauma related services
- Develop a best practice approach to professional development internal procedures including guidelines and templates



Initiatives

- Integrated quality data systems that enable access to inform analytics, personnel records including Aboriginal identification, qualifications, skills and knowledge and career plan which can be accessed and updated throughout career and agency moves
- Further develop and market the use of the Aboriginal Employment portal
- Investigate the possibility of establishing a Centralised Aboriginal Employment Division with carriage of attraction, recruitment and retention processes
- Increased partnerships with non-government organisations to access a broader talent pool
- Formalised process for flexible work arrangements and job sharing for remote employees





FOR MORE INFORMATION

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