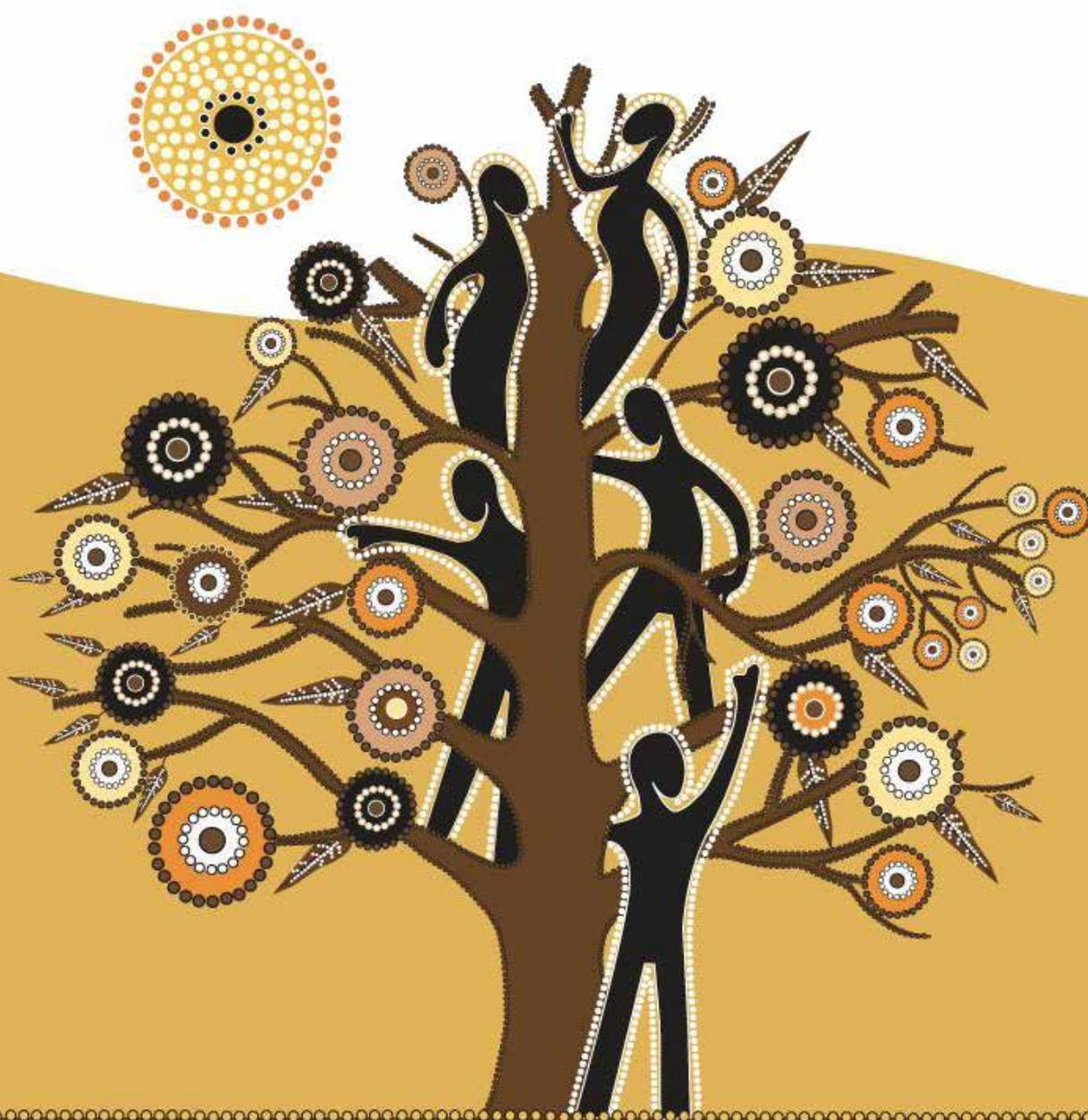


# Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2014 - 2016



Communities for all:  
Opportunities for everyone



Government of South Australia  
Department for Communities  
and Social Inclusion

# Acknowledgements



The Department for Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI) Aboriginal Employment Strategy has been developed with significant assistance from a range of key stakeholders, in particular the DCSI Aboriginal Senior Leadership Group for their insight and input to the Strategy.

