



Aboriginal Recruitment and Career Development Strategy 2020–23

Published by the Department Jobs, Precincts and Regions
1 Spring Street Melbourne, Victoria 3000
Telephone (03) 9208 3799

February 2020

© Copyright State Government of Victoria 2020

This publication is copyright. No part may be reproduced
by any process except in accordance with provisions
of the *Copyright Act 1968*.

Authorised by the Victorian Government, Melbourne.

Designed by DJPR Design Studio

Disclaimer

This publication may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication. While every effort has been made to ensure the currency, accuracy or completeness of the content we endeavour to keep the content relevant and up to date and reserve the right to make changes as required. The Victorian Government, authors and presenters do not accept any liability to any person for the information (or the use of the information) which is provided or referred to in the report.

Accessibility

If you would like to receive this publication in an accessible format, such as large print or audio, telephone (03) 9651 9999 or contact us at djpr.vic.gov.au/about-us/contact-us



Table of contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Acknowledgement | 2 |
| About the artwork | 2 |
| Secretary foreword | 3 |
| Statement from Andrew Jackomos | 3 |
| Introduction | 4 |
| Aboriginal Self-Determination – Changing the game | 6 |
| Strategy objectives | 8 |
| Focus area 1 – Attraction, recruitment and retention | 8 |
| Focus area 2 – Cultural safety | 10 |
| Focus area 3 – Development and succession planning | 12 |
| Focus area 4 – Executive leadership, accountability and monitoring | 13 |
| Governance | 13 |

Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the traditional Aboriginal owners of country throughout Victoria, their ongoing connection to these lands and water ways and we pay our respects to their culture and their Elders past, present and future.

We acknowledge Aboriginal Self-Determination is a human right as enshrined in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Building on the foundations of Aboriginal Self-Determination, we are committed to developing strong and enduring partnerships with Aboriginal communities that will contribute to growing a prosperous, thriving and strong Victorian Aboriginal community.

Throughout this document the term Aboriginal is used to refer to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Picture includes some of DJPR's Aboriginal Staff Network.



About the artwork

Artist – Dixon Patten, Yorta Yorta and Gunnai

The artwork depicts the department, its people and its commitment to developing the economy by helping to create Aboriginal employment opportunities, supporting inclusion and economic prosperity and thriving Aboriginal communities.

The bigger circle in the middle represents the broad work of the department and its eight different Groups working together to achieve this.

The pathways represent the opportunities for the Aboriginal community to achieve personal and economic prosperity and improved employment outcomes.

The various smaller circles represent the different mobs within the Aboriginal community and the footprints represent the diversity of knowledge, skills and resources the community have.

The artefacts represent our traditional economy and are a reminder of our trade/barter system(s) and the connection to our cultural practices and ceremonies.

The emu and kangaroo tracks represent the department's commitment to moving forward, as these animals can't walk backwards.



Secretary's foreword

It is my great pleasure to launch the Aboriginal Recruitment and Career Development Strategy 2020-23 (Strategy) for the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions. This Strategy is built on the principles of Aboriginal Self-Determination and was developed and is jointly owned by our Aboriginal staff members and the department more broadly.

The Strategy is a pivotal commitment document for the department, outlining our determination to become an employer of choice for Aboriginal people and to achieve our targets of a minimum of two per cent Aboriginal employment with 20 per cent of that being at senior levels by 2022.

Diversity in the workplace is not just a nice to have – it is the foundation of good business principles and will ensure the department is best placed to deliver on its purpose.

This Strategy sets out three years of actions and priorities, and it serves as a guide for building a strong Aboriginal workforce. Growing a vibrant, dynamic and diverse Aboriginal workforce can only make us stronger as a department, and we all have an important role to play in bringing this Strategy to life.

Increasing our Aboriginal workforce is an important first step to growing the department's cultural knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal culture and people. I am wholeheartedly committed to ensuring that the department is a culturally safe workplace for all Aboriginal employees.

The success of this Strategy rests with every single one of us and it is imperative we take collective ownership of it.

I look forward to working together to deliver this Strategy.

Simon Phemister
Secretary



Increasing our Aboriginal workforce is an important first step to growing the department's cultural knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal culture and people.

