ABORIGINAL RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGY 2010-2013 YEAR 3

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARIES

In 2010 we launched The Department of Human Services and Department of Health Aboriginal Recruitment and Retention Strategy 2010-2013 (Strategy). The Strategy is a key part of our collective commitment to improve outcomes for Aboriginal people and progress Reconciliation.

Our dedicated Aboriginal Employment Unit has responsibility for coordinating the Strategy across both departments as well as developing and implementing several initiatives to increase our Aboriginal workforce by December 2013.

Year two Strategy highlights include:

> continued implementation and refinement of our two pathway programs; the Aboriginal Study-to-Work Program (ASTWP) and the Aboriginal Graduate Recruitment Program (AGRP). Recruits are offered an ongoing position with either department upon completion of the programs.

> growth of Aboriginal Staff Support Network, with quarterly meetings and an annual forum providing opportunities for collegial support and professional development. In February 2012 a Writing for Government workshop was held, attended by one third of all Aboriginal staff from the departments.

> use of the 118 Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) exemptions to identify VPS 1-6 and equivalent positions to allows us to recruit Aboriginal candidates.

> management of an Aboriginal candidate register, accessible by recruitment managers.

> continued operation of the Aboriginal employment support line and email address, accessible to all Aboriginal candidates, for positions within both departments.

> establishment of scholarships to undertake the Graduate Certificate in Public Sector Management. Four staff were awarded scholarships and three have since graduated.

> flexible support for new Aboriginal recruits and their managers.

> maintenance of support for all Aboriginal employees to further develop long term meaningful career pathways.

This activity reinforces our determination and commitment to increase Aboriginal employment within our departments and to exceed the Victorian government’s one per cent Aboriginal employment target for the public service well before 2018.

We recognise the success of this strategy depends on the support from all groups, divisions and regions as well as the Aboriginal community. With this important support we will continue to secure meaningful employment opportunities for Aboriginal people across the state whilst providing important career development.

We look forward to seeing our Aboriginal workforce grow and develop across all areas and levels within the departments.

Gill Callister  
Department of Human Services

Dr Pradeep Philip  
Department of Health
STRATEGY CONTEXT

The Victorian Government is committed to increasing and strengthening the workforce participation of Aboriginal people in the public sector. Karreeta Yirramboi – Victorian Aboriginal Public Sector Employment and Career Development Action Plan 2010-2018 highlights the need for concerted effort, clear targets and specific resources. This plan has set a one per cent target in Aboriginal employment across the public service by 2018.

The Department of Human Services and the Department of Health aim to exceed this target prior to 2018.

This target complements the considerable activity by both the State and Commonwealth Governments to reduce Aboriginal disadvantage by creating real jobs in both the public and the private sector. Both departments have the capacity to creatively and strategically make a significant commitment to Aboriginal employment.

In January 2010, the departments collectively employed 62 staff who identified as Aboriginal. This represented 0.52 per cent of the combined departments’ workforce. This compares with 111 in November 2012, representing approximately 0.9 per cent of the combined departments’ workforce.

The Strategy

> recognises that Aboriginal people have skills, expertise and knowledge to enhance the work of both departments.

> is designed to be responsive to both departments workforce needs and will evolve over the duration of the Strategy.

> acknowledges that many people who work for the departments want to make a direct and positive difference to the lives and opportunities of Aboriginal Victorians.

> creates a practical and supportive mechanism to make that difference. The Strategy will attract and recruit Aboriginal people to existing jobs at all levels. The jobs will be ongoing with professional development as part of the employment arrangements.

> will support existing Aboriginal staff and provide a network to retain staff once they join. It will also build upon the existing departmental efforts to develop the cultural competence of all staff at all levels.

The recruitment and retention of Aboriginal staff in the departments will have multiple benefits including supporting the development and implementation policies and programs that better meet the needs of Aboriginal Victorians.
The recruitment and retention of Aboriginal staff is a practical expression of government and departmental policies addressing Aboriginal disadvantage. These policies include:

- Council of Australian Governments (COAG) joint commitment to Closing the Gap on Indigenous disadvantage. In February 2011 COAG agreed to Closing the Gap on Indigenous disadvantage as one of five themes of national strategic importance.

- **National Partnership on Indigenous Economic Participation** includes a commitment to increase Aboriginal public sector employment.

- Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2013 – 2018 (VAAF) reflects the COAG commitments and supports a collaborative whole of department approach to improving outcomes for Aboriginal people. The VAAF identifies building prosperity through economic participation as a priority for improved effort and reform and includes the following headline target: By 2018, employment of Aboriginal people in the Victorian public service will increase to 1% of total employees.

- Victorian Aboriginal Economic Strategy (under development) supports improved economic participation of Aboriginal people in the Victorian economy.


