

Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2020–2025

Department of Customer Service





“Connecting Communities”

Artwork

Large artwork based on design concept representing the core values of the NSW Department of Customer Service. The artwork is created in a specific colour scheme and depicts the core values: Integrity Trust Service Accountability. These are the principal values of the services that connect communities and people to protect, support and nurture. The communities are symbolised by Gnurra/houses built on natural resources. The lines connecting the communities comprise of Tally marks, a significant symbol used in NSW on message sticks, body scarification, tools and engravings.

Artist: Alison Williams

A proud Gumbaynggirr woman, Alison’s love for painting and drawing from a young age was a way of expressing her personal impressions, dreams and experiences.

Born in Sydney in 1968, Alison grew up around Wollongong, however Alison always harbored a feeling of belonging to her mother’s family & country, the northern lowlands of Gumbaynggirr Nation. This feeling brought her to the North Coast of NSW, to settle there. Alison established a studio and continued her artistic & professional development strengthening roots within the community to teach, advocate, support family and artistic practice in regional NSW.

Alison is a spokesperson for the cultural heritage of Australian First Nation people and involved herself in the education and communication of culture from dance, sculpture, and painting as well as community leadership. Alison’s passion is to create greater engagement and understanding within the general community of Australia and abroad, in the rich cultural heritage of Indigenous Australia.



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Message from the Secretary

I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Land on which we work and live and pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

I am delighted to launch the Department of Customer Service Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2020–2025. The strategy sets the direction and targets for improving the employment of Aboriginal peoples across the Customer Service Cluster. I acknowledge the great work carried out by the Public Service Commission and its Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2019–2025. Our strategy aligns closely with the PSC Aboriginal Employment Strategy.

This is the first Cluster-wide Aboriginal Employment Strategy for Customer Service and builds on the actions we have already taken to make us an even more inclusive organisation for our people, our customers and our community. Our Strategy is to increase our current workforce who identify as Aboriginal from 2.7 per cent to a minimum of 4 per cent by 2025.

In keeping with Aboriginal tradition, we will adopt a holistic approach which broadens the purpose of the Strategy to include employment opportunities, strong support mechanisms, career pathways and promotions - delivered in a culturally inclusive environment.

The Strategy goes beyond employment targets and includes a focus on growing Aboriginal cultural competency for all employees across the sector. We want to provide a sense of diversity and inclusion and a sense of belonging.

Our 4 per cent target at each grade across Customer Service will be achieved by taking a career pathway approach. This approach strives to create a talent pipeline to sustain growth in Aboriginal employment representation long after the Strategy has come to term. It will enable us to support the Premier's Priority of increasing the number of Aboriginal senior leaders to 10 by 2025.

Thank you to the Executive Sponsor, Carmel Donnelly, and the many people that contributed to this Strategy. This includes the Aboriginal Employee Resource Group, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal employees, senior leaders including the Deputy Secretaries and Senior Executives for their valuable and insightful contributions.

I am proud to release a Strategy that puts people and inclusion at the heart, and I look forward to working together as a department to become the world's most customer-centric government.

Emma Hogan

Secretary
Department of Customer Service



Message from the executive sponsor

I want to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the Land on which we work and pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

The launch of the Customer Service Cluster - Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2020-2025 is a significant milestone.

We are committed to putting customers and community at the centre and people and inclusion at the heart of everything we do. A diverse and inclusive workforce that truly reflects the communities we serve is essential to our core purpose.

Aboriginal peoples are the First Nation peoples of NSW and this Strategy recognises that strong support for Aboriginal employment and careers in the Customer Service Cluster is an essential foundation to work alongside Aboriginal people and communities and make sure their voices are heard so that we can meet their needs.

It does this by acknowledging our current Aboriginal colleagues and setting new targets to ensure Aboriginal employees are getting full access to interesting and rewarding careers and professional opportunities across the Customer Service Cluster.

The Strategy also sets clear targets for Aboriginal representation at each grade, and will make sure we create a positive, supportive and rewarding place to work by strengthening the Aboriginal cultural capability in the sector.