A special acknowledgement is made to Karen Briggs for her artwork. Karen is a Yorta Yorta woman whose ancestral homelands radiates from the junction of the Goulburn and Murray Rivers in north-east Victoria. Karen is a Senior Graphic Designer with DCSI's Media and Communications Unit.

The large sun represents the source of life that guides and nurtures people on their career pathway journey.

The image represents a 'working together' approach to career pathways and future opportunities for Aboriginal staff in DCSI.

The tree represents growth, strength and unity in collaboration with the department. The people climbing the tree depict the journey our people are on to achieve their career goals in life.

The circles coming out of the tree represent the different divisions across the department, with the branches signifying the various sections and units. The leaves provide the tree with shade by offering protection and support towards striving to achieve positive outcomes.

Note: In South Australia the term 'Aboriginal people' includes Torres Strait Islander people.

## Chief Executive's Statement of Commitment



Increasing employment opportunities for Aboriginal people is recognised as being vital to Closing the Gap in Aboriginal disadvantage. Disappointingly, in his recent address to Parliament on the 12th February 2014 regarding progress on Closing the Gap, the Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, advised that “indigenous employment has, if anything, slipped backwards over the past few years”.

I know that staff in this department are very aware of the high levels of poverty and disadvantage experienced by many Aboriginal children, families and communities in South Australia. We all know that employment is a crucial step out of this situation.

The strategies outlined in this plan are built on the department's previous Aboriginal Employment Strategy, where I am proud to say that DCSI has achieved significantly more than the target of 2% employment for Aboriginal staff.

However, more remains to be done. The strategies outlined in 2014- 2016 will guide DCSI to be the leaders in Aboriginal employment for the public sector in South Australia and help towards narrowing the gap between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians.

I urge you to take the time to read this strategy and consider how your area can promote great employment outcomes for Aboriginal staff across our department.

**Joslene Mazel**  
Chief Executive

## Why a DCSI Aboriginal Employment Strategy is necessary

Many Aboriginal South Australians still experience discrimination and disadvantage. Because of this, many Aboriginal people do not share in the full benefits of society, in particular the areas of education, training and health, and live in areas with fewer labour market opportunities, discrimination, and lower levels of job retention.

The value of a job or a career brings a sense of self-worth, provides stability and financial independence, as well as providing improved access and outcomes for clients. It also provides positive role models to the community at large.

The South Australia Strategic Plan has set targets around Aboriginal unemployment and increasing employment of Aboriginal people within the public sector to:

- halve the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal unemployment rates by 2018, and
- increase the participation of Aboriginal people in the South Australian public sector, spread across all classifications and agencies, to 2% by 2014 and maintain or better those levels through to 2020.

The public sector has a vital role to play in demonstrating to other organisations the contribution made by Aboriginal people across all levels of employment. As a leading provider of services to Aboriginal people and Aboriginal communities, DCSI has a responsibility to reflect its client base in its workforce. To achieve this, the department has set a target of 4% of its workforce to be Aboriginal people by 2016.

This Aboriginal Employment Strategy provides the roadmap for DCSI to meet that target with its initiatives to attract, retain and develop Aboriginal staff and provide an inclusive working environment.

## Our Aboriginal workforce

Below is an extract of relevant demographics for DCSI's Aboriginal workforce taken from the [DCSI Aboriginal Workforce Profile for 2012-2013](#).

- DCSI has 192 employees (3.7% of the workforce) who have identified as being Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders
- 127 are female and 65 are male
- 60.4% are employed in ongoing positions
- 68.8% are employed fulltime
- The average age is currently 38.7 years, which is lower than the average age of all DCSI employees at 45.9 years
- The average tenure is 6.2 years, far lower than DCSI's average of 11 years. Additionally, the turnover of Aboriginal ongoing employees is 12.1%, compared with DCSI ongoing workforce of 7.2%
- DCSI is meeting its target of 2% representation of the workforce by Aboriginal employees being represented across most of the classification levels
- Of note is the high representation of Aboriginal employees in the Operational Services Stream (OPS) classification. Aboriginal employees represent nearly half (48%) of the total number of employees in this classification stream across DCSI
- The classification spread of Aboriginal employees across the ASO stream is comparable to the distribution of all DCSI employees across classification streams. There is a higher representation of Aboriginal employees in the ASO1-4 range: 27% for Aboriginal employees, compared to 21% for all DCSI staff
- When looking at the higher classification levels (ASO7 and above), however, there is little difference between the Aboriginal employees (4.7%) and all DCSI employees (4.8%). This indicates that there is a good representation of Aboriginal employees at senior and management levels within DCSI

