



The NSW public sector Aboriginal  
employment strategy

# NSW Working together for a better future

2019–2025



Public  
Service  
Commission

# Artwork

Sharon Smith is an emerging artist and descendant of the Wiradjuri tribe of western New South Wales. Her paintings reflect her love of the natural world, and through her depictions of landscapes, trees and animals, she explores her own connection with the earth and her people's age-old relationship to it.

Sharon's statement about the cover art, 'Meeting of waters':

“ The three large circles in this painting represent the three rivers of the Wiradjuri country: the Murray, the Lachlan and the Murrumbidgee. The circles on the outside represent waterholes and the white dots are our people travelling up-river gathering food for our ancestors. The rivers were a means of survival and a continuation of life. ”



The NSW Public Service Commission wishes to advise that this document may contain names and images of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples who have passed away. It also contains links to sites that may also use images of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples who have passed away.

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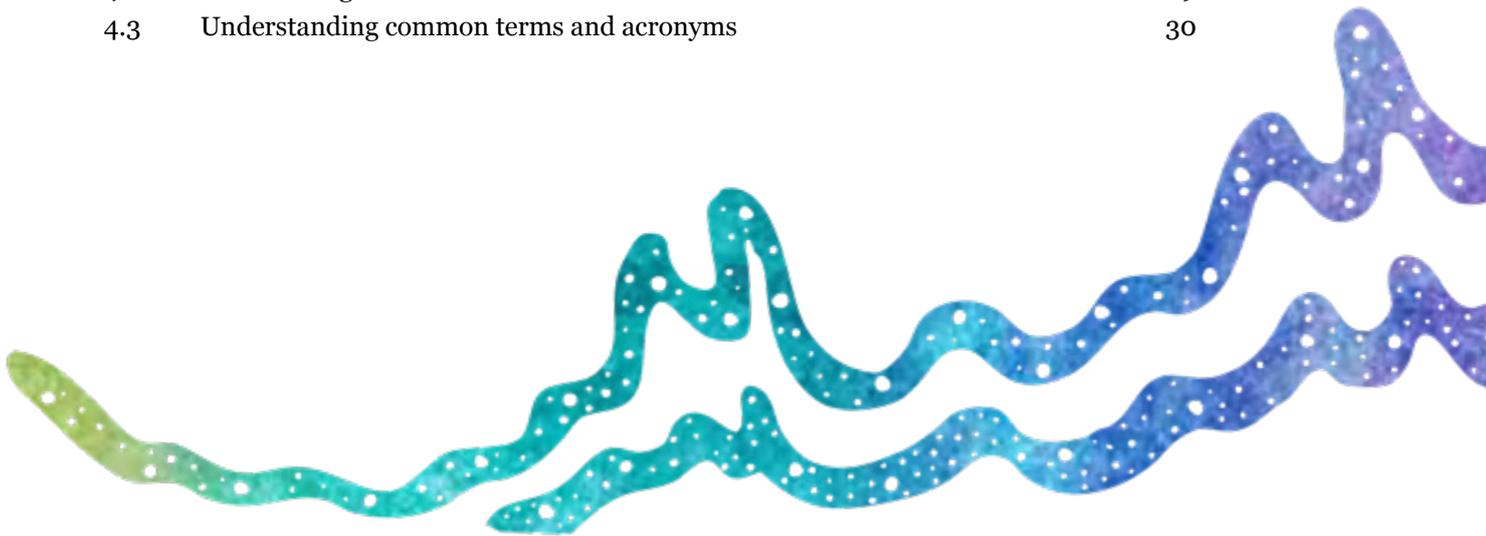
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# Message from the NSW Public Service Commissioner

I am delighted to release *NSW Working together for a better future*: the NSW Public Sector Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2019-2025. The strategy sets the direction and targets for improving the employment of Aboriginal peoples in the NSW public sector.

The strategy builds on the success of the 2014-2017 Aboriginal Employment Strategy, under which the proportion of the NSW public sector workforce identified as Aboriginal increased from 2.6% to 3.3% overall by 2018. An independent evaluation of the former strategy found that NSW is well progressed in its approach to employment and career development of Aboriginal staff.

However there is more to do and the 2019-2025 strategy is designed to take us as a sector to the next stage.

The new strategy takes a career pathway approach in that it sets an ambitious target of 3% Aboriginal employment at each grade of the public sector by 2025. This approach will support both the Premier's Priority of doubling the number of Aboriginal senior leaders from the 2014 baseline of 57 to 114 by 2025, and strives to create a talent pipeline to sustain growth in Aboriginal employment representation long after the strategy has come to term.

The strategy goes beyond employment targets and includes a focus on growing Aboriginal cultural competency for all employees across the sector.

I thank our Executive Sponsor, Brendan Thomas, and the many people who were interviewed or attended our co-design workshops for their valuable and insightful contributions.

I am proud to release a strategy that pushes us as a sector to be best in class when it comes to inclusive and diverse workforces, and I look forward to working together as a sector as we progress towards our targets.