When our workplaces are safe and inclusive environments, it helps to support our overall wellbeing, particularly mental health. This Strategy recognises the need to create a work environment that is culturally safe and welcoming for Aboriginal people. Given our Cluster's leading role in workplace regulation, particularly health, safety, recovery and wellbeing at work, this is especially critical.

At Customer Service, we have great potential to lead and influence change through our Aboriginal Employment Strategy by supporting the employment, career, social, cultural and economic aspirations of Aboriginal people who work for NSW now and in the future. This is indeed part of our central agency leadership of Customer Service as well as our commitment to strong inclusive leadership.

I would like close by acknowledging and thanking our Aboriginal colleagues throughout the Cluster for the energy, time, patience, good will, collaboration and hard work they have contributed to bring us all towards delivering this important Strategy. I particularly recognise, with gratitude, the leadership shown by all the members of the Aboriginal ERG.

Carmel Donnelly

Chief Executive
State Insurance Regulatory Authority



Photo: Brett Cunningham

Message from the Aboriginal Employee Resource Group

The Aboriginal Employee Resource Group (ERG) was formed in 2016 to improve, support and retain Aboriginal staff across what was the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation (DFSI). As the transition to the Department of Customer Service (DCS) has happened, so has the demand to address changes relevant to Aboriginal staff and the need to build both a culturally competent and culturally safe customer service.

Our Aboriginal ERG provides social and professional support for its members, support advocacy and provides avenues for information sharing. We have been leaders across the NSW Public Sector in our Acknowledgement of Country discs initiative and our Cultural Values Sharing Training.

A strategy about outcomes for Aboriginal people must be built around our views, priorities, voices, and aspirations, therefore, we launch our latest initiative in the development of our Aboriginal Employment Strategy.

The Aboriginal ERG is a whole-of-DCS approach that demonstrates commitment to building a capable and versatile Aboriginal workforce across all levels and classifications within DCS. The Aboriginal Employment Strategy is grounded in the knowledge that Aboriginal people face long standing historical, cultural, and social barriers to accessing employment.

By providing improved employment opportunities, DCS is contributing to extending economic participation for Aboriginal people, with many follow-on benefits including improved health and education outcomes and a higher standard of living for Aboriginal people and their families.

The Strategy has been developed following close consultation with the Aboriginal ERG and is in line with the with NSW Public Sector Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2019–2025, OCHRE Plan – NSW Government Aboriginal Affairs Strategy and the Closing the Gap formal Partnership Agreement between the National Federation Reform Council and the National Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations in 2020.

Acknowledgements

The Department of Customer Service (DCS) recognises Aboriginal peoples as the traditional custodians of the lands now called NSW, where our DCS offices and staff are located, and we conduct our business. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders ancestors and Elders, both past and present.

There are hundreds of nations in Australia, and each one holds countless traditions and diverse experiences. On occasions we use Aboriginal peoples rather than Aboriginal people to recognise this diversity of language, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs. We would like to acknowledge and sincerely thank all the people that contributed to this strategy and generously shared their experiences, knowledge and ideas.

This includes:

- The Aboriginal Employee Resource Group members
- Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal DCS employees
- Senior leaders across DCS, including the Secretary, Deputy Secretaries and Senior Executives.

We are committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, water and sea, and their rich contribution to society. We encourage and welcome all DCS staff to further their knowledge of these rich, thriving cultures.

Terminology

This document uses the terminology Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. In some cases, Aboriginal is used, in recognition that Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of NSW (for example, when a Welcome to Country is discussed).

Executive summary

Our commitment

The Department of Customer Service (DCS) came into being in July 2019 and has been active in developing the necessary strategies to meet the commitments of the Premier’s Diversity Priority. The Department of Customer Service is strongly committed to growing and developing a talented and versatile Aboriginal workforce by providing career paths for Aboriginal employees to:

- Fill at least 10 DCS senior leadership roles
- Represent a minimum of 4% of all staff in non-executive salary classes.