Statement from Andrew Jackomos

Executive Director, Aboriginal Economic Development



Broadening employment opportunities for Aboriginal people across a breadth of roles and into managerial and executive positions and specialist areas is our long-term vision.

These are exciting times with the government's commitment to the Treaty process and Aboriginal Self-Determination firmly on the agenda - and for the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions to launch this Strategy at this time and in its first year of operation, is clear evidence that we will be a strong player participating in the process. More importantly, this Strategy has been developed and jointly owned by the Aboriginal Staff Network and the executive board.

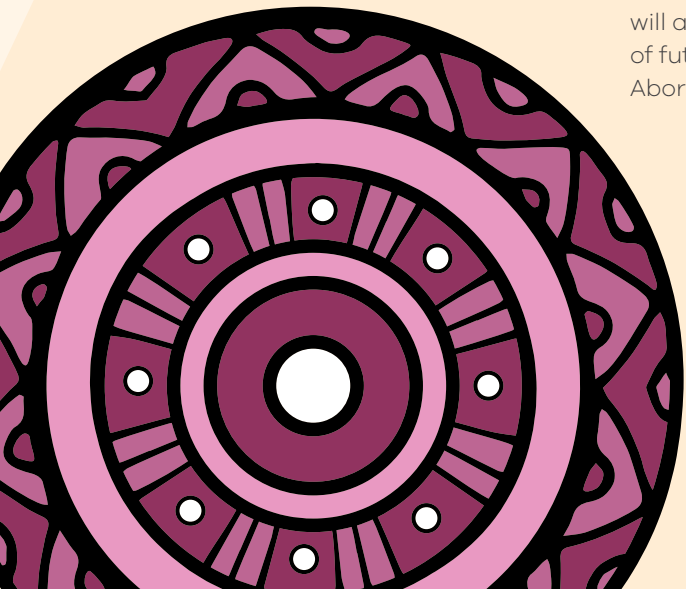
I applaud the Aboriginal Staff Network for its leadership in helping build a Strategy that is real, that has substance and will deliver benefits not only for its members now, but for community members many years into the future. Equally, I applaud our secretary and the executive board's genuine commitment to increasing Aboriginal employment and creating workplaces that are both culturally safe and nurturing.

Broadening employment opportunities for Aboriginal people across a breadth of roles and into managerial and executive positions and specialist areas is our long-term vision. Our present course of action builds upon the values of our department, supports the goals of the *Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework*, and aligns to the *Barring Djinang Aboriginal Employment Strategy* for the Victorian Public Sector.

We acknowledge the considerable work that must be undertaken for this department to become a place where Aboriginal people want to work and grow a career. By prioritising Aboriginal employment and forging successful career pathways for individuals, the benefits to immediate families and communities should not be underestimated.

Our Strategy must be built on the principles of self-determination and appropriately resourced to be enduring and to achieve our mutual objectives. With unfailing commitment from both the executive board and the Aboriginal Staff Network, I am confident in the strength of our staff experience and knowledge to deliver on this Strategy and its actions.

The standards that underpin this Strategy and the actions within will act as a springboard to grow and seed a new generation of future Victorian Aboriginal leaders and build equity within Aboriginal communities.



Introduction

The Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) is committed to growing its Aboriginal workforce across the department and positioning itself to become an employer of choice for Aboriginal people. DJPR recognises the cultural expertise, life experience, unique skills and knowledge of Aboriginal people that is integral to the work of the department. We know, and evidence shows that diversity is good for the workforce, the economy, and the community. Having a diverse workforce has many immediate and tangible benefits including creativity, productivity and connects the department to the community.¹