- the Department of Health is leading the development of the **Closing the Gap through the Aboriginal Health Workforce Plan**. The plan focuses on increasing and developing the Aboriginal external workforce that responds to key health priority areas.
RECRUITING AND RETAINING ABORIGINAL STAFF

This strategy will attract, recruit, support and retain Aboriginal staff in the departments.

The departments recognise that employment is central to improving outcomes for health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people. Factors such as health, housing, education and cultural understanding impact on the employment of Aboriginal Victorians. The departments understand the need to provide additional support and development opportunities to recruit and retain Aboriginal staff and to that end, support managers to recruit and retain Aboriginal people.

Provisions to assist recruiting managers include (but are not limited to):

> one on one support for managers of new Aboriginal recruits.
> Aboriginal Study-to-Work Program, an entry level pathway to employment program.
> Aboriginal Graduate Recruitment Program.
> register of Aboriginal candidates.
> targeted national marketing (no cost to regions and divisions for exempt positions).
> a secured 118 VCAT exemption numbers that the departments can place on vacancies providing opportunity for Aboriginal candidates.
> embed recruitment guidelines and support into mainstream recruitment guides.

For more information about support available to recruiting managers please contact the Aboriginal Employment Unit: 1300 092 406.
KEY COMMITMENTS

We aim to continue to recruit, develop and retain Aboriginal staff by reducing barriers to employment through the provision of support and development opportunities. To work towards this aim we will focus on three key commitments:

1. Recruit
   > Market careers in the departments to Aboriginal people nationally
   > Promote and further develop pathways to employment in the departments
   > Provide ongoing employment opportunities to Aboriginal people.

2. Retain
   > Provide support for new and existing Aboriginal staff
   > Provide career development opportunities to build skills and capabilities of existing staff
   > Develop succession planning for identified roles.

3. Build a culturally responsive workforce
   > Continue to provide training to support the development of a culturally responsive workforce
   > Raise awareness of managers and staff of cultural issues relevant to Aboriginal staff
   > Initiate and advance cultural intelligence of staff, focusing on managers and leaders.

Key communication messages

> We value the contribution of Aboriginal people in our workforce.
> We recognise that Aboriginal people are diverse and we value their individual and collective knowledge, skills and leadership capabilities.
> We will provide meaningful ongoing employment and career development opportunities.

Evaluation and reporting

Progress of the Strategy will be monitored throughout 2013. An evaluation of the Strategy is planned for December 2013.
# YEAR THREE ACTION PLAN

## Recruit

- Promote career opportunities in the departments on the Aboriginal employment website to potential job applicants including Aboriginal Graduate Recruitment Program and Aboriginal Study-to-Work Program.
- Promote and support employment of Aboriginal candidates with a disability.
- Promote career opportunities in the departments at tertiary institutions.
- Continue to promote and implement the use of exempted positions to employ Aboriginal candidates.
- Maintain a strong pool of potential Aboriginal candidates.
- Continue to assist Aboriginal candidates with resume, application and interview skills.
- Follow up with Aboriginal candidates who were not successful in being offered a position – identify skill/experience gap. Maintain them on the candidate register.
- Secure 10 per cent of positions from the program areas where volume recruiting is used (namely housing, child protection, youth justice, disability services casuals) for Aboriginal candidates.
- Employ 40 Aboriginal people to support our target including:
  - Participation in the State Services Authority GRADS Program.
  - Implementation of the Aboriginal Study to Work Program (target 10 participants).
- Maintain the career email account and dedicated Aboriginal employment telephone number to respond to enquiries from potential job applicants.
Retain

Provide professional development opportunities at regular Aboriginal Staff Support Network (ASSN) meetings.

Assist where requested to develop a comprehensive learning and development plan between the staff and their manager, including an emphasis on further education opportunities and career planning.

Identify and implement mechanisms to systemically embed progress against the Strategy in corporate reporting to the Executive.

Provide intensive support to new Aboriginal staff.

Develop a staffing report to identify new Aboriginal staff to:
> make contact, welcome new Aboriginal staff to the department and inform them about the support that is available to them
> offer intensive support and outreach for up to a four-month period to Aboriginal recruits and their managers.

Provide support and assistance to groups, divisions and regions to recruit, retain and support Aboriginal staff.

Provide targeted professional development and support opportunities for Aboriginal staff (i.e Graduate Certificate in Public Sector Management).

Include targets to support Aboriginal employment within executive officer performance plans.

Build a culturally responsive workforce

Contribute to the new Managers’ Recruitment Guide to better engage with Aboriginal candidates and employees.

Building the cultural knowledge and understanding of staff through the delivery of the Building Aboriginal Cultural Competence program and other relevant training programs.

Identify and implement procurement opportunities across the departments that will support increased Aboriginal employment and economic engagement.

Note: INTRAIN Scholarships will continue to be offered through the Aboriginal Employment Unit in the fields of health and human services.
Contacts
Aboriginal Employment Unit
50 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne 3000
email: aboriginal.employment@dhs.vic.gov.au
Phone: 1300 092406

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