Our Aboriginal Employment Strategy (AES) will be a success if these results are achieved by 2025.

Achieving the premier’s diversity priority

We fully support the Premier’s Priority and aim to increase the number of Aboriginal senior leaders in DCS by 2025. We will create a talent pipeline for leadership roles and improve the distribution of Aboriginal employees across levels by having a minimum of 4% Aboriginal representation in each non-executive grade classification. The PSC encourages departments and agencies to set their own targets to better reflect the diversity of the communities where they work.




Aboriginal employment strategy elements

We have 3 elements to help us meet our commitment:

1. Building a talent pipeline by attracting more Aboriginal peoples to work in the NSW public sector and helping them advance their careers
2. Improving Aboriginal cultural capability by teaching all public sector employees to respect and accommodate cultural differences
3. Engaging with our Aboriginal workforce to help us meet our targets. This section details the actions we will take to implement each of these elements.

DCS people strategy alignment

The DCS People Strategy links us to our commitment regarding the three elements of our AES:

DCS People Strategy	AES Elements
 Customers and community at the centre	1. Building a talent pipeline by attracting more Aboriginal peoples to work in the NSW public sector and helping them advance their careers
 People and inclusion at the heart	2. Improving Aboriginal cultural capability by teaching all public sector employees to respect and accommodate cultural differences
 Partner collaboration at its best	3. Engaging with our Aboriginal workforce to help us meet our targets.

Doing things differently – agency coordination and collaborative approach

Areas of the Department of Customer Service have made strong progress on Aboriginal employment recently however our retention rates need to improve. While success has been achieved via the various recruitment programs, we will develop effective support mechanisms to increase our retention rates and provide a springboard to ongoing employment across the DSC cluster.

We will collaborate across DCS to meet our targets and objectives and develop strong partnerships between DCS and Aboriginal communities because they will be the recipients of our increased services.

We will take a coordinated approach across DCS regarding Aboriginal communication strategies, Aboriginal engagement strategies and recruitment programs, retaining trainees and providing ongoing employment. We will coordinate employment programs to provide pathways for trainees' post completion of their training either in the host agency or another DCS agency.

As part of our community engagement from an employment perspective, we will pilot information seminars in relative communities and provide information on careers in the public sector. This pilot will cover all aspects of the application and recruitment process, public sector structures and other useful information.

We will strengthen our relationships with external partners and align with strategies and policies to ensure our success and enable Aboriginal community members to gain employment and have access to available economic opportunities. These partners, policies and drivers include:

- NSW Public Sector Aboriginal Employment Strategy
- DPIE Aboriginal Procurement Participation Strategy
- Department of Aboriginal Affairs - NSW OCHRE Plan
- Economic Prosperity Framework, Aboriginal Procurement Policy
- National Agreement on Closing the Gap
- PSC's Aboriginal Workforce Development team.

Complementary DCS strategies and guides

Our Strategy will also complement the:

- Aboriginal Customer Engagement Strategy – the DCS Aboriginal Employment Strategy will connect with Aboriginal communities in many of its recruitment initiatives and this community interaction will be guided by our Aboriginal Customer Engagement Strategy.
- Disability Inclusion Action Plan – there are Aboriginal disability employment targets in the DIAP which will intersect with the Aboriginal employment targets of the DCS Aboriginal Employment Strategy. These targets will be monitored in tandem to ensure that all targets will be met.
- Aboriginal Engagement and Protocols Guide – will intersect with the Aboriginal Customer Engagement Strategy. The Protocols Guide will direct DCS to effectively, respectfully and with cultural sensitivity, interact with Aboriginal communities.



1. Our commitment

The Department of Customer Service is proud to announce our Aboriginal Employment Strategy. In keeping with Aboriginal tradition, we will adopt a holistic approach which broadens the purpose of the Strategy to not only include employment opportunities but to provide strong support to retain staff and ensure that career opportunities and promotions are accessible and practiced in a culturally inclusive environment. However, the Strategy does not stop there because at the forefront we will be engaging with Aboriginal communities to develop strong partnerships regarding employment opportunities and will seek feedback and advice, where necessary, on proposed legislation changes and employment processes especially in areas where we have DCS centres.