- The Allied Health classification stream, however, appears to have lower representation of Aboriginal employees, with only the AHP1 and AHP4 levels achieving the 2% target. There are few Aboriginal employees at the AHP2 and none at the AHP3 level. Strategies to promote DCSI as an employer of choice to Aboriginal students in allied health courses will need to be considered.

## What is happening now

This Strategy builds on the work already occurring across the department to recruit and retain Aboriginal people. Detailed below are the various initiatives that are currently in place.

### DCSI Aboriginal Reconciliation Plan 2014-2016

The DCSI [Aboriginal Reconciliation Plan](#) was recently endorsed by Reconciliation Australia. The Plan was developed by the DCSI Reconciliation Committee following workshops and consultation across the department, and feedback from Reconciliation Australia.

### Aboriginal Services Directors Working Group

Chaired by the Chief Executive of DCSI, the Aboriginal Services Directors Working Group is responsible for overseeing the development of a policy establishing a consistent approach to support the most effective way of working with Aboriginal clients and communities and providing a venue for directors to report on their service provision and share information.

### DCSI Aboriginal Senior Leadership Group (ASLG)

The DCSI Aboriginal Senior Leadership Group was established in May 2013 to provide culturally specific advice on Aboriginal related matters across the department. The ASLG are an advisory committee to the DCSI Aboriginal Services Directors Working Group.

### Aboriginal Employment Pool

The DCSI [Aboriginal Employment Pool](#) is an Equal Employment Opportunity program to support Aboriginal employment in the Department. The pool provides the opportunity for Aboriginal candidates to be considered for a range of targeted roles within DCSI before they are advertised to the rest of the sector.

Currently the Pool recruits to the following classification levels:

- Administrative Services Roles: (ASO 2- ASO 3)
- Project Officer Roles: (ASO 3-ASO 6)
- Youth and Community Services Roles (OPS 2 – OPS 4).

DCSI also advertises all external positions on [www.IndigenousJobsAustralia.com.au](http://www.IndigenousJobsAustralia.com.au), a site dedicated to advertising job vacancies and opportunities to Aboriginal Australians.

### Flexible Work and Leave Arrangements

DCSI offers [flexible work arrangements](#) to assist Aboriginal employees to better meet their work and family obligations. Employees are also able to access special leave with pay (cultural leave) to attend essential cultural and ceremonial activities required under their traditional law.

### DCSI NAIDOC Awards

These annual Awards presented by the Minister and Chief Executive acknowledge Aboriginal employees who have shown leadership and driven positive change within DCSI.

### Aboriginal Cultural Sensitivity and Respect Training Program

The DCSI College for Learning and Development provides a two [Aboriginal Cultural Sensitivity and Respect](#) training program for all staff.

This learning program focuses on developing a general Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural competence and aims to equip participants with useful information in regards to Aboriginal affairs and non-Aboriginal privileges in order for staff to work more effectively with Aboriginal peoples.

### **Career fairs and Aboriginal cultural events**

DCSI actively promotes career opportunities through career fairs and Aboriginal cultural events, including attendance at Sorry Day, Reconciliation on Rundle, NAIDOC and the Aboriginal Power Cup. DCSI also holds sessions at Aboriginal community organisations to provide information regarding employment opportunities.

### **DCSI Mentoring Program**

Aboriginal staff are encouraged to participate in the [DCSI Mentoring Program](#) either as Mentors or Mentees. There is also a separate Aboriginal Mentoring category for Aboriginal mentors. The aim of this category is to support Aboriginal employees who can be faced with the challenges of working within a government system. Mentors will also assist in supporting and encouraging mentees in their career development.

