

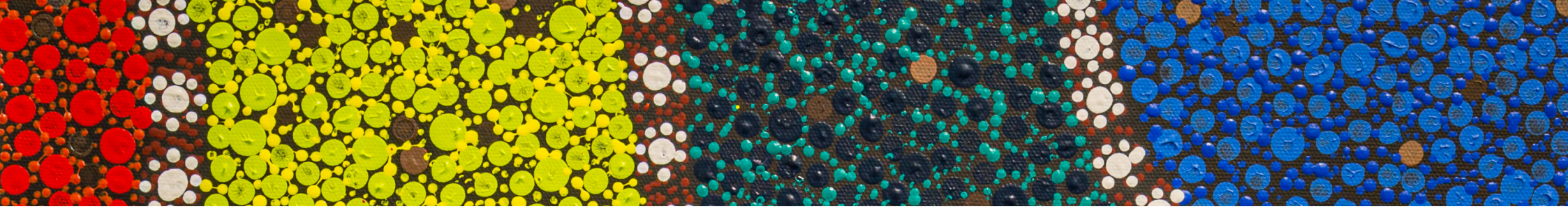


Australian Government
Department of Industry,
Innovation and Science

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2019 – 2021







Secretary's foreword

It is my pleasure to present the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science (DIIS) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2019-21* (the strategy).

This strategy supports the department's commitment to a diverse and inclusive workforce and directly links to our *Reconciliation Action Plan 2019-21* and the associated commitments across the Respect, Relationship and Opportunities categories. It is further supported by the department's Corporate Plan, the *DIIS Inclusion Strategy 2017-20*, *DIIS Capability Development Strategy 2017-20* and aligns with the Australian Public Service Commission's *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy*.

Increasing the diversity of our workforce is a critical priority for the department. This is to ensure our workforce reflects our communities and truly leverages employees' unique perspectives; increasing innovation, productivity, stronger decision making and creative problem solving. We recognise the valuable expertise and knowledge which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees bring across all areas of our work to allow us to deliver better outcomes for business, science and our communities.

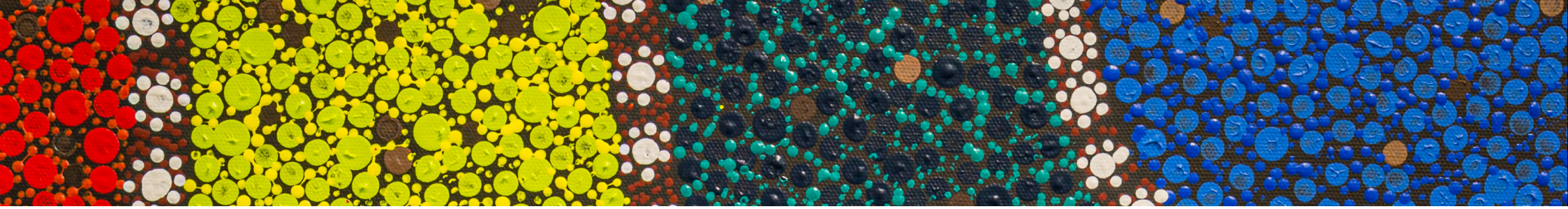


We strive to increase representation and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by leveraging five key focus areas. These focus areas range from attraction and recruitment, through to nurturing and developing our staff to create an environment where everyone can reach their full potential. The focus areas are supported by tangible actions to achieve sustainable change which will be regularly monitored and reported against.

We place a strong focus on supporting, valuing and respecting the unique perspectives of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. As part of this, we are removing barriers which may prevent equal opportunity to participate, contribute and progress in the department. While this strategy still places an emphasis on recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees through Entry Level Programs, it also moves beyond this to identify specific actions to nurture career pathways and build leadership capability at the middle and senior levels.