The DCS Connect Strategy is aligned with the PSC's Aboriginal Employment Strategy which sets out the key initiatives to be implemented across the NSW public sector and within departments and agencies over the period 2019 to 2025. The PSC Strategy will build on the success of its previous Strategy which showed an increase in Aboriginal staff representation across the NSW public sector workforce.

From a DCS perspective there is still more to do in meeting our employment targets however this is only one part of our holistic approach which will also focus on growing Aboriginal cultural competency for all employees across the sector. Aboriginal staff will be involved in the development of Aboriginal focused strategies and initiatives regarding mentoring, promotion opportunities and processes, community engagement activities and privacy issues. This will include an improved identification and participation process. We aim to provide a culturally safe environment and a sense of belonging within DCS. Our current retention rates can be improved with the necessary support mechanisms in place. The AES is designed to take us to the next stage, and we are committed to growing and developing sustainable career paths for Aboriginal employees within DCS. Over the life of the AES we are also committed to:

- Achieving a minimum target of 10 Aboriginal people in senior leadership roles
- Achieving a minimum target of 4% of all Aboriginal staff in non-executive roles
- Recruiting Aboriginal people to all agencies within the DCS cluster and under all available programs including:
 - o School-based traineeships
 - o Graduate and entry level programs
 - o Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Program
 - o Aboriginal Development Training & Leadership Program
 - o Secondments
 - o Role swapping with NGOs
 - o Utilising talent/recruitment pools; and
 - o Other yet to be identified innovations

- Providing sustainable career paths and promotional opportunities.
- Establishing robust support mechanisms including:
 - o Mentoring and shadowing
 - o Buddy systems
 - o Aboriginal EAPS program
- Strengthening our induction process so that new staff are aware of our support services and can connect with other Aboriginal staff including the ERG
- Develop an exit interview process to gain honest and open data so that we can continually improve our retention and staff satisfaction rates
- Encourage participation in community development programs such as Jawun and explore options for DCS to develop similar programs
- Incorporating employment, retention and promotional targets in Directors annual performance plans.

1.1 Connection to our DCS people strategy

We are committed to Our Vision, Our Purpose and Our Intent with the support of the three pillars of the DCS People Strategy:




- Customers and community at the centre
- People and inclusion at the heart
- Partner collaboration at its best.

How we will achieve our People Strategy commitment is articulated below:



OUR VISION To be the world's most customer-centric government

OUR PURPOSE Customers and communities can expect government services to be trustworthy, effective and easy no matter who they are, where they are, or what they need.

OUR INTENT	 Customers and community at the centre	 People and Inclusion at the heart	 Partner collaboration at its best
OUR PEOPLE PRIORITIES	How we serve Our customers and communities are at the centre of all that we do. We deliver excellence in customer service in our sector and for all industries. Our people feel valued and engaged and motivated to deliver positive customer experiences.	How we work We are focused on educating, enabling and engaging our people to make a difference. We ensure that all our people have a consistent experience. One team, working together to build an inclusive environment from the inside out.	How we learn, collaborate and lead We are committed to enabling a collective leadership. Our people and leaders work as one community, supporting each other and delivering on the things that matter. We are focused on lifelong learning, to help us to be the best we can be.
OUR FOUNDATION	Our customer and digital capabilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer at the centre • Data, decisions and ethics • Enabling technology • Collaboration and agility • Ideas to impact • Digital leadership 	Our people values <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service • Integrity • Trust • Accountability 	Our customer commitments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to engage • Respect my time • Resolve the situation • Engage the community • Act with empathy • Explain what to expect
OUR PEOPLE PLAN	Employee experiences enabling great customer experiences	Empowered and inclusive culture	Growing and assisting our people for now and the future
OUR 2020-2022 FOCUS AREAS	Focus on what matters for our customers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing our digital and customer capability • Share and learn from customer stories • Tailored workforce strategies to drive customer outcomes 	Focus on what matters for our people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One team - working towards the one vision • Performance - aligning all our people to the plan • Inclusion - everyone belongs, always 	Focus on what matters for our growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building our customer commitments • Individualising the learning journey for everyone • Our leadership capability - collaboration, digital customer