**Emma Hogan**

*NSW Public Service Commissioner*

## Message from our Executive Sponsor

As Executive Sponsor, I am very excited about *NSW Working together for a better future: the NSW Public Sector Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2019-2025*. This strategy builds on the success so far but also sets new targets to make sure our people are getting full access to exciting and rewarding careers in the NSW public sector.

The strategy sets ambitious targets for Aboriginal representation at each grade in the public sector, and will make sure we create a positive and rewarding place to work by really strengthening the Aboriginal cultural capability in the sector, and building a strong and inclusive workforce. I'm excited about fundamentally changing the face of the NSW public sector, building real Aboriginal leadership, and designing and changing public services to improve the lives of our people.

**Brendan Thomas**

*Chief Executive Officer, Legal Aid*



# Acknowledgements

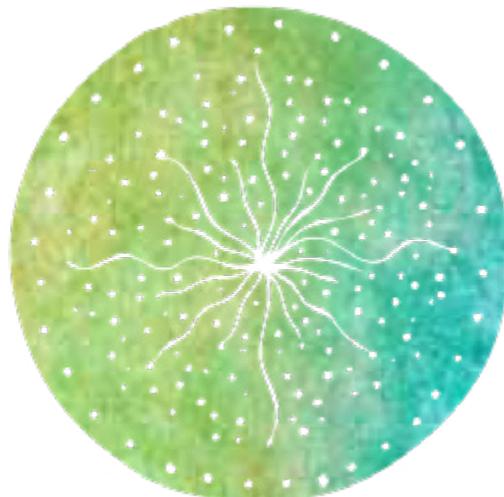
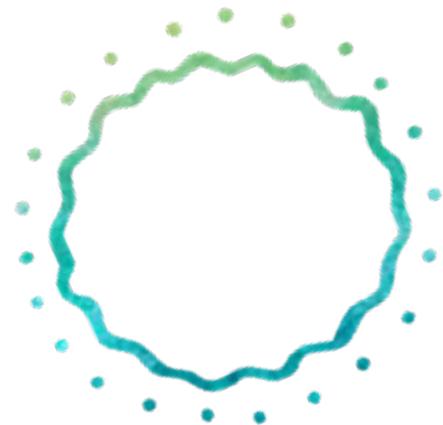
The NSW Public Service Commission recognises Aboriginal peoples at the traditional custodians of the lands now called NSW, where our agency is located, and we conduct our business. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders ancestors and Elders, both past and present.

There are hundreds of nations in Australia, and each one holds countless traditions and diverse experiences. Throughout this document 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:

- Brendan Thomas, Chief Executive Officer, Legal Aid
- Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal NSW public sector employees
- senior leaders in the NSW public sector, including department secretaries, deputy secretaries and agency heads
- Aboriginal Workforce Development Community of Practice members
- Aboriginal Employment Advisory Committee members.

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 all NSW public sector staff to further their knowledge of these rich, thriving cultures.





# Executive summary

## Our commitment

In 2015, the NSW Premier announced several key priorities for the State and committed a whole-of-government approach to them. Among them was the Premier's Diversity Priority to increase the number of women and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in senior leadership roles.

At the NSW Public Service Commission, we are committed to growing and developing public sector career paths for Aboriginal employees. We are committed to meet the Premier's Priority by enabling Aboriginal employees to:

- fill at least 114 NSW public sector senior leadership roles
- represent 3% of all staff in non-executive salary classes.

Our strategy will be a success if we can achieve these results by 2025.

## The strategy elements

Our strategy has 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.



## A collaborative approach

The NSW public sector has made significant progress on Aboriginal employment in recent years.

Our last strategy succeeded in growing Aboriginal staff representation and expanding career opportunities, particularly in regional NSW. But an independent evaluation of that strategy found room to improve, and we have used its findings to inform this strategy.

We also acknowledge the stakeholders from 28 NSW public sector agencies who helped us develop this strategy. This included key groups like the:

- Aboriginal Workforce Development Community of Practice
- Aboriginal Employment Advisory Committee.

The NSW Public Service Commission will play a key role in overseeing this strategy for the next six years. We are also responsible for its governance and reporting.

We recognise that this is a living document, and will consistently monitor our progress and seek best practice. We will conduct a mid-term review in 2022 to inform our approach for the final 3 years, whether that includes continuing our performance or piloting new initiatives.

## Supporting information

Our strategy compels NSW public sector agencies to show good practice in Aboriginal employment. It complements our efforts to make the NSW public sector a better place to work and aligns with other public sector reforms, including the:

- NSW Public Sector Capability Framework and Performance Development Framework
- NSW Government Aboriginal Affairs Policy.

The initiatives in this strategy will:

- allow the public sector to maximise the benefits of an inclusive and diverse workforce
- improve the customer experience and help us grow representation of the communities we serve.



# 1 Our commitment

The NSW Public Service Commission is strongly committed to growing and developing a talented and versatile Aboriginal workforce in the public sector.

Aboriginal peoples offer a wealth of life experiences, knowledge and skills. We value their significant contributions across the 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 increase 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 every Aboriginal person in NSW.