I encourage all staff to actively contribute to achieving the actions outlined in the strategy but not to be limited by its scope. It is through individual commitment and collective action that we can create sustainable change

Dr Heather Smith
Secretary



Acknowledgments

Acknowledgment of Country

The Department of Industry, Innovation and Science acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of lands and water throughout Australia, and their continuing cultural connection to land, water and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to their ancestors and Elders past, present and emerging.

We acknowledge and pay our respect to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees who work in the department throughout Australia.

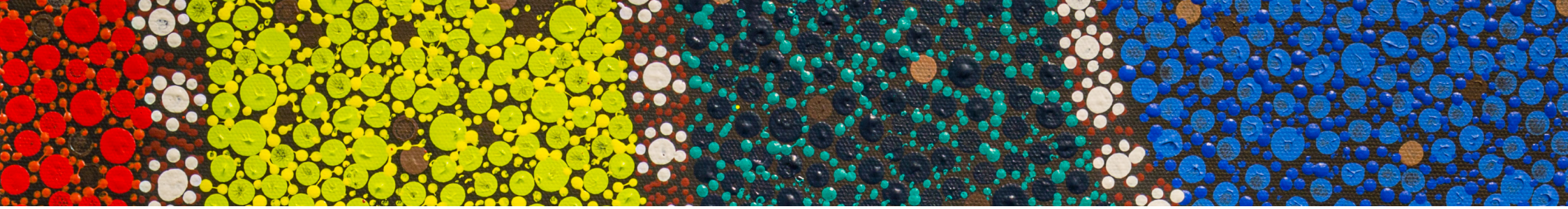


Contributors to the strategy

Thank you to the following participants who contributed to the development of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment strategy:

- the Indigenous Employee Network
- the Reconciliation Action Plan working group
- the Indigenous Champion, Sam Reinhardt and Senior Executives across the department
- the department's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees who participated in consultations.

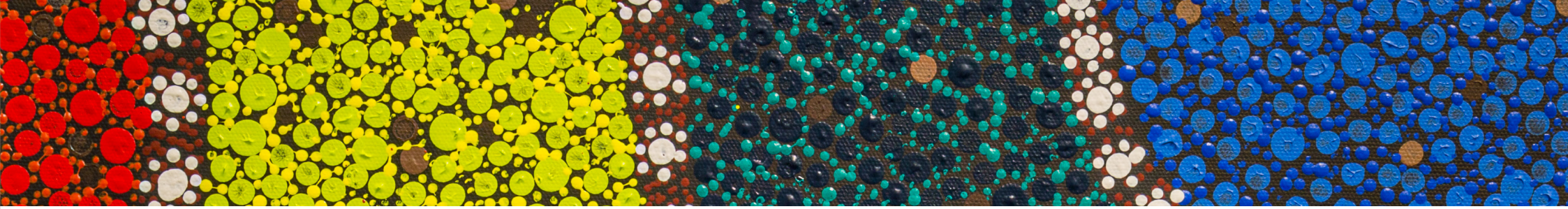
The department acknowledges the significant leadership, commitment and contributions of the above mentioned participants and looks forward to their continued engagement and guidance in the strategy's implementation.



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Our commitment

As a department, we are committed to building a diverse and inclusive workforce, one where we leverage capability by bringing different talent, skills and perspectives together to work towards a common vision. It is important that we have a workforce that reflects the diversity of our communities and acknowledges the First Nations peoples ongoing cultural practices.

We will empower our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to support policy and program delivery by ensuring the knowledge and experiences of First peoples are engrained in our work. We will value and engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' innovations, knowledge and culture, to strengthen our organisation's cultural capabilities and to improve Australia's economic and social opportunities.

