



# INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT IN THE WA PUBLIC SECTOR

## VALUING THE DIFFERENCE



Office of Equal Employment Opportunity  
Government of Western Australia

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment wishes to acknowledge the involvement and contributions of the following persons and organisations in the preparation of this booklet.

- CEO Diversity Forum
- Indigenous SES members
- Department of Training and TAFEs
- Participants in the consultation workshop

## **NOTE**

In this document the terms Aboriginal people and Indigenous Australians are used interchangeably. For the purpose of this publication, both terms refer to Aboriginal and Islander peoples of Australia. These terms, however, do not reflect the diversity of Indigenous Australians and it is important to remember that many Indigenous Australians prefer to be known by their specific group names (for example, “Noongar”).

(Adapted from *Insights – Strategies for Success*)

## FOREWORD

In October 2001 a **Statement of Commitment** was agreed between the Western Australian Government and Aboriginal people of Western Australia. The *Statement* articulates the State Government's formal commitment to build a new and just relationship with Indigenous Western Australians. The principles of the *Statement* that are pertinent to this strategy, *Indigenous Employment in the WA Public Sector – Valuing the Difference*, include equity, regional and local approaches, inclusiveness, and a commitment to improved capacity building and economic independence.

As the State's largest employer, the public sector is in a unique position to contribute to improved social and economic outcomes for Aboriginal people through increased employment levels and subsequent enhanced service delivery.

In January 2002 I launched the **Equity and Diversity Plan for the Public Sector Workforce 2001-2005**. The purpose of the Plan is to match the public sector workforce to the profile of the community at all levels. It identifies how incremental progress will be achieved over a realistic period of time in a number of priority areas, including greater workforce diversity through improved representation of Indigenous Australians at all levels of employment.

Agencies are expected to contribute to the Plan's implementation by developing objectives for their organisation that ensure that the sector wide objectives are achieved. Agency CEOs have primary carriage of the strategies associated with the Plan and responsibility for achievement of its outcomes.

When I launched the Plan I indicated support strategies would be developed for priority groups to assist CEOs in its implementation. The 2002 data on Indigenous Australians in the public sector shows a slight increase in representation but a decline in the equity index. The release of this Strategy is timely if we are to achieve the objectives established for 2003 and 2005. It provides practical ideas that agencies can use to improve both the representation and the equity in public employment for Aboriginal people.

Several whole of government strategies and other support mechanisms are referred to in this document. Achievement of objectives for your agency will occur in many instances through a commitment to making a difference as well as a commitment to doing things differently.

I encourage you to use the strategies suggested in this document to improve Indigenous representation, in your own agency, at all levels as well as in positions that service both Indigenous clients and the broader community.

**DR GEOFF GALLOP MLA  
PREMIER**



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## 1. OVERVIEW

**The Western Australian public sector is the State's largest employer, with over 110 000 staff in a broad range of occupations and professions including education, health, police, justice, and community development services.**

Indigenous Australians are under-represented in employment in the public sector as a whole, and are particularly under-represented in management positions including the Senior Executive Service (SES) and in the top three Management Tiers. In addition, the Equity Index, a measure of distribution across all levels, shows that Indigenous Australians are clustered at the lower levels of employment.

The Government supports the principles of self-management and self-determination for Indigenous Australians in the design and delivery of any policy or program. It is imperative, therefore, that Indigenous Australians are represented at senior management levels to contribute effectively to decision making and implementation of policies and programs. Additionally, employment for Aboriginal people needs to be increased throughout the sector and the range of professions, and at all levels, to obtain a more inclusive, representative and effective workforce.

The outcomes sought by the Indigenous employment strategy are to achieve equity across all levels of employment in the Western Australian public sector for Indigenous Australians in an inclusive work environment that values the contribution and the difference they bring. To achieve these outcomes, this strategy, *Indigenous Employment in the WA Public Sector – Valuing the Difference*, has encompassed agency specific strategies and whole of government strategies.

