Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade


Introduction

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade’s (the Department) Indigenous Recruitment and Career Development Strategy (IRCDS) has been updated following the launch of a revised version of the Building an Indigenous Employment Strategy – A Starter kit for Commonwealth Agencies (the Kit), by the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) in October 2011. The IRCDS has been organized according to the three Focus Areas identified in the Kit:

- workplace environment
- attraction and recruitment
- retention.

The actions, responsibilities timeframes and performance indicators that the Department has committed itself to under these three focus areas are set out in the table at Attachment A.

Purpose

The IRCDS outlines the means by which DFAT will recruit, retain and provide career development and progression opportunities for Indigenous employees, enabling us to meet the Australian Government’s ‘Closing the Gap’ Indigenous employment targets. These efforts form part of the department's workplace diversity program and are consistent with broader whole-of-government efforts to increase Indigenous representation within the Australian Public Service (APS). This strategy also outlines initiatives to promote awareness of, and respect for, Indigenous Australia within the Department. The strategy should be read in conjunction with DFAT’s Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2011-15 and Volume One of the Department's Human Resources Manual (chapters 2 and 12).
Roles

The Indigenous Taskforce (ITF) will oversee the implementation of the strategy. The Workplace Diversity Unit (WDU), in conjunction with Staffing Branch (SFB), will have responsibility for the coordination and implementation of activities associated with the strategy, and will provide regular updates to the ITF. The ITF will work closely with the Indigenous Employees’ Network (IEN) and the RAP Working Group – led by the Deputy Secretary-level Departmental Indigenous Champion - on the implementation of this strategy. The IEN will also provide advice and mentor Indigenous staff on career development issues and play an advocacy role on behalf of Indigenous employees in the ITF.

Focus Area 1: Workplace Environment

Supporting Indigenous employees

The Department acknowledges that Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people’s backgrounds and life experiences often differ from those of non-Indigenous employees. The Department is committed to supporting Indigenous employees achieve work life balance and making sure that all members of the Department understand the importance of Indigenous employees’ needs and expectations.

Respecting Culture

The Department demonstrates respect for Indigenous culture by:

- observing cultural protocols that recognize the position of Indigenous Australians as the traditional owners of the land
- recognizing cultural days of significance, and
- using inclusive language and avoiding terms that are offensive to Indigenous people.
Focus Area 2: Attraction and Recruitment

Selection practices

The department will seek to recruit suitably qualified Indigenous Australians through the Policy and Corporate Graduate Programs, APS-wide Indigenous employment programs and through general and specialist recruitment processes. The department will participate in APS-wide Indigenous employment programs, including, but not limited to:

- Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) Indigenous Cadetship Program (ICP)
- APSC Indigenous Graduate Program (IGP), and
- DEEWR Indigenous Australian Government Development Program (ITP).

The department will adopt the following strategies to foster the recruitment and retention of Indigenous employees:

- promoting vacancies through direct contact with Indigenous studies centres at Australian tertiary institutions and other educational institutions (i.e. High Schools, TAFE)
- advertising vacancies in Indigenous-specific media
- establishing a pool of Indigenous ‘contact officers’ for all vacancies advertised through Indigenous media and ensuring that contact details are provided to relevant managers of all advertised vacancies
- ensuring that DFAT promotional materials, including on the DFAT website, are up-to-date, Indigenous specific and appropriately target potential Indigenous applicants, and
- including Indigenous employee profiles on the DFAT website and in marketing campaigns.

Special Measures and Identified Positions

Special Measures provisions are only open to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander applicants. Identified Positions are used for positions that involve the development or delivery of policies, programs and services that involve the development or delivery of policies, programs and
services that impact on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and/or require interaction with Indigenous communities. It does not mean that this position has to be filled by an Indigenous Australian.

Focus Area 3: Retention

Induction

A thorough induction process is the first step in building a two-way relationship between the Department and the employee. In addition to the specific strategies set out below, the department will achieve this by:

- ensuring all new non-SES Training and Development initiatives are inclusive of targeted professional and personal development for Indigenous employees, specifically, the Leadership and Management Development Program and Professional Skills Development Program;
- ensuring all Indigenous recruits have career pathways in place within 12 months of commencement with the department
- assisting Indigenous employees to experience a diverse range of placements across the policy, trade, corporate and service delivery areas of the department
- developing a formal Indigenous Mentoring Program and establishing a pool of suitable, trained mentors across all areas of the department and at all levels, including SES, and
- matching Indigenous recruits with suitable, trained mentors and providing information on APS-wide learning and development opportunities.

