

# PROGRESSING DIVERSITY: INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS

Indigenous Australians are people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent who identify as such and are accepted as such by the community in which they live.

The community benchmark target of 3.2% for this diversity group, as set out in Equity and Diversity Plan for the Public Sector Workforce 2006-2009, is based on the 2001 Census data collected by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The most current estimates from the ABS 2006 Census indicate that the proportion of the Western Australian population identified as Indigenous was 3.3 per cent. Of these, the proportion aged 15 to 64 years was 3.0% (ABS, 2006).

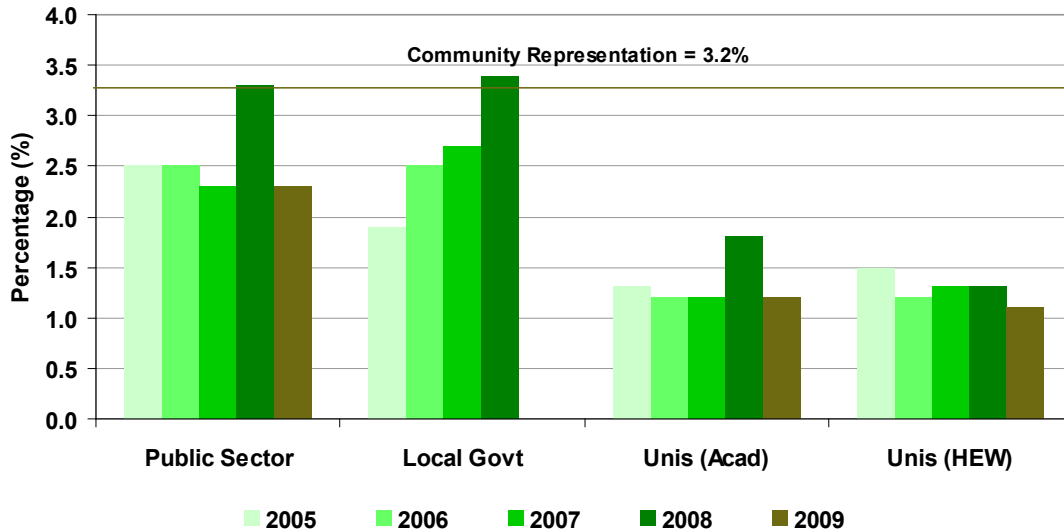
## Representation

The representation of Indigenous Australians employed in the Western Australian public sector has decreased from 3.3% (2,507 employees) in 2008 to 2.3% (1,776 employees) in 2009. Levels of representation of Indigenous Australians are lower than representation in the overall community (3.2%).

In local government, the representation of Indigenous Australian outdoor workers is 8% (204 employees) and has continued to remain above representative levels in the community for 2008. Representation of Indigenous Australian indoor workers still remains very low at 1.5% (95 employees) compared to other sectors and levels in the community. In 2008, survey response rates across local government were lower than the previous year. This may account for apparent increases in representation for this sector.

The percentage of Indigenous Australian university academics has remained relatively unchanged, from 1.8% (60 employees) in 2008 to 1.2% (58 employees) in 2009. The proportion of university general staff has also remained relatively unchanged from 1.3% (62 employees) in 2008 to 1.1% (73 employees) in 2009.

## Representation of Indigenous Australians in public authorities: 2004-2009



*Note: The data for this diversity group relies on self nomination and it is therefore possible that these results underestimate the true number.*

## Distribution

The equity index for Indigenous Australians in the Western Australian public sector has been increasing steadily over the last four years, from 35 in 2005 to 39 in 2008, with a significant increase to 63 in 2009.

The equity index for Indigenous Australians in the public sector has increased over the last eight years, from 27 in 2001 to 63 in 2009. Despite this trend, Indigenous Australians are still heavily concentrated at lower salary levels. The relatively low numbers of Indigenous Australians in public authorities means that small changes in distribution can result in major fluctuations in equity index scores.

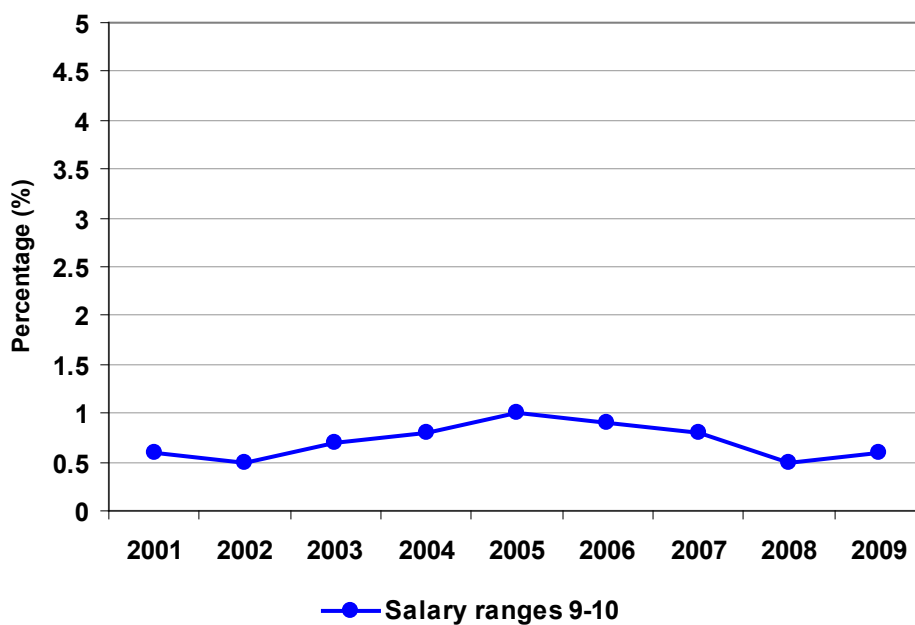
The equity index for Indigenous Australian local government indoor workers has decreased from 56 in 2007 to 52 in 2008. For outdoor workers it has remained unchanged at 98 in 2008. (Note that the salary range for outdoor workers stops at level 6.)

The equity index for Indigenous Australian university academics reached a high of 60 in 2006. It slipped five points in 2007 to 55 but has since continued to increase, from 56 in 2008 to 59 in 2009. For general staff the equity index reached a high of 77 in 2007. It slipped seven points in 2008 to 70 and has decreased further to 58 in 2009.

## Indigenous Australians in public sector management

The under-representation of Indigenous Australians at senior levels is evident, with Indigenous Australians holding only 0.6% of salary ranges 9 and 10, which may be considered a potential pool for future appointments to the senior executive service. Representation of Indigenous Australians in salary ranges 9 and 10 has decreased over the last three years from 1.0% in 2005 to 0.5% in 2008, however, there was a slight increase to 0.6% in 2009.

**Public sector - Indigenous Australians in management tiers and senior executive service**



## Distribution across the salary levels

The number of Indigenous Australians in the public sector at salary ranges 7 to 10 has decreased from 114 in 2008 to 93 in 2009. Overall, there is still a high concentration of this diversity group at lower salary levels.

In 2009, of all Indigenous Australians in the public sector, 5.2% were at salary ranges 7 to 10 and 0.6% at salary ranges 9 to 10. This compares to 9.1% and 3.2%, respectively, for all employees in the public sector.

### **Distribution of Indigenous Australian employees across salary ranges in the public sector in 2009**