The core components of the strategy are:

- **Diversity Management Plans** – with specific reference to Indigenous people as one of five priority groups. The Diversity Management Plans that agencies are required to provide to the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment specify strategies and objectives for increasing Aboriginal employment across all levels.
- **Diversity objectives** – at the sector and individual agency levels as required by the Equity and Diversity Plan. These employment objectives underpin the important role of agencies in delivering better quality outcomes for Indigenous Australians. Agencies have set their objectives based on their current workforce profile and business imperatives.
- **Indicators of success** - measured against key result areas. Agency progress is evaluated annually on the achievement of the objectives they have set through the annual reporting process.
- **Whole of Government strategies**- a range of whole of government strategies will support the achievement of government and agency objectives.

This document draws together these components into a cohesive package through which real change can be achieved and progress measured. The suggested strategies provide agencies with a range of practical options to assist them to achieve their specific needs and objectives.

## 2. CURRENT PROFILE

### Government's Equity and Diversity Plan Objectives

The performance objectives in the Government's Equity and Diversity Plan are designed to achieve an improved representation and distribution of Indigenous Australians in the public sector workforce.

Public sector bodies were asked to provide equity objectives for Aboriginal employment to the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment by 30 May 2002, with predicted incremental increases for June 2003 and June 2005. Achievement of these objectives is linked to strategies identified in each agency's *Diversity Management Plan* and the overall sector objectives.

Progress towards achieving the Government's equity and diversity objectives will be monitored through both the annual reporting process of the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment and public sector demographics on workforce.

**Table 1: Performance Objectives for Indigenous Australians (from the *Equity and Diversity Plan for the Public Sector Workforce 2001-2005*)**

Community	Public Sector Priority Areas							
	2001 Actual		2002 Actual		2003 Objective		2005 Objective	
	Workforce %	Equity Index*	Workforce %	Equity Index*	Workforce %	Equity Index*	Workforce %	Equity Index*
2001 Census								
3%	2.1%	29	2.2%	24	2.5%	34	2.9%	39

\*An equity index of 100 shows group members are equitably distributed across the salary levels. An index under 100 indicates concentration at the lower levels. An index over 100 indicates that group members are likely to be at the upper levels

**Table 2: Representation of Indigenous Australians in the Western Australian Public Sector 30 June 2002**

	Public Sector Workforce			
	Indigenous		Non-indigenous	Total
Representation in the public sector*	1 940	(2.2%)	87 727	89 667
Representation in SES	7	(1.9%)	365	372
Management Tier 1	0	(0%)	144	144
Management Tier 2	3	(0.4%)	698	701
Management Tier 3	23	(1.4%)	1587	1610

\*These figures are based on data provided to the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment and published in the *Annual Report 2001-2002*. Almost 90,000 public sector employees were surveyed by their agency and asked to identify if they considered themselves to be Indigenous or Torres Strait Islander. As the data is based on self-identification, it is possible these results may underestimate the true number.

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## 3. PRINCIPLES

The Indigenous employment strategy is based on the following principles.

### Respect for Aboriginal Culture

Recognition that achieving greater representation of Aboriginal people in the public sector involves acknowledgement of the past, and developing an understanding of and respect for Aboriginal culture and perspectives in all public sector organisations.

### Recognition of Diversity

Recognition of the contribution the diverse knowledge, skills and experience Indigenous Australians bring to achieving quality public sector services and products, and of the different needs and contributions of Indigenous women and men,

### Merit

Selection for employment will continue to be based on merit as articulated in the public sector standards. The Recruitment, Selection and Appointment Standard states: "The minimum standard of merit, equity and probity is met for recruitment, selection and appointment if a proper assessment matches a candidate's skills, knowledge and abilities with the work-related requirements of the job and the outcomes sought by the public sector body, which may include diversity." (That is the best person for the job is selected)

### Organisational Autonomy

Agencies are best placed to make decisions regarding Aboriginal employment in their organisations; to determine approaches and set objectives that will meet their organisation and business needs.

### Shared Accountability

Accountability for achieving targets in the *Equity Diversity Plan* is shared between individual organisations and the Government.