### **DCSI Training and Qualifications**

DCSI Aboriginal employees are supported to achieve qualifications through DCSI study provisions.

In support of this, up to 100% reimbursement of study fees may be granted.

### **DCSI Aboriginal Administrative Traineeship Program**

In 2012 DCSI implemented an Aboriginal traineeship program with assistance from Maxima (a Group Training Organisation specialising in improving employment prospects for Aboriginal people). Ten trainees were recruited for the 12 month program and placed in a range of administrative roles across the department. Trainees combined on the job experience with study to gain a Certificate III in Government. The 'Jobs4Youth' traineeship program commencing in April 2014 will recruit a number of Aboriginal Trainees to DCSI over the next 4 years.

### **Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands Workforce Strategy**

DCSI has developed and implemented an APY Lands Workforce Strategy to specifically address the high turnover of staff on the Lands. This Strategy has included a partnership between DCSI and TAFE SA Regional to pilot a new model of training based on mentoring and a specific induction program for APY.

### **Anangu Retention Pilot**

The Anangu Retention Pilot arose as an intergovernmental and inter-agency contribution to address related issues around client service in Home and Community Care (HACC) delivery in the APY Lands, and the retention and career progression of Anangu staff employed as HACC workers.

## Key Objectives

The DCSI Aboriginal Employment Strategy has identified three key objectives that DCSI will meet by the end of 2016:

### Objective 1: Recruiting our Aboriginal Workforce

Our goal is to become employer of choice for Aboriginal communities in the future and by having a dedicated, skilled pool of Aboriginal employees.

Our strategies include:

- Increasing the Aboriginal representation of the DCSI workforce from 3.7% to 4% by 2016
- Promoting the Aboriginal Employment Pool across DCSI and annually increasing the number of Aboriginal staff employed through it
- Reviewing DCSI's recruitment and selection processes and tools to ensure they are innovative and culturally inclusive
- Engaging up to 4% of DCSI's allocation of 'Jobs4Youth Traineeship Program' for Aboriginal trainees for each year of the Program
- Continuing to promote DCSI employment opportunities at Career Fairs and community events and functions
- Liaising with the Career Guidance Units within each of the three universities based in Adelaide to explore opportunities to attract Aboriginal Graduates particularly from the Allied Health streams.

#### Measure:

- The number and percentage of Aboriginal employees recruited will reach 4%.

### Objective 2: Retaining and developing our Aboriginal staff

DCSI is committed to retaining our employees through building a workplace that is inclusive and respectful of Aboriginal culture. We also understand the importance of career pathways for Aboriginal employees and hearing their views on issues that directly relate to their employment opportunities within DCSI.

Retention strategies are especially important as DCSI Aboriginal employees have a far lower average tenure (6.2 years), than DCSI's average of 11 years. Additionally, the turnover of Aboriginal ongoing employees is 12.1%, compared with DCSI ongoing workforce of 7.2%.

Our strategies include:

- Having representation of Aboriginal people to 2% across all classification levels
- Promoting and resourcing the DCSI Aboriginal Orientation Program for all new Aboriginal employees
- Regularly reviewing and monitoring our Aboriginal workforce data to provide an accurate profile on our Aboriginal workforce
- Promoting and observing dates and events of significance to Aboriginal people
- Encouraging the sharing of information across the department via the maintenance and distribution of the DCSI Aboriginal Employees Network email listing
- Increasing skills levels and engagement of Aboriginal staff in formal education and training pathways including leadership, policy and project management
- Developing strategies that promote ongoing employment and career pathways for Aboriginal employees. In particular, investigate career progression for Aboriginal OPS 1 employees
- Monitoring the implementation of the APY Lands Workforce Strategy and the Anangu Retention Pilot.

#### Measures:

- Aboriginal employees will comprise 2% across all classifications.
- The number and percentage of DCSI ongoing Aboriginal employees participating in formal education and training pathways is increased annually.
- The number and percentage of DCSI ongoing Aboriginal employees exiting the department is reduced annually.

### Objective 3: Inclusive Workplace

Fostering a culturally aware and inclusive workplace will support an environment which enables optimal work performance from all employees, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.