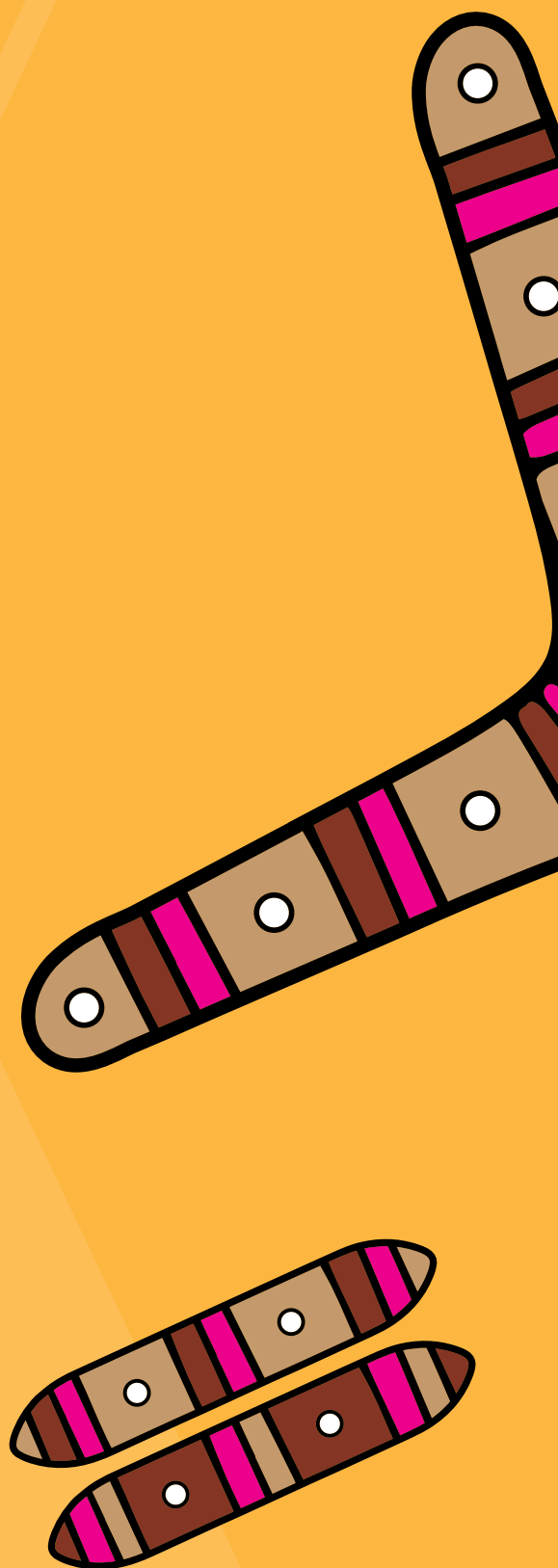
The department acknowledges that we are in the early stages of our journey in creating a thriving Aboriginal workforce and creating a culturally safe and inclusive workplace. The Aboriginal Recruitment and Career Development Strategy 2020-23 (Strategy) will support the department to achieve its commitment through investment in Aboriginal employment and building meaningful careers and growing a work environment which understands, values and respects Aboriginal people and culture.

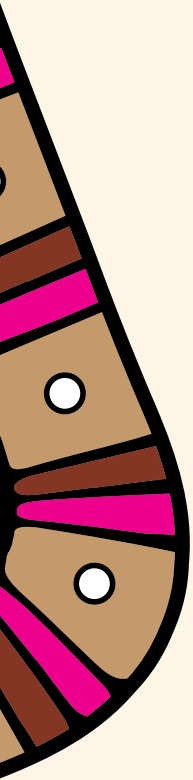
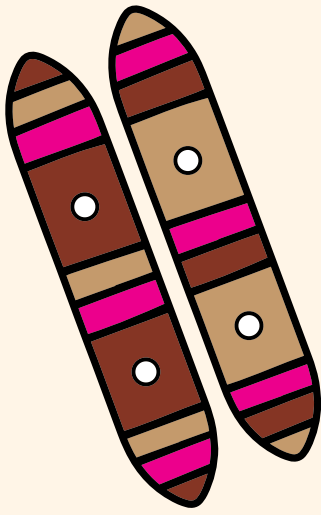
In the first year of the Strategy, our focus will be on collaborating with our eight divisional Groups to grow our Aboriginal workforce and to embed and deliver on a range of initiatives. The second year of the Strategy will focus on expanding our commitment across the department's public sector agencies.

The Strategy is aligned to the strategic objectives and targets as set out in the *Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-23* (VAAF) and the Victorian Public Sector Commission's (VPSC) Aboriginal Employment Strategy, *Barring Djinang 2017-22* (Barring Djinang). The Victorian Government have been committed to increasing Aboriginal employment since 2010, through *Karreeta Yirramboi Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2010-15*. Since then, a number of department's have made significant progress in increasing their Aboriginal workforce.