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## 4. THE FRAMEWORK

A model for the strategies outlined in this document is shown here. Agency strategies in the four key result areas (cultural security, career development, recruitment and induction and leadership and management) will result in the desired outcomes of equity for Indigenous employees and an inclusive public sector work environment.



### Outcomes

An anticipated outcome is the increased equity of Indigenous Australians in the WA Public Sector. The long-term goal is for representation to be reflective of the community profile and/or customer base. To achieve this outcome it is necessary to focus on the elimination of racism and the embracing of diversity in the public sector workplace, and therefore much of the overall strategy relates to cultural change.

Improved representation will not be achieved without increased attention on retaining people. However, specific strategies to improve retention have not been developed as it is expected that implementation of the strategies in this document will contribute to improved retention through creating a work environment accepting of diversity and by valuing and developing Indigenous employees.

Specific strategies are grouped into four key result areas, all of which contribute to the outcomes.

- Creating an environment of cultural security and equitable employment conditions.
- Utilising effective recruitment and induction practices.
- Providing opportunities for career development, and improving retention of staff through security and planned career pathways.
- Identifying and developing Indigenous leaders in the workforce.

The majority of the strategies are relevant to agencies, however a range of whole of government strategies have also been established (see Section 7).

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## 5. SUCCESS INDICATORS

Indicators of success or progress are identified at the agency and public sector level. The majority of the data required to measure these indicators is currently available through various sources.

	<b>CULTURAL SECURITY</b>	<b>RECRUITMENT &amp; INDUCTION</b>	<b>CAREER DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>MANAGEMENT &amp; LEADERSHIP</b>
<b>Agency Level</b>	Incidence of Discrimination/ Harassment Claims  Cross-Cultural Training (numbers completed)  Equity in permanency rates  Indigenous Employee Satisfaction (surveys)	Percentage Increase  Numbers Employed  Average Length of Service  Attrition Rate	Equity Index  Access to Development Opportunities  Acting  Secondments	Numbers in Management Tiers (main stream positions)  SES Acting
<b>Whole of Government</b>	Indigenous Employee Satisfaction (surveys)  Equity in permanency rates	Number Employed  Percentage Increase	Equity Index	Representation in Management Tiers  Access to Leadership Programs

### Evaluation and Reporting

Public sector agencies currently report annually to the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment on diversity groups. These annual demographic reports from agencies to the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment, together with MOIR data, will enable monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the strategy. Climate surveys of employee perceptions in agencies will also provide feedback on attitudes in the workplace and access to development opportunities and promotions.

The Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment will include analysis of the data and progress towards achievement of the goal of improved equity for Indigenous employees in her annual reports to the Premier. Annual feedback to agencies, through the Director’s *How Does Your Agency Compare* reports, will also help agencies to track their progress.

## 6. KEY RESULT AREAS

### 6.1 CULTURAL SECURITY

**Cultural security is the freedom to express cultural rights, values and expectations of Indigenous Australians. It reflects an appreciation of the need for cultural diversity to provide effective public sector programs, services and administration.**

An inclusive work environment, which recognises the diverse contribution of skills of Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees, is necessary to enable Indigenous people to be attracted to and retained in the public sector. Enhancing cultural security in the workplace will support the development of an inclusive work environment and enable people to maximise their performance for the benefit of all clients, including Indigenous clients. An essential element will be the capacity to welcome Indigenous ways of working.

#### **Respecting culture**

- Educate Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff about each other's cultures and values and the impact on workplace practices to enhance mutual respect and positive working relationships.
- Ensure Indigenous knowledge and skills are better understood, valued and rewarded, and used to incorporate Aboriginal cultural values in the design and delivery of services.
- Recognise the diversity of Indigenous groups through engaging the local community in decision-making and customising workplace practices and service delivery.
- Embrace cultural and community consultation protocols, including recognition of and welcome to country.
- Recognise and encourage Indigenous ways of working and terms of reference, and ensure this approach is included in the induction of supervisors and managers.