## 1.1 Achieving the Premier's Diversity Priority

Under the Premier's Priority, we aim to double the number of Aboriginal senior leaders in the NSW public sector from 57 (in 2014) to 114 by 2025.

We will create a talent pipeline for leadership roles and improve the distribution of Aboriginal employees across levels by having at least 3% Aboriginal representation in each non-executive salary classification by 2025.

This new target replaces the previous target of 1.8% Aboriginal representation in those classifications by 2021. It encourages departments and agencies to set their own targets to better reflect the diversity of the communities where they work.

## 1.2 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 supports 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.



### 1.3 Ensuring Aboriginal employees feel culturally safe

Our strategy aims to support positive workplaces for Aboriginal public sector employees in which they:

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

It also recognises the importance of providing trauma informed and culturally safe services, and supporting healing for Aboriginal peoples.

Our initiatives, which we detail on page 20, 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.

### 1.4 Understanding drivers and barriers to employment

The strategy does not identify or solve all of the issues that affect Aboriginal employment in the NSW public sector. 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.



## 2 The strategy elements

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

- represent 3% of all staff in non-executive salary classes
- work in a wider range of departments, agencies, regions and job types than in 2018
- fill at least 114 senior leadership roles in the NSW public sector
- 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 2018 levels, and express this in their survey responses.

We will also be successful if culturally capable and trauma informed workforce training completion rates are very high among all NSW public sector employees.

We will roll out this strategy progressively from 2019–2025.

### 2.1 Element 1: Building a pipeline of Aboriginal talent

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 the NSW public sector
- improve Aboriginal employees' experiences, 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.

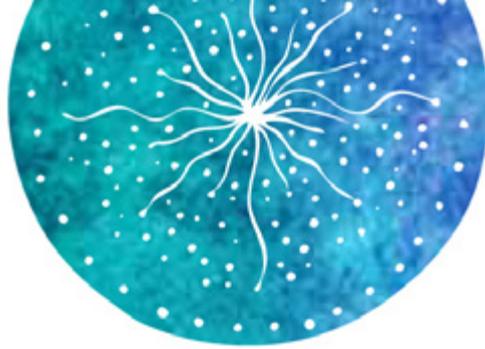
Once employees are in the pipeline, we will build on related public sector successes in retaining them and advancing their careers.

Our effective system for managing individual, team and organisational performance underpins our high-performance culture.

This element supports the NSW Performance Development Framework (see page 29 for more details), which aims to ensure that:

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

We outline key actions for this element below, including proactive initiatives from the NSW Public Sector Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2014–2017 evaluation.

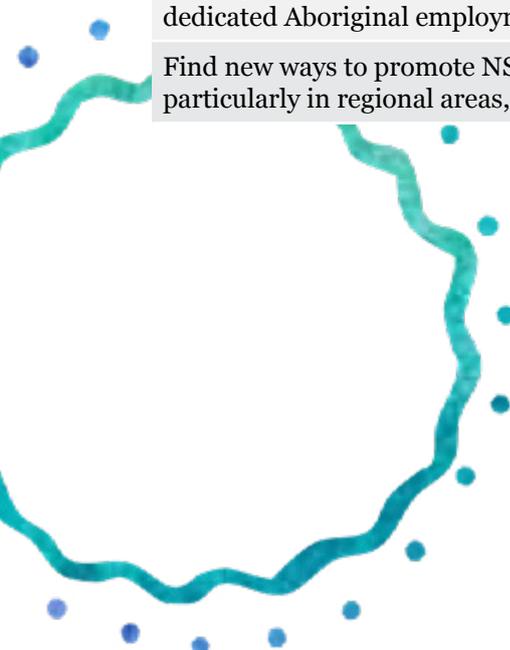


### ✔ 2.1.1 We will use resources to target recruitment across the sector

Tasks	Timing
Connect department and agency HR managers with Aboriginal recruitment services for specialised and bulk recruitment	From July 2019
Develop guidance on using Rule 26 of the <i>Government Sector Employment (General) Rules 2014</i> to target recruitment to Aboriginal peoples	From June 2020
Pilot a resource to guide departments and agencies on recruiting Aboriginal employees	By June 2020
Review this resource after its pilot and promote it across the sector	From June 2021

### ✔ 2.1.2 We will promote NSW public sector careers to Aboriginal peoples

Tasks	Timing
Pilot a program for Aboriginal high school students to learn about NSW public sector careers, modelled on the national Work Exposure in Government Program	By December 2020
Identify potential partner organisations that support Aboriginal students, such as the Aurora Education Foundation	By December 2020
Develop and relay the employee value proposition, including Aboriginal role models and success stories, to attract Aboriginal employees	Ongoing
Identify NSW Public Service Commission website improvements, including possible dedicated Aboriginal employment pages on <a href="http://iworkfor.nsw.gov.au">iworkfor.nsw.gov.au</a>	Ongoing
Find new ways to promote NSW public sector careers to Aboriginal peoples, particularly in regional areas, and implement these promotional activities	Ongoing