DJPR is also committed to becoming a leader and innovator of Aboriginal employment across the Victorian Public Sector. This requires leadership across all levels and areas of the department, and sustained commitment to collaborate with the Aboriginal Economic Development (AED) Branch and Corporate Services in the implementation of the Strategy actions.

¹ Deloitte, V.E.O. and Human Rights Commission, 2013. Waiter, is that inclusion in my soup? A new recipe to improve business performance. Deloitte Research Report.





In 2019, Victoria ranked at the top of the economic performance in the *State of the States Report*, ranking first on four of the eight indicators and continues to benefit from solid population growth and a strong job market.² Despite such progress, Aboriginal people continue to experience barriers to ongoing employment and participation in our economy. The VAAF further highlights that Aboriginal Victorians are more economically disadvantaged compared to non-Aboriginal Victorians and a higher percentage of Aboriginal Victorians are either unemployed or not in the labour force compared to non-Aboriginal Victorians.

In the *State of the Public Sector in Victoria Report for 2017–18*, Aboriginal people had the lowest diversity representation in both employment and on board representation in the public sector and public service.³ Aboriginal people continue to face multiple barriers in securing and sustaining ongoing employment. Such barriers include racism, unconscious bias, a lack of cultural safety in workplaces, physical and mental health issues, intergenerational trauma, an over-representation in the justice system, a much higher rate of out-of-home care for children, family violence, and lower education and training levels.

The department recognises that Aboriginal employment and economic development are vital to increasing Victoria's overall economic productivity and building trust and long-lasting relationships with Aboriginal people and communities. Growing a thriving and sustained Aboriginal workforce will add to the department's overall capability to build a deeper understanding of Aboriginal people and communities and create a more prosperous and inclusive Victoria.

This Strategy is built on the principles of Aboriginal Self-Determination and as such has been developed in collaboration with joint support and ownership by the Aboriginal Staff Network (ASN) and the executive board.

² July 2019 CommSec State of the States report

³ Cited in the State of the Public Sector in Victoria Report for 2017–18, pg 21-103

Aboriginal Self-Determination – Changing the game

Self-determination means different things to different people. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) describes self-determination as the ability for Indigenous people to freely determine their political status and pursue their economic, social and cultural development. It also describes self-determination as a right that relates to groups of people, not only individuals.

The VAAF outlines Government's commitment to advancing Aboriginal Self-Determination to improve outcomes and services for Aboriginal Victorians.

"Here in Victoria, we're committed to advancing Treaty and self-determination.

It represents a fundamental reset in the relationship between Aboriginal communities and government: A reset that means the voices of Aboriginal people are being heard and government is being held to account. And as this report shows, the actions we've taken – together – are important first steps.

But although we've made some vital progress, there remains much more to be done. We must close the gap of disadvantage, but we must also go beyond only looking at deficits. And fundamentally, we must ensure Aboriginal people are being given the respect and the responsibility to write their own future. Nothing less will do"
The Hon. Daniel Andrews, MP, Premier of Victoria⁴

Through the VAAF community consultations, Victorian Aboriginal communities highlighted that Aboriginal Self-Determination encompasses a spectrum of rights that are necessary for Aboriginal Victorians to achieve economic, social and cultural equity, based on their own cultural values and way of life. These rights include:

- not be discriminated against
- enjoy language, culture and heritage
- land and natural resources
- have access to the basic necessities of life and be economically self-sufficient
- make decisions that impact their lives from a position of wellbeing and empowerment
- 'grassroots community' having ownership and responsibility for their own affairs and their own communities, including through designing and delivering policy and services on their own terms, setting their own funding priorities and holding their service providers accountable.⁵

Aboriginal Self-Determination encompasses a spectrum of rights that are necessary for Aboriginal Victorians to achieve economic, social and cultural equity.