#### **Eliminating racism**

- Ensure standards and behaviour are consistent with zero tolerance of racism, and all managers and supervisors actively intervene to prevent and address racial harassment.
- Ensure policies and practices take into account the complexities of Indigenous Australian cultures and do not discriminate (directly or indirectly).
- Monitor and review racism elimination policies and grievance procedures, promote these to all staff and ensure that officers responsible for implementation are adequately trained.
- Ensure positive recognition of, and reward for, the level of skills required in identified Indigenous positions.
- Recognise that Indigenous staff may experience tension between workplace and community expectations and provide support to manage these issues.

#### **Workplace practices**

- Provide flexible employment practices to enable Indigenous employees to meet their cultural and social obligations.
- Ensure support systems provide Indigenous staff with culturally sensitive avenues to raise and address concerns.
- Collect data from Indigenous staff exiting the WA public sector to identify factors for improving the work environment.
- Recognise services to Indigenous people as core business and ensure workplace practices do not discriminate in terms of permanency or job security.

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## CASE STUDIES

### **Use of culturally appropriate artwork and symbolism**

The Department of Indigenous Affairs has successfully used Indigenous artwork, colours and culturally appropriate symbolism in its advertisements and promotional materials to attract the attention of both potential Indigenous applicants and clients.

### **Wisdom from the elders to progress Indigenous recruitment**

The Department of Justice has taken an innovative approach to liaising specifically with members of the Indigenous community and in addition has spoken directly with Indigenous elders to gather support, culturally appropriate input and suggestions into progressing a recruitment program to attract Indigenous prison officers. Informal two-day community meetings were organised throughout the state, to discuss the role of prison officers and why Indigenous applicants were needed. Further information on career development and training opportunities within the Department was also provided, as well as information on how to apply for positions. The Department of Justice also utilised Indigenous employment organisations to ensure that news of the vacancies were distributed through Indigenous links and contacts. Consequently 195 applications were received from Indigenous applicants for 15 positions. All 15 Indigenous targeted vacancies were successfully filled.

### **Promoting Indigenous cultural protocols**

The Department of Education recognises that Indigenous knowledge and skills are better understood, valued and rewarded through flying both the Aboriginal and Australian flags and utilising cultural protocols such as: recognition and welcome to country; using written and verbal bilingual materials.

### **TAFE Consultation Process**

In developing a strategy for the employment and career development of Aboriginal people, the Department of Training and TAFE colleges have used a broad based consultation process involving both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, across all levels, in regions throughout the State. A series of workshops were run in rural and metropolitan TAFE colleges and the Department of Training. These workshops obtained input about the issues and ideas for improving outcomes in Indigenous employment and career development. This consultation process has involved leadership from the highest level, including the Director General and Managing Directors, who actively participated in, and supported the consultation process. The workshops culminated in the identification of strategies and priorities for implementation. The ideas derived from this consultation process are being used for the development of a coordinated implementation strategy for the TAFE sector as well as being implemented by individual colleges.

## KEY RESULT AREAS (CONT)

### 6.2 CAREER DEVELOPMENT

**Effective career development recognises the value of employees to the organisation and the importance of developing skills and careers in line with individual aspirations and the needs of the organisation.**

It is important to create a work environment where Indigenous employees choose to stay and further their careers in positions that serve Indigenous clients and the broader community. This may be assisted by supporting exploration of available options and opportunities in both the short and long-term, and encouraging the development of the skills that will enable people to follow their chosen career. For Indigenous employees, career development may include sideways movement between positions servicing Indigenous clients and positions servicing the broader community as well as between the private and community sectors.

#### **Career planning and development**

- Ensure organisational structures support career links between positions that service the Indigenous community and positions that service the broader community.
- Ensure Indigenous employees are supported to achieve their work objectives and encouraged to undertake development opportunities and training in line with these.
- Support Indigenous employees to manage their career through identification of goals and access to relevant training and development opportunities, including formal qualifications.
- Recognise and support the need for people working with Indigenous clients and organisations to maintain Indigenous knowledge, professional and community networks, and skills.
- Ensure equity of access to training and development opportunities for Indigenous staff that will enable them to be competitive for positions throughout the organisation.
- Ensure training content and delivery methods are suited to the learning styles and needs of Indigenous staff as well as other employees.