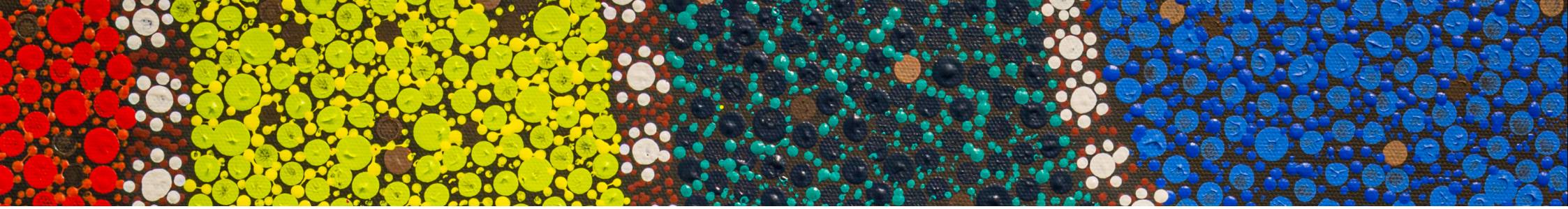


Introduction

This strategy complements and builds on the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science (DIIS) Inclusion Strategy 2017-20, DIIS Capability Development Strategy 2017-20 and the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy.

Increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation is a key priority for the department and this strategy. To assist the department in achieving this, a target of 2.5 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment has been set, to be achieved over the timeframe of this strategy. As at March 2019, the department's workforce profile includes 1.4 per cent of employees who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander:

	Current (as of June 2019) %	Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff (of total)	Target by level	Additional staff needed to achieve target
SES	0%	0 (82)	2	2
EL2	1.4%	5 (350)	9	4
EL1	1.1%	8 (697)	18	10
APS 5-6	1.5%	15 (1025)	26	11
APS 1-4	2.9%	13 (448)	11	-2
Total	1.6%	41 (2613)	65	24



The change framework

To achieve 2.5 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment, it is critical that the department has a solid framework that builds on current foundations and is strengthened by innovative actions to drive change.

This strategy sets out the five focus areas to achieve greater Indigenous employment in the department:

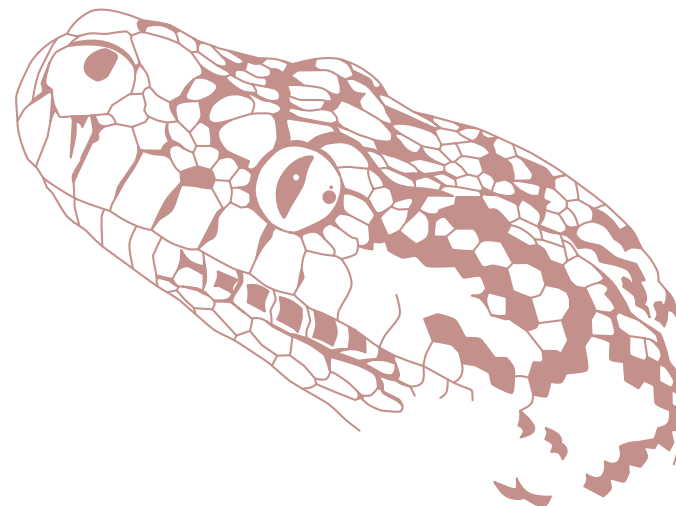
- Recruitment and Attraction
- Induction
- Inclusive workplaces
- Retention
- Development

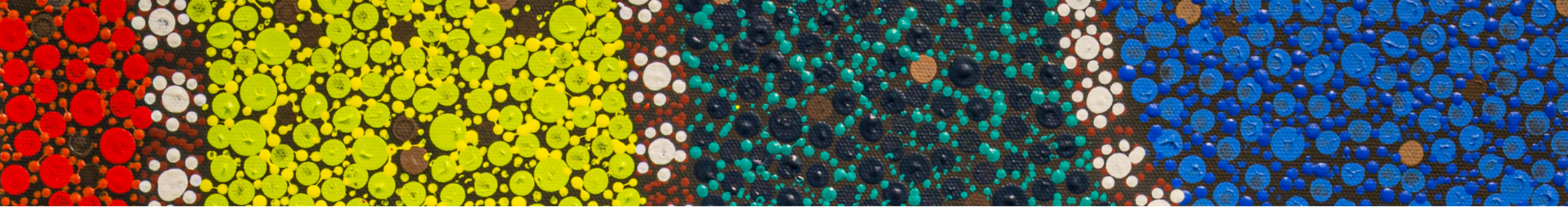
The department aims to attract increasing numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees into career pathways that are diverse and inclusive. The strategy strives to increase overall representation and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees as well as placing a strong focus on increasing representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in executive roles. Senior leadership representation is critical to drive improvements in cultural practice, cultural awareness and to influence positive policy outcomes.