### ✔ 2.1.3 We will run Aboriginal-specific employment programs

Tasks	Timing
Develop a strategy to continue professional development for Aboriginal Employment and Development Program (AEDP) alumni	By December 2020
Run the AEDP annually	Ongoing
Collect and share good practice in Aboriginal-specific pre-employment programs from across the sector	Ongoing

### ✔ 2.1.4 We will expand internship and graduate programs

Tasks	Timing
Register as a CareerTrackers Indigenous Internship Program business partner	From July 2019
Work with departments and agencies to host more CareerTrackers interns	From September 2019
Help CareerTrackers interns progress into the NSW Government Graduate Program (see page 29) or department and agency roles	From January 2021
Increase Aboriginal graduates' participation in the annual Graduate Program	From July 2019
Negotiate with departments and agencies for more regional Graduate Program placements, and promote these to Aboriginal students	By June 2020
Form relationships with discipline- and industry-specific Aboriginal student programs in NSW universities to promote the Graduate Program	From July 2019
Encourage departments and agencies to host Aboriginal graduates	By June 2020

### ✔ 2.1.5 We will establish an Aboriginal Talent Management Team

This team will sit in the NSW Public Service Commission and work across the sector to identify high-potential Aboriginal employees. They will facilitate career development and leadership opportunities for employees they identify by:

- linking them to departments and agencies
- encouraging agencies to run structured sponsorship programs that pair employees with senior leaders.

Tasks	Timing
Do a scoping study and recommend a preferred model for the team	By January 2020
Prepare a business case for the team and gather resources	By March 2020
Establish the team, and develop and implement its work plan	By June 2020
Develop a central talent register of high-potential Aboriginal employees	From June 2020
Connect the team to departments and agencies to leverage opportunities for high-potential Aboriginal employees, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sourcing potential candidates for the talent register</li> <li>• placing Aboriginal Career and Leadership Development Program (ACLDP) alumni on the register</li> <li>• sourcing acting opportunities and secondments for people on the register</li> </ul>	From June 2020
Evaluate the team’s early results and recommend improvements based on findings	By June 2022

### ✔ 2.1.6 We will strengthen career mobility and flexibility

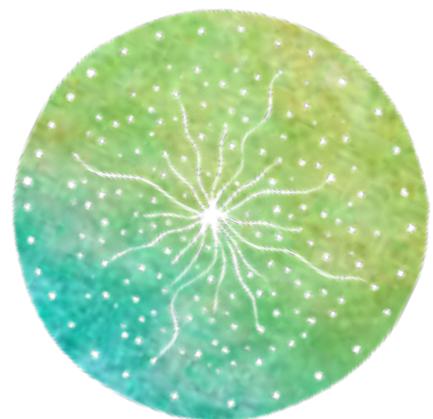
We support all Aboriginal employees, including those in identified roles (see page 30), to move between roles:

- across the NSW public sector
- and into the Australian Government, non-government and private sectors.

Tasks	Timing
Develop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a policy to support cross-sector career mobility for Aboriginal employees</li> <li>• an implementation guide with advice on how entitlements and benefits change with time away from the sector</li> </ul>	By June 2022
Support departments and agencies in following the policy, especially across departments and in regional areas	From June 2023

We will further support flexible work for Aboriginal employees, including the ability to work in regional areas. This means discussing different work options available to employees, regardless of why they are seeking it.

Tasks	Timing
Evaluate how flexible work policies and practices suit Aboriginal employees, including by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• helping them access career development and leadership roles in regional areas</li> <li>• acknowledging the importance of their connection to community and land.</li> </ul>	From December 2020



### ✔ 2.1.7 We will offer professional development for employees at grades 5/6 and 7/8

We will collaborate with a registered training organisation (RTO) on a sector-wide pipeline development program targeting Aboriginal employees at these grades.

Tasks	Timing
Work with the RTO to design the program	By December 2020
Recruit participants for pilot intake	From March 2021
Launch pilot	By June 2021
Evaluate its early outcomes and recommend improvements based on findings	By June 2023
Run the program annually	From June 2023

We will also ensure department and agency managers can use performance development and planning processes to support Aboriginal staff in their own professional development and career planning.

Tasks	Timing
Work with department and agency HR managers to enhance performance development planning, with a focus on retaining, career planning, mentoring and talent managing at these grades	From January 2020



✔ **2.1.8 We will support ACLDP participants to enter the NSW Leadership Academy**