#### **Mentoring and coaching**

- Provide culturally appropriate mentoring to foster confidence and develop skills to enable effective participation in the workforce.
- Identify and ensure access to qualified coaches with specific skills in working with Indigenous people.
- Provide Indigenous coaches for managers and supervisors to assist them in providing appropriate support to Indigenous employees.
- Identify and recognise Aboriginal role models in the organisation and the sector and use their success to encourage Indigenous employees.

#### **Rotation, acting and secondment**

- Ensure job rotation, acting opportunities and secondments are made accessible in all areas of the organisation and the public sector.
- Support Indigenous staff to take advantage of opportunities outside their area of expertise so they can obtain broader experience and exposure.
- Ensure Indigenous staff are not restricted to Indigenous-specific roles, and recognise that skills and experience are transferable to a range of other roles in the organisation.
- Recognise work shadowing and job rotation opportunities, at the same or higher-level positions, as culturally appropriate development options for Indigenous people.

### CASE STUDIES

#### **Department of Community Development**

The Department of Community Development (DCD) has developed an innovative Aboriginal employment and career development strategy to provide a workforce able to continuously improve the design and delivery of services to Indigenous families and communities across Western Australia.

In the mid 1990s, DCD made a commitment to involve Indigenous people at decision making levels, and developed the comprehensive strategy to be implemented. Initiatives target all employees, and in the current three-year phase include:

- Encouraging further study through scholarships and flexible study leave
- Creating career paths into service planning and management roles
- Setting up mentoring and support mechanisms to encourage Indigenous trainees and employees
- Providing family and culturally sensitive employment conditions to all employees
- Offering service delivery officer traineeships – these have attracted considerable interest (over 325 applications were received in 2000/01) and the first seven graduates in 1999 took up employment with DCD throughout the State.
- Providing a comprehensive cross cultural training program for all employees
- Broadening the pool of prospective applicants by advertising traineeships through local media, word of mouth and Indigenous agencies.

In 1995 there were only seven Indigenous employees at DCD above Level 4. In 2001 there were 27, including one member of the Senior Executive Service.

#### **Department of Education – formal qualifications acquired locally**

The Department of Education has established programs, in consultation with universities, that will enable existing employees to obtain teaching qualifications while remaining in their preferred regional location. The programs will enable local Aboriginal people to provide local education services in their region and will improve career opportunities for existing Indigenous staff by enabling movement into a professional occupation.

#### **Housing and Works – single coordinator**

The Department of Housing and Works has employed an Aboriginal Career Development Officer. The role of this person is to assist in identifying career objectives and development needs for Indigenous employees and to facilitate the ongoing recruitment of Indigenous trainees to the organisation. A further aspect of the role is maintaining support networks for all Indigenous employees and particularly trainees. Employment of Indigenous Australians in the Department of Housing and Works is currently at 7.6% and across all levels.

### KEY RESULT AREAS (CONT)

#### 6.3 RECRUITMENT AND INDUCTION

**Doing things differently will enable public sector agencies to compete in attracting a diverse Indigenous workforce across all occupational groups and levels, and will result in Indigenous people recognising the public sector as an employer of choice.**

While it is important to attract more Indigenous people to the public sector, employers also need to focus on retention if the representation of Indigenous people in the public sector is to increase. Therefore, the strategies associated with cultural security and career development are necessary to ensure the work environment is supportive and enables people to work effectively so they choose to remain in the public sector in the longer term.