What we will do

In order to increase our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in the workforce to 2.5 per cent, we will continue with current initiatives as well as adopt new ideas and practices. Innovation is key to drive change and increase measurable outcomes. The work practices that we will undertake will include:

- **Investing** in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to ensure that they reach their full potential.
- A focus of our employee value **proposition** to incorporate the unique cultural skills that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff offer in workplaces.
- **Developing a talent pipeline** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff through inclusive recruitment processes.
- Strengthening **inclusion** across our workplaces, policies and systems to ensure everyone feels valued and is able to fully contribute.
- Training to all staff on behaving respectfully and appropriately to create a **culturally safe** workplace.





Recruitment and Attraction

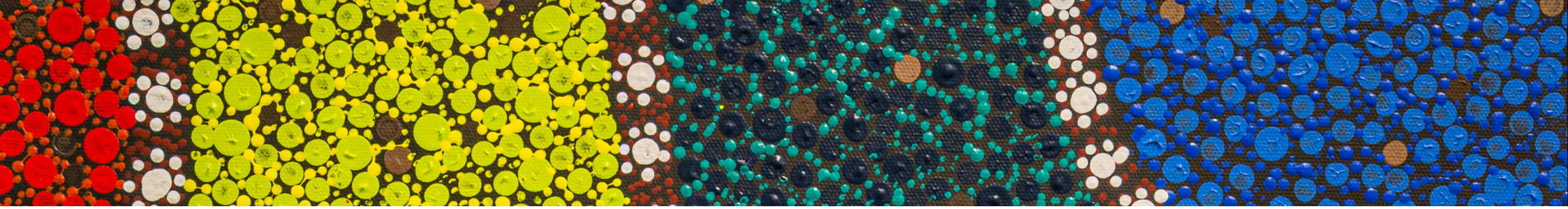
The Australian Public Service, private sector and other industries have realised the benefit of employing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This has resulted in a highly competitive environment for talent in our capital cities and regional locations. The challenge for the department is to engage with potential employees and other partners in order to develop and attract talent from the labour market.

To meet this challenge, we will utilise our existing national footprint and other innovative approaches to increase recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. This includes looking for opportunities to work collaboratively and partner with professional associations, other government agencies and the private sector.

Actions

To develop the pool of talented Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees the department will:

- Develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment resources to promote and raise the department's profile and showcase the opportunities and scope of work at forums such as:
 - Cultural and significant community events
 - Sponsorship of National reconciliation week and NAIDOC Week events
 - Major national Indigenous Affairs events.
- Review marketing material and position descriptions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander roles to ensure the use of inclusive language.
- Advertise roles in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media and circulate opportunities through Aboriginal networks such as
 - Specific career portals
 - Community newspapers, newsletters and brochures
 - Tertiary institutions
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations and organisations.
- Create career opportunities in all business areas across the organisation by identifying positions for future recruitment such as Affirmative Measures and Indigenous Identified.
- Develop an Affirmative Measures temporary employment register.
- Conduct strategic bulk recruitment campaigns using Affirmative Measures.
- Partner with other government agencies in targeted Affirmative Measures recruitment campaigns to develop cross agency talent merit pools.
- Focus on recruitment at executive and Senior Executive Staff levels.
- Maintain recruitment through entry level programs with a target of 5 per cent employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.
- Facilitate internships, cadetships and scholarships to increase engagement of people in the latter years of tertiary education.
- Explore new practices for interviewing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates, including opportunities for candidates to demonstrate skills and knowledge.
- Provide unconscious bias training to Affirmative Measures recruitment selection panels and ensure at least one Indigenous panel member participates in the process.
- Consult Affirmative Measures merit pools for suitable candidates prior to filling positions through other formal recruitment processes.