1.2 Collaboration and diversity

Aboriginal peoples offer a wealth of life experiences, knowledge and skills. We value their significant contributions across the DCS sector, which include:

- adding richness to our diversity of thinking
- building our capacity to innovate
- improving the services, we deliver by helping us better understand their needs and goals, along with those of their communities
- improving results across the sector.

A public sector that attracts and nurtures Aboriginal employees will promote economic participation in Aboriginal communities and improve access to quality services and supports. In this way, the sector will benefit future generations and help advance the wellbeing of Aboriginal people across NSW.

To achieve our goals and objectives we will work collaboratively across DCS to ensure that everyone is participating in what we are aiming to achieve. This will take honest and open leadership to form meaningful partnerships and to cultivate, nurture and strengthen these partnerships as we move forward. Strong and fearless leadership is also required to make tough decisions especially regarding Aboriginal employment programs across our cluster and across NSW. We will fulfil our commitment by achieving our targets and outcomes as identified and highlighted throughout our Strategy.



2. Confirmation of Aboriginality

Aboriginal as defined by the *Aboriginal Lands Rights Act 1983 (NSW)* is a person who:

- identifies as a person of Aboriginal descent
- presents documentation identifying their family's Aboriginal descent
- is accepted by their local Aboriginal community as a person of Aboriginal descent.

These three criteria are universally accepted across NSW by Aboriginal Peoples and will bring confidence to our Aboriginal recruitment process.

Torres Strait Islander as defined in *Section 7 of the Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991 (QLD)* is a person who is a descendant of an Indigenous inhabitant of the Torres Strait Islands.



Photo: Thomas Sheen

3. Three elements actions

The following targets will help us meet our commitment by 2025. We will be successful if Aboriginal employees:

- represent 4% of all staff in non-executive salary classes
- work in a wider range of departments, agencies, regions and job types than in 2020
- fill at least 10 senior leadership roles in DCS
- experience similar staff retention, transfer and promotion rates to non-Aboriginal staff in all salary classes
- sense an improvement in cultural respect and understanding from 2020 levels and express this in our survey responses.

We will also be successful if culturally capable and trauma informed workforce training completion rates are very high among all DCS employees. We will roll out this strategy progressively from 2020–2025.

3.1 Element 1: Building a talent pipeline

Building a talent pipeline by attracting more Aboriginal peoples to work for the Department of Customer Service and helping them advance in their careers.

The first element is to develop a pipeline of Aboriginal talent from entry level to senior roles. It aims to:

- attract more Aboriginal peoples to work in DCS
- improve Aboriginal employees' experiences and sense of belonging, boost retention rates and help advance their careers.

We will build on NSW public sector successes in attracting Aboriginal employees by:

- using recruitment procedures that do not exclude or discourage Aboriginal applicants
- giving agencies better access to Aboriginal talent pools to fill roles at every level.

Once employees are in the pipeline, we will build and provide robust support mechanisms in retaining them and advancing their careers. Our effective systems for managing individual, team and organisational performance underpins our high-performance culture. This element supports the NSW Performance Development Framework, which aims to ensure that:

- all Aboriginal employees have the skills, capabilities, supports and experience they need to excel in the sector
- DCS can effectively respond to issues that adversely affect Aboriginal staff retention.

3.2 Element 2: Improving Aboriginal cultural capability

Improving the Aboriginal cultural capability of all Department of Customer Service employees to respect and accommodate cultural differences

The second key strategy element aims to nurture workplaces:

- where Aboriginal employees feel culturally safe and secure and a sense of belonging, and draw strength from their identity, culture and community
- that understand, respect and support Aboriginal cultures, and accommodate cultural differences.