##### **Recruitment to all levels and all positions**

- Work with Indigenous communities and organisations to identify appropriate recruitment and selection strategies that convey to Indigenous applicants they are valued and welcomed in the organisation.
- Use Indigenous recruitment agencies, searches, advertise positions as widely as possible (including through Indigenous media and organisations) and include a statement such as “Aboriginal people are encouraged to apply”.
- Use traineeships, cadetships, apprenticeships and scholarship programs, particularly where there are opportunities for permanent positions or where there is a limited market of suitably qualified Indigenous people.
- Develop selection practices that accommodate the cultural diversity in the applicant pool and, if a panel is used, ensure Indigenous representation where appropriate.
- Develop partnerships with education and training providers to develop and promote courses with direct pathways into employment in the organisation.
- Develop regional recruitment strategies with other relevant agencies to enable locally based employment for Indigenous Australians and provide opportunities for joint skill development and cross sector secondments.
- Ensure job descriptions include the specific skills required to effectively service Indigenous clients. Where necessary, use identified Indigenous positions with clearly articulated responsibilities and expectations and classification levels that recognise the level of skills required .
- Ensure selection criteria for positions recognise life experience in the workplace and the community as a valid alternative to formal qualifications.
- Identify areas where Indigenous staff are under-represented in general positions and implement measures to achieve equity in those areas.
- Make managers accountable for identifying objectives and achieving improvement in the representation of Indigenous people at all levels in their area.

##### **Induction**

- Develop orientation and induction processes that are culturally inclusive and maximise the success of Indigenous people in employment.
- Ensure Indigenous appointees are supported in the initial phase of employment and introduced to appropriate Indigenous networks.
- Provide support, when required, to assist people in their transition to work - especially in their first experience of employment.

### CASE STUDIES

#### **A new range of park rangers**

The Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) has recently initiated a program that tackles the issues of succession planning and overcoming employment barriers for Aboriginal people. CALM has long employed Aboriginal people in its parks and runs many training programs specifically targeting Aboriginal people. Many major parks and wilderness areas, which rate among the State's greatest tourist attractions, are run on a joint custodian basis with Aboriginal people .

CALM felt one way they could harness the skills and knowledge of Indigenous people was to employ local Aboriginal people in each of its national parks as rangers and field officers. However rangers and field officers require Certificate IV qualifications, a level many Aboriginal applicants did not have and which immediately excluded them from the positions. Traineeships failed to qualify Indigenous graduates for entry level ranger and field officer roles, due to problems including traineeships being based in the metropolitan area; a bias towards clerical, administrative or vocational trades; training limited to 12 months; and no job at the end of the training.

CALM's new Indigenous traineeship program is offered over a two to three year period and will provide the skills and knowledge to make graduates immediately competitive on merit for national park ranger and field officer positions. Trainees will walk away with a Certificate IV in Conservation and Land Management, but more importantly, the potential for a productive career. CALM also managed to secure funding through the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations for five years.

#### **Recruiting for Diversity**

The Fire and Emergency Services Authority of WA (FESA) wanted to improve the diversity of its primarily Caucasian male workforce. The role of fire-fighters has changed significantly and now requires an emphasis on community interaction through education and community safety initiatives. In its 2001 recruitment campaign, a clear shift was made to a selection and recruitment process more focussed on workforce diversity considerations.

The 2001 campaign included the following strategies:

- To encourage women, people of culturally diverse backgrounds and Indigenous Australians to apply, the campaign was promoted through traditional mediums and also by targeted advertisements and posters in the *Koori Mail*, *Australia-Chinese Times*, *Perth Weekly*, and the YOU section of the *West Australian*.
- Discussions with Indigenous recruitment agencies helped them to prepare clients more competitively.
- Selection criteria were made easier to understand and address, with an emphasis on a candidate's *ability to relate to and work effectively with people of different gender and diverse backgrounds*.
- The selection panel included men, women and an Indigenous fire-fighter.
- In addition to competitiveness on the selection criteria, final selections were made following consideration of the gender and cultural and Indigenous background and experiences of each suitable applicant.

Of the final eighteen applicants, two were Indigenous Australians, six were from culturally diverse backgrounds and a further three were women. FESA won the prestigious Premier's Award in the category of "Management Improvement" for this fresh approach.