⁴ Victorian Government Aboriginal Affairs Report 2019 pg. 4

⁵ Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018–2023 pg. 22



DJPR is committed to the 11 guiding principles of Aboriginal Self-Determination that is identified in the VAAF:

- 1. Human Rights** Self-determination initiatives honour the norms set out in UNDRIP and *Victoria's Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.
- 2. Cultural Integrity** As First Nations peoples, the rich, thriving cultures, knowledge and diverse experiences of Aboriginal people, including where they fit with family, community and society, will be recognised, valued, heard and celebrated.
- 3. Commitment** Aboriginal Self-Determination will be advanced and embedded through planned action that is endorsed by, and accountable to, all parties.
- 4. Aboriginal Expertise** Government and agencies will seek out, value and embed Aboriginal culture, knowledge, expertise and diverse perspectives in policies and practice.
- 5. Partnership** Partnerships will advance Aboriginal autonomy through equitable participation, shared authority and decision-making, and will be underpinned by cultural integrity.
- 6. Decision-Making** Decision-makers will respect the right to free, prior and informed consent and individual choice and will prioritise the transfer of decision-making power to Aboriginal people in areas that impact their communities.
- 7. Empowerment** Aboriginal people will have autonomy and participation in the development, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of legislation, policies and programs that impact their communities.
- 8. Cultural Safety** Programs and services accessed by Aboriginal people will be inclusive, respectful, responsive and relevant, and informed by culturally safe practice frameworks.
- 9. Investment** Investment to support self-determination will be sustainable, flexible and appropriate to strengthen Aboriginal peoples' aspirations and participation, including around economic participation, economic independence and building wealth.
- 10. Equity** Systemic and structural racism, discrimination and unconscious bias and other barriers to Aboriginal Self-Determination will be actively identified and eliminated.
- 11. Accountability** All parties responsible for delivering outcomes involving Aboriginal people will be held accountable and subject to Aboriginal-led, independent and transparent oversight.

Strategy objectives

This Strategy is developed to guide DJPR's commitment to recruitment, retention and development of Aboriginal employees at all levels and in all areas of the department. Our commitment to increasing and retaining Aboriginal people is a critical component to growing our diverse and talented workforce; and key to building our capacity to work with Aboriginal communities. This important work will contribute to delivering a sustainable economy and improving the lives and prosperity of all Victorians.

We are committed to:

- achieving a minimum of two per cent Aboriginal employment by 2022, with 20 per cent of this target to be achieved at VPS level 6 and above with 75 per cent being ongoing positions
- Only ongoing employees, fixed term contracts of 18 months and above and DJPR home based graduates are to be included in the target calculation
- achieving an equitable spread of employment opportunities across regional and metropolitan areas
- supporting Aboriginal staff to build rewarding career pathways
- creating culturally inclusive and safe working environments for all employees
- building a deeper understanding of Aboriginal people and communities
- positioning the department as an employer of choice for Aboriginal people
- executive leadership, accountability and monitoring of the Strategy implementation

The Strategy responds to best practice, evidence and research in attracting Aboriginal people to the department and career development opportunities. The Strategy has four key focus areas:

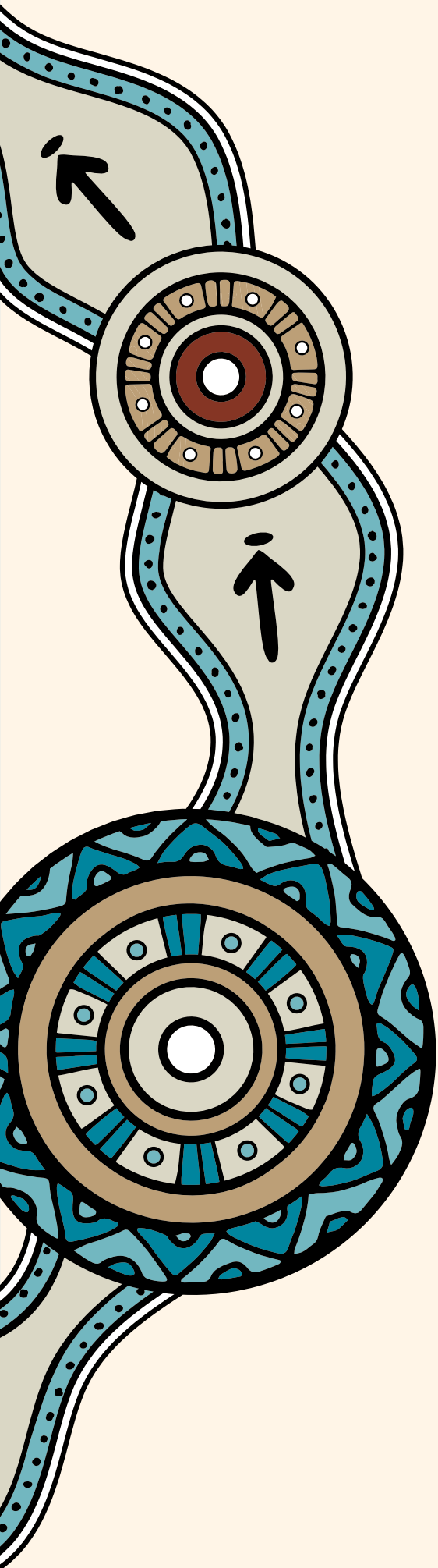
1. Attraction, recruitment and retention
2. Cultural safety
3. Development and succession planning
4. Executive leadership, accountability and monitoring