Creating such an environment across DCS requires a coordinated effort to strengthen every employee's cultural capability. By better understanding the unique characteristics and specific needs of Aboriginal communities, DCS can:

- better respond to the needs of communities where they work
- improve the services they deliver to all NSW residents
- attract more Aboriginal peoples to public sector roles.

We will be successful if culturally capable and trauma informed workforce training completion rates are high across the sector.

3.3 Element 3: Engaging with our Aboriginal workforce

Engaging with our Aboriginal workforce to help us meet our targets

The third key strategy element means:

- engaging with Aboriginal employees to better understand their experiences
- monitoring progress against the strategy's actions to identify issues
- proactively responding to any issues we uncover.

This engagement will make our responses more effective, and consistent monitoring makes us more likely to meet our targets. We will be successful if our employee surveys show that they sense an improvement in cultural respect and understanding from 2020 levels.

While this is an employment strategy, we will always be aware of the impact we have with our Aboriginal customers. We will strive to be the world's most customer-centric government and we will achieve this by learning from our customers. The guidance of the DCS Aboriginal Customer Engagement Strategy is imperative for effective Aboriginal community engagement and community partnerships.

4. Building, retaining and growing

4.1 Providing robust support mechanisms for Aboriginal staff

Working with the Aboriginal communities to recruit staff is only the first step along an exciting journey regarding staff recruitment. It is important that new Aboriginal staff are welcomed appropriately and as part of the induction process, new staff will be provided with Aboriginal contacts across DCS as a starting point. Buddy or mentoring opportunities will be provided where possible and an Aboriginal staff member will contact new recruits to welcome them aboard.

A key step is the development of robust inclusive support mechanisms to ensure that we retain our staff by:

- Providing a culturally safe and inclusive workplace.
- Aboriginal staff to welcome new employees and support them through awareness of the ERG and other support groups.
- Offer buddy or mentoring support.
- Providing information regarding the Aboriginal Employees Assistance Program and contact details.
- Providing information regarding local Aboriginal organisations and services especially if they have moved to a new location.
- Where there are no Aboriginal staff-members we will use local champions to welcome new Aboriginal staff.

Due to our collective history many Aboriginal people may be affected by intergenerational trauma which involves the transmission of trauma from one generation to the next. Recognising and addressing intergenerational trauma is central to healing for Indigenous peoples, both in Australia and elsewhere. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people a history of forced removals, policies such as racial assimilation, socially sanctioned racism and violence and grief over the loss of land and culture have all contributed to intergenerational trauma.

4.2 Growing Aboriginal career paths in the public sector

This strategy is about working with Aboriginal peoples to maximise their potential. It aims to support those with career aspirations in the NSW public sector by:

- developing a pipeline of Aboriginal talent from entry level to senior roles
- identifying and creating career development opportunities at all levels.

The talent pipeline approach involves creating a pool of employees at all levels who have the skills, capabilities and support they need to advance into available roles and be effective in them. It focuses on making sure all Aboriginal employees – from trainees to department and agency leaders – know they are a valuable part of our workforce, can improve their careers and can aspire to leadership opportunities. The strategy will ensure continuity by leveraging the important work departments and agencies already do to attract, retain and promote

Aboriginal employees. It encourages them to build on their achievements and collaborate on ongoing efforts to develop a sector pipeline and nurture Aboriginal talent. This will help achieve the Premier's Priority.

4.3 Leadership targets

Our target will increase the number of Aboriginal staff in executive roles to ten people which will be staged over the life span of the AES. The staged approach will enable us to prepare staff for the next level by providing leadership programs, mentoring, shadowing and acting-up opportunities. Our plan to achieve these targets in real terms is articulated in the following table.