## KEY RESULT AREAS (CONT)

### 6.4 MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

**Identifying and developing Indigenous leaders enables the organisation to better service Indigenous clients and the broader community. To achieve this outcome, agencies need to be innovative, take risks, be supportive and encouraging, and recognise leadership potential.**

While Indigenous Australians are under-represented in the public sector, they are particularly under-represented in management positions, including the Senior Executive Service and in the top three management tiers. Improving the participation of Indigenous Australians in decision-making, through management and policy roles, will enhance the capability of the public service to address the needs of Indigenous people and provide equitable access to career paths. Recognising and developing Indigenous leaders will also provide role models that will assist in improving the distribution and development of Indigenous employees at all levels of the workforce.

#### **Succession planning**

- Identify and develop potential Indigenous employees who will become strong leaders in the public sector, to establish a leadership pool for future recruitment.
- Where Indigenous services are part of the core business, ensure the organisational structure provides direct reporting to the department head with career paths through a range of senior positions.
- Encourage Indigenous leaders and managers to apply for or transfer into positions in mainstream sections of the organisations.

#### **Recruitment**

- Ensure job descriptions are user-friendly, in plain English, and do not discourage potential Indigenous applicants.
- Use networks and headhunt to encourage more Indigenous applicants for management positions, including for mainstream positions.
- Brief executive search firms and interview panels and insist they search for Indigenous applicants. Conduct further searches if it becomes apparent prior to shortlisting that there is not a suitable diverse range of quality applicants.
- To attract people from outside the sector, ensure the application and selection practices are relevant to the job, as informal as possible, and does not require familiarity with public sector processes.
- Recognise the validity of leadership experience gained through activities outside the formal work environment, including community leadership roles.
- When the pool is limited, consider investing in the future by appointing an applicant with potential and providing them with relevant developmental support.

#### **Recognition**

- Ensure strong, visible support and advocacy from the chief executive officer and corporate executive for the role of Indigenous leaders in the organisation.
- Value and encourage Indigenous styles of leadership as a valid way to do business.
- Involve Indigenous senior managers in decision making across the organisation (not just in their own section), and recognise this work as part of their role.
- Monitor the representation of Indigenous people in mainstream management positions compared to the community and the client base, and set objectives to achieve improved representation across the organisation.
- Recognise Indigenous leaders outside the public sector and engage them in decision making.

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### Leadership development and support

- Recognise the complexity of the Aboriginal leadership role and, particularly, the implications this can have for their interaction with the community.
- Continue to provide coaching and support for senior Indigenous managers and leaders, including executive coaching support and professional networks across the sector.
- Support involvement in regular forums to share information and exchange ideas.
- Ensure equitable access to a range of leadership and development courses, and acting opportunities, both in Aboriginal specific and mainstream areas.
- Facilitate secondments to leadership positions in other agencies that will broaden the experience of Indigenous managers.

### CASE STUDY

#### Diversity in leadership styles

The Department of Community Development and the Department of Education have Aboriginal people in mainstream leadership roles. This ensures a diversity of leadership styles and signifies to the organisation the value Aboriginal people add to the work of the organisation.

### Indigenous Leadership Package

The Indigenous Leadership Package is a package of related Indigenous specific and mainstream courses that develop the capacity of Indigenous managers to undertake leadership roles.

	Central	Individual	Agency	Other
Level 1 – 3		Independent courses/Study	Various training specific to roles	Mentoring program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ AIM</li> <li>▪ UWA</li> <li>▪ AITSIS</li> <li>▪ LEP</li> </ul>
Level 4 – 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Indigenous career development (Department of Training)</li> <li>▪ Management Course (DPC)</li> </ul>	Independent courses of study sponsored by agency	Various training specific to roles	
Level 9 and above	LEP (Dept Premier & Cabinet)	Independent courses of study sponsored by agency		

### 7. GOVERNMENT WIDE SUPPORT

#### **Indigenous Leaders' Forum**

The Department of Indigenous Affairs will sponsor a regular Forum for Indigenous people providing support, networking opportunities and leadership strategies in an informal setting.

#### **Job Bank links**

A diversity job bank has been established by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, through which agencies can tap into Indigenous employment programs and potential employees. Agencies can choose to utilise this service to fill positions where an Indigenous employee will provide added value to the position or to help meet diversity targets.