Induction

Induction plays an important role in the recruitment and retention of all employees.

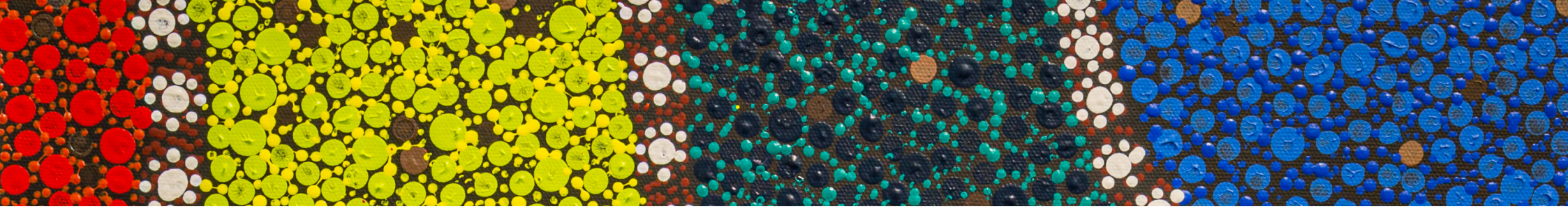
The department's induction process can vary quite considerably, depending on the area, the role and the manager concerned.

New starters can sometimes feel overwhelmed by a new workplace. Providing new staff with a workplace buddy can assist them to settle into a workplace more comfortably. In the case of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, another Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person is desirable in the role of a buddy, where possible.

Actions

To improve the induction process for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, the department will:

- Review the current induction process to ensure it incorporates the department's commitment to diverse and inclusive workplaces, behaviour expectations and online training.
- Create a new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee tool kit which provides information on the department's Indigenous Employee Network, other support services and key information and contacts.
- Create a managers tool kit which incorporates inclusion of all diversity groups, including for those who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.
- Develop a compulsory training program for managers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees that focuses on cultural awareness, respect and safety.
- Implement a workplace buddy system for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander new starters.



Inclusive workplaces

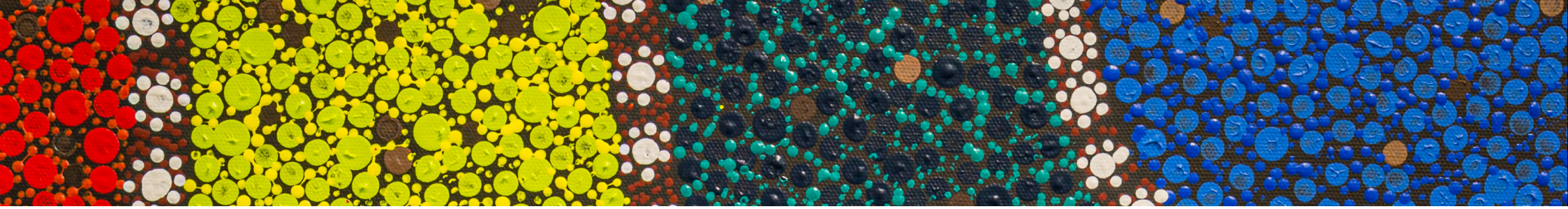
The department is dedicated to creating an environment where all employees feel equally valued, supported and respected, and where all employees have an equal opportunity to participate, contribute and progress.