Focus area 1 – Attraction, recruitment and retention

Our focus is to build meaningful and sustainable employment opportunities for Aboriginal people across all areas and at all levels of DJPR. We plan on doing this by enhancing our current attraction, induction and retention processes to become more culturally diverse, inclusive and by building our profile in the Aboriginal community. We aim to be, over time an employer of choice for Aboriginal people.

We are committed to developing a range of employment pathways by building new partnerships with Traditional Owners, Aboriginal organisations, businesses, universities, schools and employment providers to support and promote attraction and recruitment of Aboriginal talent.

It is important that new Aboriginal employees are orientated into DJPR with ease, are appropriately supported by their managers and supervisors and connected to the ASN and with other Aboriginal employees.



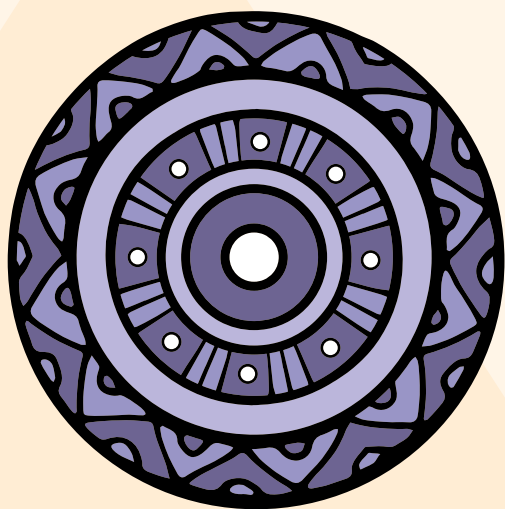
| Priority actions | Outcomes | Lead |
|--|--|---------------------------|
| Achieve a minimum 2% Aboriginal employment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With at least 75% of positions being ongoing Only ongoing employees, fixed term contracts of 18 months and above and DJPR home based graduates are to be included in the target calculation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DJPR achieving minimum 2% Aboriginal employment overall by June 2022 Increased Aboriginal employment by Groups | All Groups |
| Achieve a minimum 20% of the 2% Aboriginal employment target at VPS level 6 and above | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DJPR achieving overall minimum 20% of their 2% Aboriginal employment at VPS level 6 and above by June 2022 Increased Aboriginal employment at VPS level 6 and above by Groups | All Groups |
| Develop an Aboriginal designated and identified position policy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designated and identified position policy developed and embedded within DJPR Number of designated positions within DJPR by Group | Corporate Services AED |
| Develop Aboriginal employment toolkit for managers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal employment toolkit developed, available and communicated across DJPR | AED Corporate Services |
| Develop Aboriginal specific marketing and promotional materials | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotional material developed, established social media platforms to market Aboriginal employment opportunities | Corporate Services |
| Develop Aboriginal talent pool | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talent pool established Number of candidates in the pool and transition to employment outcomes across DJPR | AED Corporate Services |
| Develop and build strong partnerships with Traditional Owners, Aboriginal community organisations, education faculties and employment services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established partner relationships Developed pipeline, tracking and referrals to DJPR from partners | AED Corporate Services |
| Develop and promote Aboriginal specific jobseeker toolkit to support applicants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment tools and guides developed, promoted and available to external partners and potential candidates | AED Corporate Services |
| Develop Aboriginal specific pathway programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed entry programs that are actively promoted and recruiting Aboriginal graduates and trainees Number of candidates recruited from each pathway | AED Corporate Services |
| Develop Aboriginal employee orientation program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed, promoted and available orientation program | AED Corporate Services |

Focus area 2 – Cultural safety

Our focus is to create culturally safe and inclusive workplaces within DJPR. Creating a department which embeds cultural safety in all aspects of the organisation is fundamental to the cultural wellbeing of Aboriginal employees.