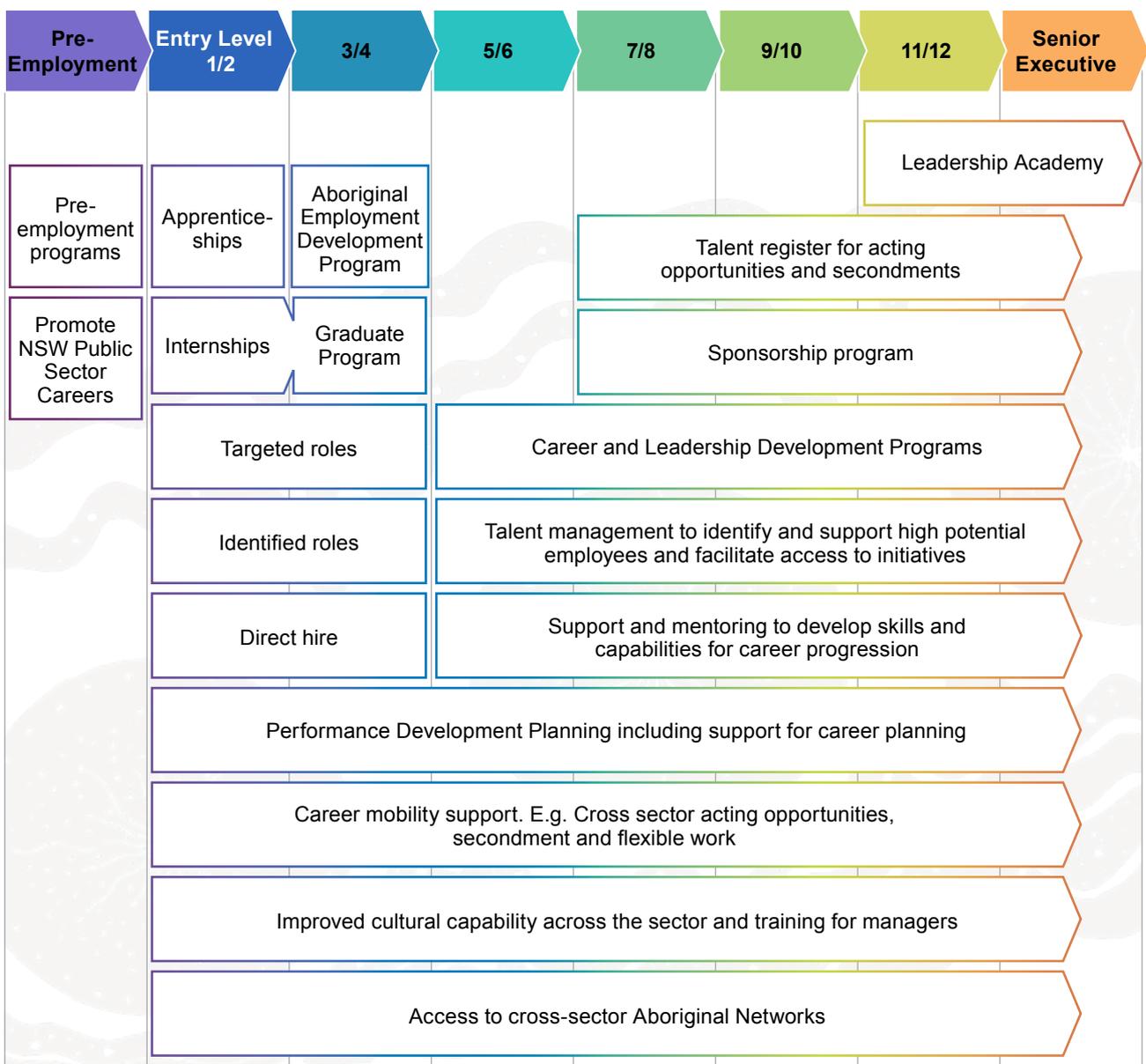
Tasks	Timing
<p>Review the ACLDP with the goal of increasing its contribution to Aboriginal talent pipeline. The program should prepare participants or alumni to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• transition to senior leadership roles</li> <li>• access leadership development courses like NSW Leadership Academy (see page 29) and the Executive Master of Public Administration.</li> </ul>	Ongoing





## The NSW Public Sector Aboriginal Talent Pipeline

This diagram shows how these initiatives will outline career paths for Aboriginal employees.





## 2.2 Element 2: Improving Aboriginal cultural capability across the sector

The second key strategy element aims to nurture workplaces:

- where Aboriginal employees feel culturally safe and secure, 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 the NSW public sector requires a coordinated effort to strengthen every employee’s cultural capability. By better understanding the

unique characteristics and specific needs of Aboriginal communities, organisations across the sector 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. We outline key actions under this element below.

### ✔ 2.2.1 We will deliver culturally capable and trauma informed workforce training

Sector wide culturally capable and trauma informed workforce training is the key initiative that will drive progress towards this goal. We will deliver this to all NSW public sector employees, and strongly encourage departments and agencies to enhance cultural capability in their organisations, such as through cultural immersion programs.

Tasks	Timing
Roll out this training across the NSW public sector to create workplaces that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are culturally safe for the sector’s Aboriginal workforce</li> <li>• are trauma informed</li> <li>• support Stolen Generations survivors, their families and communities</li> </ul>	From January 2020
Require all employees interested in Leadership Academy programs to complete this training before applying	From January 2020
Report evaluation findings in the ‘State of the NSW Public Sector’ report	From June 2020
Work with departments and agencies to build on this training with cultural capability development programs from non-government organisations or Aboriginal communities	Ongoing

### ✔ 2.2.2 We will offer professional development about Aboriginal cultural safety

Tasks	Timing
Work with sector HR staff and managers to identify professional development needs and teach them to manage Aboriginal cultural safety issues, including racism and lateral violence	From June 2020
Develop and deliver targeted professional development activities	From June 2020
Evaluate professional development activities and recommend improvements	By June 2024