A fundamental part of this is to develop a workplace culture which acknowledges, respects and celebrates the cultures of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Actions

To develop an inclusive workplace the department will:

- Develop a culture and inclusion workplace campaign, focused on valuing diversity including specific messages relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.
- Promote the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training package.
- Support the Indigenous Employee Network to act as a peer support network while being a platform for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to participate in the shaping of policy and programs across the department that will impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and businesses.
- Continue to promote and implement the department's Reconciliation Action Plan.
- Provide support to managers supervising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.
- Continue to develop appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures by celebrating key cultural events such as National Reconciliation week and NAIDOC week.
- Explore improvements to cultural leave provisions in the next iteration of the Enterprise Agreement.
- Provide departmental staff with the tools and resources to be able to identify unacceptable behaviour in the workplace through education and awareness such as bias and cultural training.
- Develop, implement and communicate an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural ethics protocols guidance document.



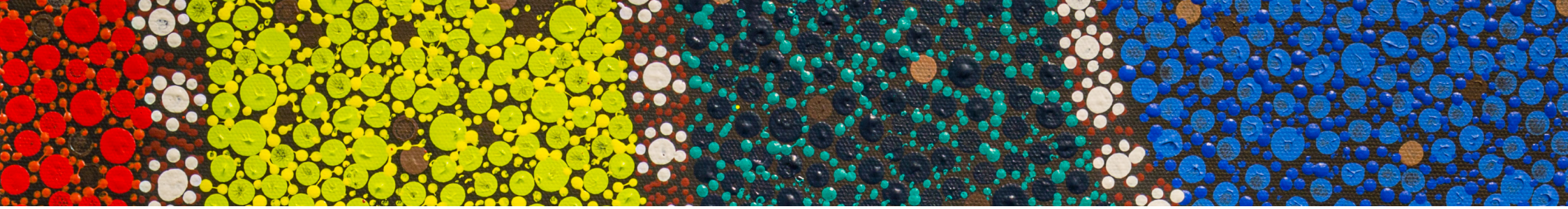
Retention

Ensuring we increase representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees relies heavily on not only attracting new talent, but on nurturing and retaining them.

Actions

To retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees the department will:

- Develop and promote a flexible and holistic Mentoring and Coaching program which includes formal and informal opportunities both internally and externally.
- Encourage greater participation of becoming an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mentor, mentee or coach by promoting the value and rewarding benefits to all staff including senior managers and executive staff as well as to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.
- Provide cross-cultural training for non-Indigenous employees wanting to participate as mentors or coaches to ensure full understanding of the complexities and opportunities resulting from a relationship with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mentee.
- Continue to invite a Traditional Owner from the local area to conduct a Welcome to Country for significant functions or events.
- Perform an Acknowledgement of Country prior to all significant internal and inter-department meetings.
- Utilise and promote the department's flexible work arrangements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who live in the states or regions or have other commitments to community or family that do not allow for full time work.
- Continue to support the annual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employee Network conference.
- Implement entry and exit interviews for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to gain insight into the success of initiatives and the reasons why staff join or leave the department.



Development

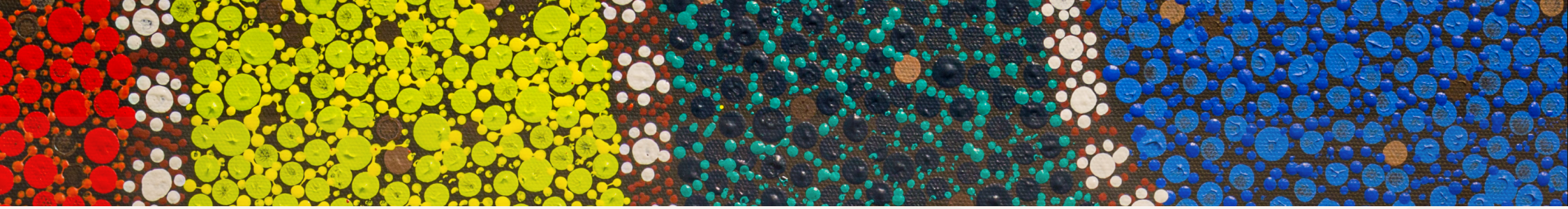
The department has previously been successful at attracting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at the APS1-3 classification levels, however there has been limited opportunity for these staff to progress. The current data confirms that there are minimal numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who hold senior roles within the department.