DCSI recognises that Australian history continues to impact on Aboriginal peoples and communities today and therefore we need to implement effective strategies in the workplace for shifting paradigms, furthering learning and development and enhancing respectful work with Aboriginal peoples.

Our strategies include:

- Promoting and supporting the implementation of the South Australian Universal Access and Inclusion Guidelines across DCSI
- Exploring opportunities for inclusion and engagement of Aboriginal employees through social networking
- Increasing the number of DCSI employees attending the Aboriginal Cultural Sensitivity and Respect Training Program offered through the College for Learning and Development
- Exploring the reasons that attract Aboriginal employees to DCSI as well as those reasons for why they leave.

#### Measures:

- The number and percentage of employees attending the DCSI Aboriginal Cultural Sensitivity and Respect Training Program is increased annually.
- There is increased number of people within DCSI identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

### Reporting and accountability

Annual reporting will be conducted measuring success against the targets and strategies at the end of each calendar year. Reporting will concentrate on those strategies with a target date at the end of the given calendar year with a report sent to Executive Leadership Team in the first quarter of the following year.

Human Resources Directorate will lead the following strategies, with the support of all

DCSI Divisions. Regular input and advice from the DCSI Aboriginal Senior Leadership Group will be sought regarding the Strategy and a half yearly report on progress made available.

The DCSI Aboriginal Employment Strategy will be communicated to all DCSI staff via the DCSI website and the HR Intranet.

## Key Stakeholders

The following key stakeholders were consulted with in the development of this Aboriginal Employment Strategy:

#### Internal

- Executive Leadership Team
- Aboriginal Services' Directors Working Group
- Aboriginal Senior Leadership Group
- College for Learning and Development

#### External

Aboriginal Workforce Participation Program within the Department for Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (DFEEST).

### Objective 1: Recruiting our Aboriginal Workforce

Strategy	End 2014	End 2015	End 2016
1.1 Increasing employment of Aboriginal people to 4%.			
1.2 Continuing to promote the Aboriginal Employment Pool across DCSI and annually increase the number of Aboriginal staff employed through it.			
1.3 Reviewing DCSI's recruitment and selection processes and tools to ensure they are innovative and culturally inclusive.			
1.4 Engaging up to 4% of DCSI's allocation of 'Jobs4Youth Traineeship Program' for Aboriginal trainees for each year of the Program.			
1.5 Continuing to promote DCSI employment opportunities at Career Fairs and community events and functions.			
1.6 Liaising with the Career Guidance Units within each of the three universities based in Adelaide to explore opportunities to attract Aboriginal Graduates particularly from the Allied Health streams			

### Objective 2: Retaining and Developing our Aboriginal staff

Strategy	End 2014	End 2015	End 2016
2.1 Continuing to promote and resource the DCSI Aboriginal Orientation Program for all new Aboriginal employees.			
2.2 Regularly review and monitor our Aboriginal workforce data to provide an accurate profile on our Aboriginal workforce.			
2.3 Promoting and observing dates and events of significance to Aboriginal people.			
2.4 Encourage the sharing of information across the department via the maintenance and distribution of the DCSI Aboriginal Employees Network email listing.			
2.5 Increasing skills levels and engagement of Aboriginal staff in formal education and training pathways including leadership, policy and project management.			
2.6 Developing strategies that promote ongoing employment and career pathways for Aboriginal employees. In particular, investigate career progression for Aboriginal OPS 1 employees.			
2.7 Monitoring the implementation of the APY Lands Workforce Strategy and the Anangu Retention Pilot.			

### Objective 3: Aboriginal Cultural Awareness

Strategy	End 2014	End 2015	End 2016
3.1 Promote and support the implementation of the South Australian Universal Access and Inclusion Guidelines across DCSI.			
3.2 Explore opportunities for inclusion and engagement of Aboriginal employees through social networking.			
3.3 Increasing the number of DCSI employees attending the Aboriginal Cultural Sensitivity and Respect Training Program offered through the College for Learning and Development.			
3.4 Explore the reasons that attract Aboriginal employees to DCSI as well as those reasons for why they leave.			