DCS Leadership Targets					
2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
2	1	2	2	2	1

4.4 Non-executive staff targets

Our target will increase the percentage of Aboriginal staff across DCS from 2.7% to 4% by 2025. This will be achieved through a combination of recruiting Aboriginal staff and retaining staff by increasing the retention rates. Our plan to achieve the percentage increases is articulated in the following table:

Non-Executive Staff Targets					
2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
2.7%	3%	3.3%	3.6%	3.9%	4%

4.5 Ensuring Aboriginal employees feel culturally safe

Our Strategy will provide workplaces for Aboriginal public sector employees in which they:

- feel culturally safe and secure
- can draw strength from identity, culture, family and community
- feel a sense of belonging.

It also recognises the importance of providing trauma informed and culturally safe services and supporting healing for Aboriginal peoples. Our initiatives will:

- enhance cultural capability across the sector
- foster more culturally inclusive and safe workplaces
- help the sector work toward better outcomes for Aboriginal communities, including Stolen Generations survivors and their families and communities.

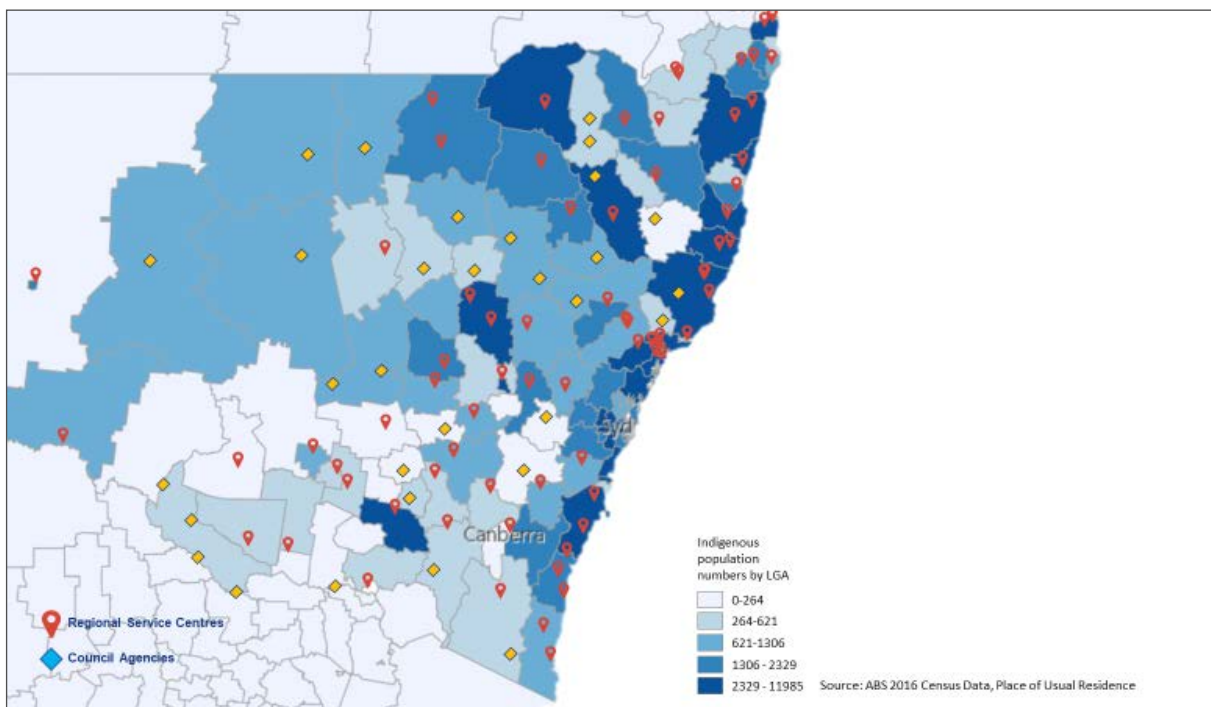
4.6 Understanding drivers and barriers to employment

Our Strategy does not identify or solve all issues that affect Aboriginal employment in DCS, but it commits to understanding and addressing both the key drivers that attract Aboriginal peoples to work in the sector and the barriers to their employment. Our strategy reflects and responds to what we already know attracts Aboriginal peoples to work in the sector and advance their careers. This includes:

- meaningful regional employment opportunities
- flexibility in where and how they can perform their roles
- the ability to work towards better outcomes for their communities.