The department has conducted a number of staff surveys which indicate that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are very interested in and value professional development and career advancement. We are committed to ensuring opportunities are created to develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff across all levels.

Actions

To develop careers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, the department will:

- Support professional development for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff that is focused on realising the potential of individuals.
- Explore temporary and permanent mobility opportunities across the department, the portfolio agencies and the APS with particular focus on regional locations.
- Actively identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff for leadership programs.
- Establish a discretionary scholarship for staff at any level.
- Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to undertake short and long term secondment opportunities at level and higher duties.
- Establish specific pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to transition from administration based positions to policy roles.
- Review the Study Assistance Guidelines to ensure effective support is provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to undertake tertiary studies.
- Consider career development and pathway opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at the Executive and Senior Executive Staff levels.



Monitoring and reporting

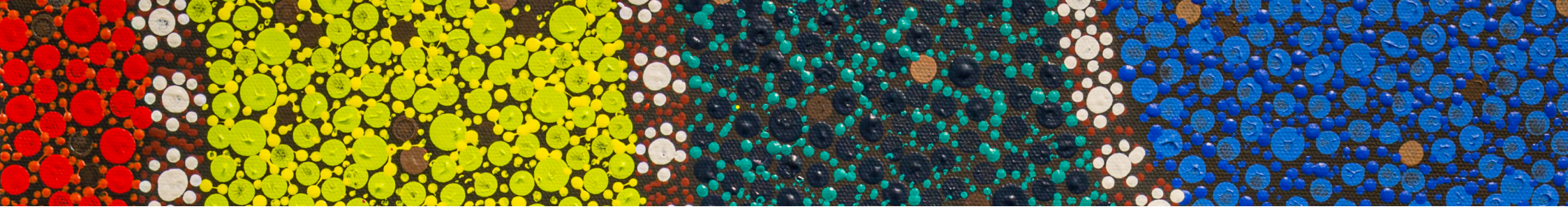
Monitoring and reporting of the strategy is critical for achieving the intended outcomes. The overarching governance framework will consist on two tiers. Tier 1 is the Executive Board, who will be responsible for approving large scale strategic initiatives or major cultural change. Tier 2 is the People Committee who will contribute to and provide guidance and leadership on the activities of the strategy.

Governance Framework

- **Tier 1:** The Executive Board will set the authorising environment, has overall responsibility and will provide leadership to drive significant strategic initiatives and major cultural changes.
- **Tier 2:** The People Committee will provide strategic guidance, approval and endorsement of initiatives under the strategy and will monitor progress on a regular basis.

Implementation Plan

Supporting the strategy will be a four year Implementation Plan which will outline the various monitoring and reporting approaches. The Implementation Plan will prioritise actions, determine the implementation schedule, identify key metrics and measures of success and outline the reporting mechanisms.



Jo Allen, Jo.Allen@industry.gov.au, 02 6276 1883

The painting symbolises inward and outward transformation from collaboration, mutual recognition/understanding and the wisdom to share, teach and accept new experiences and information as a community.



Amy Tracey, Amy.Tracey@industry.gov.au, 02 4014 5907

The artwork depicts seed pods and foliage from the bottlebrush plant. This is an important plant for the Wiradjuri people. The flowers attract the budyaa (birds) and the budyaa attract the gadi (snake), which is a key source of food for the Wiradjuri people.

The imagery has been mirrored to represent the fact that for some Indigenous people it can be hard to separate culture from other elements of life, including work. Culture is within us and it is reflected into all aspects of life.

The four lines that run across the image are a traditional symbol used by many Indigenous peoples to represent the gadi.



Larina Wall, Larina.Wall@industry.gov.au, 07 3046 4833

My painting represents my journey in the department thus far. The small tree represents myself as an APS trainee leading a path of development, growth and evolving into a bolder, more optimistic tree.

On the way to a blossoming expansion, I had a swirl of support and guidance from some very special colourful people.

