Developing an Aboriginal Employment Strategy

What an Aboriginal Employment Strategy is

An Aboriginal Employment Strategy (AES) is an integral plan for organisations to create sustainable employment opportunities for Aboriginal people plus retain, support and create career pathways for Aboriginal employees.

An AES makes good business sense and is a proactive approach for organisations to address job vacancies, skill shortages and respond to the diversity of their customers and communities. Employers who offer a culturally appropriate working environment are better placed to become ‘employers of choice’ for Aboriginal people.

An effective AES will also support the Commonwealth Government’s commitment to halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians by 2018.

Key components of an Aboriginal Employment Strategy

Organisations have the flexibility to design their own AES based on their business needs. This can be a stand-alone strategy or part of a broader workforce plan. When developing your AES, consultation with Aboriginal people is essential to ensure cultural knowledge and specific needs are addressed.

The key components of an effective AES may include, but are not limited to:

• strong commitment from management to provide a positive and culturally appropriate workplace;
• targeted recruitment processes for traineeships through to management roles;
• training and development opportunities;
• promotion of mentoring and support programs;
• provision of rewarding career pathways for Aboriginal employees; and
• inclusion of an action plan with timeframes and targets to drive the strategy.

1 The term ‘Aboriginal’ also covers Torres Strait Islander Australians.
Linking your AES to a Reconciliation Action Plan

A Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is a business plan that creates a pathway to building more respectful relationships between Aboriginal people and other Australians. The RAP supports initiatives that recognise, promote and celebrate Aboriginal culture.

An AES can be an effective tool to achieve the organisation’s RAP goals. These goals are built on a framework of relationships, respect and opportunities.

Further information about RAPs is available from Reconciliation Australia.

Useful resources

The AWDC’s How well do you understand the Aboriginal people you employ?
dtwd.wa.gov.au/awdc

The Public Sector Commission’s Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2011–2015

The Australian Public Service Commission’s Building an Indigenous Employment Strategy Kit
If you would like to know more, contact the Perth AWDC at:
• Level 7, GPO Building, 3 Forrest Place, Perth.
T: (08) 9224 6535 or freecall 1800 441 043
E: awdc@dtwd.wa.gov.au
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