#### **Indigenous Trainees**

The Department of Premier and Cabinet has a pool of Indigenous people ready for placement as trainees in organisations. This pool can be sourced to meet trainee targets, improve representation of youth and Indigenous people in the organisation and provide entry level placements for Indigenous people to meet the specific job related requirements of the organisation.

#### **Mentoring**

The Department of Premier and Cabinet has created a service to link Indigenous employees to available mentors. Mentors guide the employee in career decisions, development needs and provide other advice as required.

#### ***Insights: Strategies for Success***

This popular publication is being developed into an on-line training course. Expected to be available from March 2003, the course will provide an interactive guide to developing practical strategies for Indigenous Australians working in non-Indigenous workplaces.

#### **Classification of Positions Servicing Indigenous Clients**

The classification of positions servicing Indigenous clients needs to be examined to enable a consistent approach across agencies and recognition of the level of intercultural skills required in these positions. The Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment will coordinate a project with key agencies to develop benchmark job descriptions of classifications.

#### **Permanency Policy**

The Government has distributed a policy on appointing some people to permanent positions where they have been employed for long periods in fixed term arrangements. This policy may result in improved rates of permanency for Indigenous people.

#### **General Agreements**

The general agreements for the public sector provide for cultural and ceremonial leave and other flexible work arrangements. These provisions enable agencies to work with their Indigenous staff to find ways to accommodate work needs and cultural obligations.

## 8. FURTHER RESOURCES

### Publications and training

- *Insights: Strategies for Success – Indigenous and Non-Indigenous People on Work.* Published August 2001 by the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment.
- *Insights: Strategies for Success* is being developed into an on-line training course. Expected to be available from March 2003, the course will provide an interactive guide to developing practical strategies for Indigenous Australians working in non-Indigenous workplaces.
- *Innovative Recruitment.* Published November 2001 by the Office of EEO and the CEO Diversity Forum.
- *Working with Indigenous Australians:– A Handbook for Psychologists.* Pat Dudgeon with Darren Garvey and Harry Pickett. Gunada Press, Curtin Indigenous Research Centre, Perth, WA, 2000.

### Web Sites

- Department of Indigenous Affairs: [www.dia.wa.gov.au](http://www.dia.wa.gov.au)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee: [www.atsic.gov.au](http://www.atsic.gov.au)
- Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies: [www.aiatsis.gov.au](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au)

### Further information and assistance

Director of Equal Employment Opportunity  
in Public Employment  
Level 17, St Martins Tower  
44 St Georges Terrace  
PERTH WA 6000

Ph: (08) 9260 6600  
Fax (08) 9260 6611  
Website [www.oeeo.wa.gov.au](http://www.oeeo.wa.gov.au)

Callers who are deaf or have a hearing impairment or a speech/communication impairment may call through the National Relay Service using modem or TTY by dialling 133 677 then quote 9260 6600.

Department of the Premier and Cabinet  
23<sup>rd</sup> floor Governor Stirling Tower  
197 St Georges Terrace  
PERTH WA 6000

Ph: (08) 9222 8870  
Fax (08) 9222 8808  
Website [www.dpc.wa.gov.au/psmd](http://www.dpc.wa.gov.au/psmd)

National Indigenous Cadetship Program Coordinator

Ph: 1800 062 172  
Hotline: 1802 102

Regional Employment Development Branch  
Department of Employment and Workplace Relations  
GPO Box 9879  
Level 12, QV1, 250 St Georges Terrace  
PERTH WA 6848

Ph: (08) 9464 4249  
Fax: (08) 9464 4158  
Website: [www.nicp.dewr.gov.au](http://www.nicp.dewr.gov.au)

Indigenous Career Development Coordinator  
Department of Training  
Level 2, 151 Royal St  
EAST PERTH WA 6004

Ph: (08) 9235 6028  
Fax: (08) 9235 6224  
Website: [www.training.wa.gov.au](http://www.training.wa.gov.au)