### ✔ 2.2.3 We will promote significant Aboriginal events

Tasks	Timing
Tell departments and agencies about significant events and how they may recognise them. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Apology Anniversary</li> <li>• Close the Gap Day</li> <li>• NAIDOC Week</li> <li>• National Reconciliation Week</li> <li>• National Sorry Day</li> <li>• NSW Indigenous Veterans' Commemoration Service.</li> </ul>	Ongoing

### ✔ 2.2.4 We will support cross-sector Aboriginal Networks at all levels

Tasks	Timing
Develop terms of reference for the Aboriginal Senior Executive Network	By February 2021
Ask department and agency senior leaders to nominate senior executives	By March 2021
Organise quarterly Aboriginal Senior Executive Network meetings	Until June 2025
Organise peer networking events, including events for Aboriginal employees in regional areas, and ACLDP and AEDP alumni. Tell Aboriginal employees about them well in advance.	Ongoing
Make department and agency managers aware of the importance of Aboriginal peer networking events so they support staff attendance	Ongoing

### 2.3 Element 3: Knowing our Aboriginal workforce and planning for results

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 find.

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 2018 levels.

We outline key actions under this element below.

#### ☑ 2.3.1 We will support Aboriginal employment groups

This includes:

- creating an Aboriginal Champions of Change Network
- supporting the Aboriginal Workforce Development Community of Practice
- supporting the Aboriginal Employment Advisory Committee.

Tasks	Timing
Develop terms of reference for a Champions of Change Network with a focus on increasing cultural capability and safety across the sector	By December 2020
Ask department and agency senior leaders to nominate champions	By February 2021
Organise quarterly Champions of Change meetings	Until June 2025
Act as secretariat for quarterly cross-sector Aboriginal Employment Advisory Committee and Aboriginal Workforce Development Community of Practice meetings. Share successes, trends and issues at these meetings.	Ongoing



### ✔ 2.3.2 We will add a new research focus

To build a true Aboriginal talent pipeline, we must understand:

- why Aboriginal peoples choose to join or not join the NSW public sector
- barriers to Aboriginal recruitment, including the impact of criminal record checks
- what factors affect their decision to stay or leave
- how departmental restructures impact Aboriginal staff retention
- the supports needed to fulfill their career goals.

Tasks	Timing
Set aside resources so NSW Public Service Commission can research key issues affecting Aboriginal employment in the NSW public sector, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the topics listed above</li> <li>• positive and negative aspects of targeted employment actions.</li> </ul>	From July 2020
Work with Aboriginal employees to co-design solutions to issues that affect their employment, and recommend initiatives and required resources to the Public Service Commissioner	Ongoing

### ✔ 2.3.3 We will create a new reporting model and better report results online

Tasks	Timing
Review comparable websites in other jurisdictions to identify potential improvements	By December 2019
Develop and launch improved reports for strategy results and outcomes online	By June 2020
Contribute to the following reports on the Premier's Priority: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• regular reports to the Secretaries Board</li> <li>• a biannual report to the Premier's Implementation Unit</li> </ul>	Ongoing
Give: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an annual strategy progress report to the Secretaries Board</li> <li>• feedback to the Deputy Secretaries and Human Resources Directors groups</li> </ul>	Ongoing

## 3 A collaborative approach

### 3.1 Building on past success

The strategy builds on the 2014–2017 NSW Public Sector Aboriginal Employment Strategy’s success in growing Aboriginal employment in the public sector. It incorporates 3 key recommendations from its evaluation, which informed the elements of this strategy.

To achieve our goals, we have included several new initiatives in this strategy, which we detail in section 2.

#### NSW is an example of leading practice but can still improve

The NSW public sector has made significant progress in Aboriginal employment in recent years. An independent evaluation of our last strategy showed that NSW is an example of leading practice in its approach to Aboriginal public sector employment and career development compared to other Australian jurisdictions.