We will build on existing efforts to identify other attraction mechanisms and communicate the sector's value to potential employees. We will also do research and engage with the sector. We also recognise that involving Aboriginal peoples as we develop policies and pilot new programs is critical to overcoming barriers. We are committed to collaborating with them to overcome any employment barriers we identify, address the ongoing impacts of intergenerational trauma, and achieve positive outcomes for Aboriginal communities across NSW.

5. NSW Indigenous populations in relation to DCS footprint



6. Definitions

Word/Term	Definition
Aboriginal Peoples	There are the many Aboriginal nations in Australia, each holding their traditions, diverse experiences, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs.
First Nations People/s	A person of Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community with which they are associated.
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	A person of Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community with which they are associated.
Indigenous or Indigenous Australians	Indigenous or Indigenous Australians is extensively used throughout Australia and the Commonwealth Government when referring to the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia, and related topics.
Aboriginal 'Identified' position	Pursuant to Section 14(d) of the <i>Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)</i> , such a position has a genuine occupational requirement for an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person to fill the role. i.e. being an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person is an inherent requirement. Basically, this applies to roles in which Aboriginality is an occupational qualification. Typically, identified roles work directly with Aboriginal peoples or are involved in developing and delivering services and programs that impact Aboriginal peoples and/or communities.
Aboriginal 'Targeted' (affirmative measures) position	Under the provisions of Section 126 of the <i>Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)</i> , an exemption is granted from sections 8 and 51 to enable DCS to put in place affirmative action measures by selecting any vacancies open only to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander applicants. This is used to increase the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce at DCS.
Confirmation of Aboriginality (COA)	<p>For vacancies advertised as Identified (Sec 14 (d) <i>Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 NSW</i>) and/or Targeted (affirmative measures, Sec 126 <i>Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 NSW</i>), eligible applicants are persons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent • who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander • who are accepted by their community as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. <p>These positions will require applicants to address selection criteria regarding their Aboriginality, and as part of the recruitment/ on boarding process a COA is required. Please refer to the Public Sector Commission Recruitment Guidelines.</p>

Culturally safe environment	A culturally safe environment is the outcome of interactions where individuals can openly experience their cultural identity (and ways of being) as having been respected, or at least not challenged or harmed in any way.
4% of the DCS workforce are Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander Australians	Those Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff who make up the % towards the 4% DCS target include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff who are in paid employment with DCS in continuing, permanent or fixed term, apprenticeships or traineeships AND who identify through HR systems that they are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Individuals not captured in the % are school-based trainees, casuals and those employed by other DCS programs including Graduate and Cadetships etc.
AEDP	Aboriginal Employment and Development Program
ACLDP	Aboriginal Career and Leadership Development Program
Career mobility	The movement of an employee through reassignment, transfer or secondment. It includes secondments and temporary assignments to a higher grade or band than the employee's ongoing employment
Community of Practice	NSW public sector groups that develop the capabilities of certain professional groups by providing forums for members to meet, network, share knowledge and learn best practice.
Senior leader	Under the Premier's Priority, these are non-casual government sector employees whose salary equals or exceeds Senior Officer Grade 1. Senior Leaders exclude: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> specialist or technical health roles with no leadership or managerial duties statutory or institutional justice roles, such as judges, magistrates and barristers.
Stolen Generations	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who, when they were children, were taken away from their families and communities as the result of past government policies.
Trauma informed	Recognising the prevalence and pervasive impact of trauma and developing sensitive or responsive services.
Workforce planning	An ongoing strategic process that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> aligns the organisations' staff requirements to their business objectives considers the future business environment and identifies the expected future demand for certain skills and capabilities.

7. References

[NSW public sector Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2019-2025](#)

[Australian Indigenous Health Info Net - Trauma](#)

[New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council - Confirmation of Aboriginality](#)



Three Sisters - 'Meehni', 'Wimlah' and 'Gunnedoo'



Darling River - Menindee