Cultural safety is not about culture, it is about racism and sovereignty.⁶ Cultural safety defines an environment that is safe for Aboriginal people to live and work where there is no assault, challenge, or denial of their identity and experience.⁷ In order to achieve this, we must build awareness through undertaking cultural safety training and recognise the expertise and contribution Aboriginal employees bring to the department.

All DJPR executives and managers are responsible for prioritising and embedding the three principles of DJPR’s cultural safety as part of our broader departmental wide learning and development.



| Priority actions | Outcomes | Lead |
|---|---|---------------------------|
| Develop and promote a cultural safety framework and guide to enable an inclusive workplace | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed and promoted cultural safety framework and guides Increase DJPR employee’s knowledge and understanding of DJPR cultural safety framework Developed cultural safety communication strategy | AED All Groups |
| Develop a suite of cultural safety training programs including a mandated cultural safety e-learn and face to face training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed and implemented mandated all staff cultural safety e-learn program Developed and implemented cultural safety face to face workshops and training programs for all staff | AED All Groups |
| Review and strengthen the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthened EAP that is culturally safe and promoted to all Aboriginal employees | Corporate Services |
| Develop Aboriginal employee toolkit to empower and support staff to speak up and promote workplace cultural safety | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed and promoted communication, reporting and management toolkit and survey on cultural safety Use learnings from survey and reports to improve cultural safety of workplaces | Corporate Services AED |
| Develop department specific cultural leave policy and guides | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed and promoted cultural leave policy and guides Number of Aboriginal employees using cultural leave | Corporate Services AED |

Key principles of cultural safety



“The fastest way to achieve cultural safety is to employ Aboriginal people at the most senior levels in all sectors and workplaces. They will bring knowledge, critical cultural thinking and experiences with them”

Andrew Jackomos

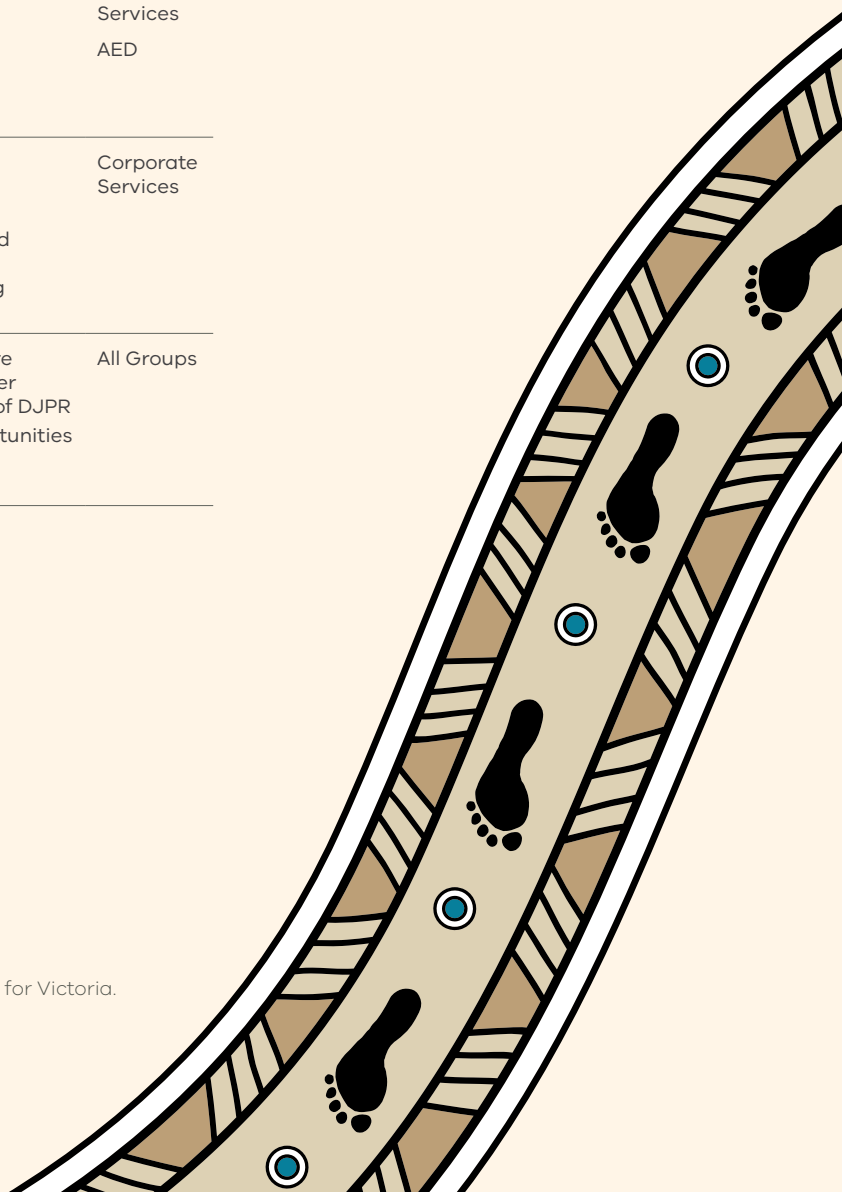
Focus area 3 – Development and succession planning