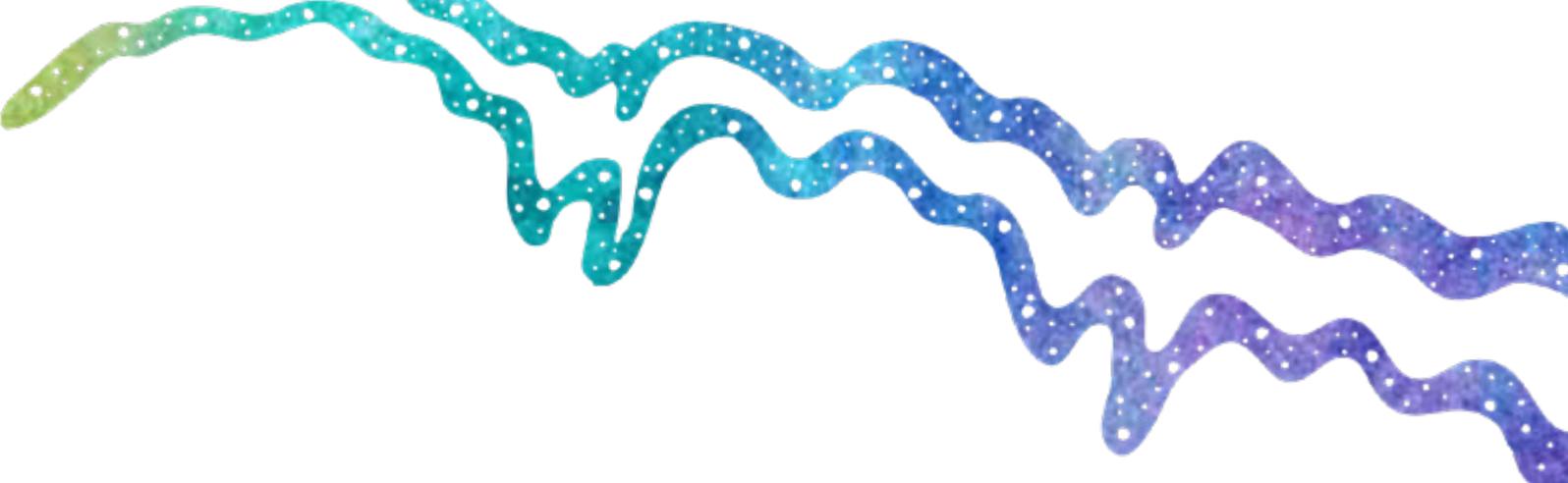
Achievements	
	Aboriginal staff representation grew from 2.8% in 2014 to 3.2% in 2017.
	The proportion of Aboriginal staff was more than 1.8% in 6 of the 8 non-executive salary classes (classes 1 to 6).
	Over 60% of Aboriginal staff work in regional NSW.

But the evaluation also showed that there is still more work to do.

Areas to improve	
	Aboriginal staff had the highest of representation in lower salary classes, but were under-represented in higher ones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The salary class with most Aboriginal staff (9.3%) was class 1 (\$0–\$45,000)</li> <li>• The salary classification with the least Aboriginal staff (1.2%) was class 7 (&gt;\$137,557, excluding public sector senior executives)</li> </ul>
	Across the NSW public sector, the separation rate for Aboriginal staff (8.1%) was higher than for non-Aboriginal staff (7%).
	Aboriginal staff were less likely than non-Aboriginal staff to agree that their organisation supports cultural respect and understanding.

#### We can help departments and agencies take a consistent approach

The evaluation also found that while the NSW public sector is committed to improving Aboriginal employment, agencies’ approaches to attraction, retention, career development and building cultural capability are inconsistent and vary in quality.



As a result, all departments and agencies must make a coordinated, consistent and sustained effort to:

- increase Aboriginal employment across all roles and salary classes
- establish clearer paths into senior management and executive roles for Aboriginal employees.

We are committed to supporting their efforts, which will ensure Aboriginal peoples in NSW have the opportunities, skills and supports to realise their potential and career aspirations. This will also allow the public sector to maximise the benefits of a truly diverse and inclusive workforce.

### 3.2 Designing and evaluating this strategy

#### **We co-designed this strategy with key stakeholders**

We developed this strategy using a co-design process with key stakeholders from 28 agencies. This process included 7 co-design workshops with 72 Aboriginal employees in the NSW public sector, including:

- Aboriginal Workforce Development Community of Practice members
- Aboriginal Employment Advisory Committee members
- department and agency representatives.

We also did 15 interviews with 25 participants in the latter group, including secretaries and deputy secretaries.

We further informed the strategy by reviewing a discussion paper on international best practice career development and leadership for Aboriginal peoples and other diversity groups.

#### **We will review our progress midway**

We will monitor this strategy regularly from 2019–2025. This will involve engaging key stakeholders, especially Aboriginal employees, in designing, implementing and evaluating actions under the strategy.

To track our work, we will formally review the strategy in 2022. We will assess our progress on how well the NSW public sector follows its tasks and achieves the outcomes on page 6. Feedback from the People Matter Employee Survey outlined on page 29 will further help us identify successes and areas for improvement.

When the strategy ends in December 2025, we will contract an independent evaluation to measure results against our priorities and outcomes. The strategy will be a success if:

- cultural capability is ingrained in public sector organisations
- our policies and services deliver better outcomes for Aboriginal peoples.

### 3.3 Working with other agencies

At the NSW Public Service Commission, we influence, advocate for, and raise the prominence of Aboriginal employment and leadership by working with departments and agencies, the community and prospective employees.

We will help departments and agencies implement this strategy to improve their Aboriginal employment outcomes. This includes working with:

- regions and local decision-making structures to find and facilitate regional Aboriginal workforce development opportunities
- the Australian Public Service Commission and other organisations to develop and progress Aboriginal employees' careers.