Providing career and development opportunities

The Department is committed to identifying development needs and career aspirations for Indigenous employees. To this end, managers, through the performance management process, will fulfill their responsibility to provide frank feedback to Indigenous employees on promotion and postings prospects and advice on strategies, including through addressing training and development needs, to prepare for promotion and postings. Managers, in consultation with Staffing Branch (SFB) and Workplace Diversity Unit (WDU), will advise Indigenous staff on relevant
training and development opportunities. Where appropriate, the Staff Counselor will also provide advice to Indigenous staff on career development and work-related issues.

*Mentoring*

WDU, in conjunction with the IEN and Graduate Management and Administrative Trainees Section (GMA) (in the case of Indigenous graduates, cadets and trainees), will match Indigenous recruits with suitable, trained mentors across all levels and areas of the department.

*Staff Networks*

The Department recognises the IEN as representative of Indigenous employees. The IEN is a member of the ITF.
# Focus Area 1: Workplace Environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Measurable Target</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. DFAT’s IRCDS supports and complements the <em>Reconciliation Action Plan 2011-15</em> and broader Government objectives, including the 2.7% Commonwealth Indigenous employment target by 2015</td>
<td>Indigenous Taskforce RAP Working Group Workplace Diversity Unit</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Progress reported to Indigenous Taskforce and Departmental Executive annually</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Achievement of 2.7% employment target</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Agency Champion Identified</td>
<td>Workplace Diversity Unit Indigenous Employees Network</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Maintenance of Deputy Secretary-level Indigenous Champion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Promote agency support for flexible work practices (e.g. leave to attend funerals/community events; staff requests to attend IAPSEN activities)</td>
<td>Managers/supervisors Workplace Diversity Unit</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Incorporation of ceremonial leave entitlement in <em>Enterprise Agreement 2011-14</em> and Human Resources Manual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Develop and adopt protocol for Welcome to Country and Acknowledging traditional owners</td>
<td>RAP Working Group Indigenous Employees Network Workplace Diversity Unit</td>
<td>February 2012</td>
<td>Administrative Circular issued advising staff of protocol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Recognize cultural days of significance</td>
<td>Workplace Diversity Unit Indigenous Employee Network Public Diplomacy Branch</td>
<td>Annually every May-July</td>
<td>Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week celebrated</td>
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**Focus Area 2: Attraction and Recruitment.**

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<td>1. Tap into centralized recruitment programs run by the Australian Public Service Commission for trainees, cadets and graduates</td>
<td>Staffing Branch</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Graduates, cadets and trainees sourced through APS-wide programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Job advertisements written in easy-to-read, inclusive language and including the tag line ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are encouraged to apply’</td>
<td>Staffing Branch</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Increase in number of Indigenous applicants for positions All advertisements include the line ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are encouraged to apply’</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Advertise positions through Indigenous media, Indigenous support units, educational institutions and Indigenous networks</td>
<td>Staffing Branch</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Advertisements placed in Indigenous media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Selection panels for identified positions/designated positions to include at least one Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander representative or someone with experience in Indigenous issues</td>
<td>Staffing Branch</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Percentage of selection panels for identified/designated positions that have at least one Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Increase number of Indigenous staff in agency</td>
<td>Staffing Branch</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Successful annual recruitment (subject to available candidate numbers and suitability for engagement) of six Indigenous trainees, three Indigenous cadets and three Indigenous graduates</td>
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### Focus Area 3: Retention.

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<tr>
<td>1. Improve awareness among Indigenous employees of how the organization works through an induction program that includes orientation on agency-specific information, the APS context and performance management</td>
<td>Staffing Branch Managers/supervisors, Indigenous Employees Network, Workplace Diversity Unit</td>
<td>From engagement of new employee</td>
<td>Induction delivered to new Indigenous employees Participant feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Provide funding for staff to undertake learning and development qualification courses</td>
<td>All work units</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Number of Indigenous staff who undertake and successfully complete courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ensure the training and development needs of Indigenous employees are addressed</td>
<td>Staffing Branch, Workplace Diversity Unit</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>All new non-SES Training and Development initiatives inclusive of targeted professional and personal development for Indigenous employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Assist Indigenous employees to extend their experience through work in a range of policy/trade/corporate/service delivery areas</td>
<td>Staffing Branch, Workplace Diversity Unit</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Wide range of job roles identified for Indigenous employees All new recruits have career pathways in place within 12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Establish a formal mentoring program</td>
<td>Indigenous Employees Network, Workplace Diversity Unit</td>
<td>June 2012</td>
<td>Pool of suitable, trained mentors, including at the SES level and across different areas of the Department, matched with Indigenous employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Support Indigenous Employees Network</td>
<td>Indigenous Taskforce, Workplace Diversity Unit</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Indigenous Employees Network consulted on issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, including ‘Closing the Gap’ initiatives</td>
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