Our goal is to provide long lasting career opportunities for Aboriginal employees, and development and progression at all levels and across all areas of the department. Aboriginal Victorians are more likely than non-Aboriginal Victorians to have certificate level or secondary education, and less likely to have tertiary degree qualifications.⁸

This can pose obstacles to accessing secure, long term and senior level employment within the Victorian Public Sector. The department is committed to valuing factors other than formal education, such as lived and practical experiences that Aboriginal employees bring to the workplace. We are committed to investing in our Aboriginal employees and providing support to progress their careers through training and professional development opportunities.

| Priority actions | Outcomes | Lead |
|---|--|---------------------------|
| Develop ASN forum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASN forum held annually ASN policy and guide developed for managers of Aboriginal employees to support participation | AED All Groups |
| Designate places for Aboriginal employees in training and development programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designated allocation to learning and development programs Number of Aboriginal employees engaged in programs | Corporate Services AED |
| Develop Aboriginal employee mentoring and coaching program that supports career development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed and implemented mentoring and coaching program Number of executive and senior officers that are mentoring and coaching Aboriginal employees | Corporate Services |
| Support access to opportunities for Aboriginal staff to act "in higher duties" roles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal employees are provided access to higher duties roles in all areas of DJPR Number of acting opportunities and staff seconded to higher duty | All Groups |

⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics, analysis of 2016 census data for Victoria.



Focus area 4 – Executive leadership, accountability and monitoring

Our focus is to ensure executive leadership, accountability and monitoring of the Strategy’s implementation. DJPR leadership plays a critical role in owning and driving this Strategy and is committed to its success and the ongoing monitoring, evaluation and reporting of its implementation.

Accountability and monitoring of all aspects of the Strategy will be informed by the development and establishment of Group Action Plans (GAPs) and an Aboriginal employment data reporting plan. DJPR Groups are accountable to meeting their respective targets and actions of the Strategy.

Improvement of Human Resource systems on collecting and reporting data will make DJPR more effective, and consistent monitoring will ensure that we meet our targets. We will be successful if our reporting including the People Matter Survey shows that there is an increase of Aboriginal people employed at the department, increase in Aboriginal employees in leadership roles and improvement in cultural respect, safety and understanding of Aboriginal cultures.

| Priority actions | Outcomes | Lead |
|--|--|---------------------------|
| Establish GAPs, GAP Champions and reporting mechanisms with the support of AED | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All GAP’s and GAP Champions established, GAPs aligned to the Strategy with effective reporting | All Groups AED |
| Develop Aboriginal specific HR metrics dashboard | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed live Aboriginal specific HR metrics dashboard to collect accurate data with effective reporting against measurables | Corporate Services AED |
| Embed and monitor Aboriginal targets into executive board data dashboard | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal specific data embedded into executive board data dashboard and measuring Aboriginal employment growth by Group and industry | All Groups |
| Establish six monthly reporting to the executive board, Aboriginal Staff Network, DJPR Aboriginal Employment and Economic Council and Partnership Groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incremental progress towards achieving targets are reported on | All Groups |

Governance framework