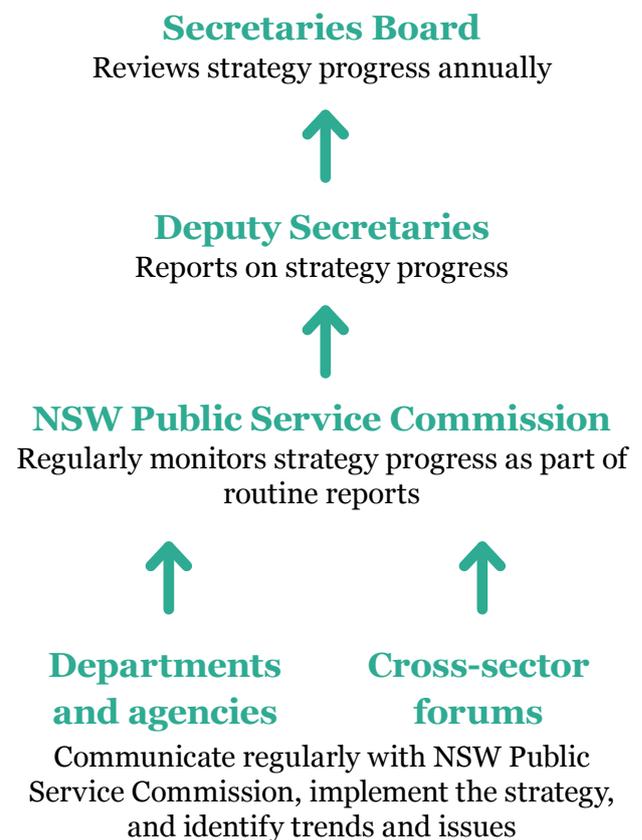
We will support groups across the NSW public sector by:

- urging them to develop culturally safe and capable workplaces
- promoting recruitment and retention good practice
- advising them how to meet their goals
- giving them chances to share lessons and success stories
- helping them build on their success and maintain momentum.

### Our role includes governance and reporting

Along with developing and managing the Aboriginal talent pipeline, we have primary responsibility for the strategy's oversight, governance and reporting.

The key governance mechanism is the following reporting model:



This model holds senior executives accountable for implementing the strategy and identifies any trends or issues for secretaries and agency heads.

Cross-sector forums will be with the following groups:

- Human Resources Directors group
- the Aboriginal Champions of Change Network
- the Aboriginal Employment Advisory Committee
- the Aboriginal Senior Executive Network
- the Aboriginal Workforce Development Community of Practice.

### **Department and agency heads can integrate diversity in workforce planning**

Section 63 of the *Government Sector Employment Act 2013* outlines the role of department and agency heads to integrate workforce diversity in workforce planning. Their leadership and support is critical to achieving both this strategy's goals and the Premier's Priority.

They can promote positive and productive workplaces by:

- starting conversations and creating momentum in their organisations
- supporting anti-bias and discrimination training
- enforcing a zero tolerance policy for racism and bullying.

They can also contribute to NSW's position as a leader in Aboriginal employment by:

- using workforce profile data and employee survey results to set realistic goals for Aboriginal employee representation
- embedding these goals in workforce strategies
- making progress toward them using our Aboriginal Workforce Development team's business partnerships and resources
- including Aboriginal employment results in regular HR reports to executives
- supporting the creation of agency-level Aboriginal staff Networks
- empowering HR teams to be innovative when responding to issues that affect Aboriginal employment outcomes.

These leaders can cement the sector's commitment to growing a talented Aboriginal workforce by:

- discussing the importance of improving Aboriginal employment outcomes
- embracing innovative employment approaches
- identifying, understanding and responding to unique issues regional Aboriginal employees may experience
- forging stronger relationships with and better understanding local communities and cultures
- recruiting from communities they work in and creating local talent pipelines.

Department and agency heads may also consider creating their own Reconciliation Action Plans.

## 4 Supporting information

### 4.1 Intersecting with other public sector reforms

#### The talent pipeline is in line with two NSW frameworks

The NSW Public Sector Capability Framework provides a common foundation for creating roles, recruiting, managing performance, developing capability, career planning and, more broadly, workforce planning. It describes the capabilities and behaviours the sector expects of all its employees. Capabilities include the knowledge, skills and abilities that public sector employees must show to effectively perform their roles.

The NSW Performance Development Framework contains key elements of and required guidelines for agency performance development systems. It sets the approach for managing all parts of employee performance, such as creating individual development plans based on the:

- capabilities required for each role
- employee's existing capabilities
- employee's performance objectives and career goals.

#### Our strategy complements the NSW Government Aboriginal Affairs Policy

The NSW Government Aboriginal Affairs Policy aims to empower Aboriginal leaders and communities economically and help them drive their own solutions. It also identifies the NSW public sector as a contributor through good practice in Aboriginal employment.

This strategy complements this policy by focusing on Aboriginal workforce development, including career development, progression and central talent management. It also outlines our role to work with regions and local decision-making models to find and facilitate regional Aboriginal workforce development opportunities.

#### We support diversity and inclusion and flexible work

We support initiatives that address diversity and inclusion, such as 'Addressing unconscious bias in recruitment and promotion', a guide from the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet's Behavioural Insights Unit. The paper is an invaluable resource for reducing bias in recruitment, retention and promotion, and suggests:

- alternate outreach options for attracting staff
- restructured assessments
- new decision-making methods.

We also follow the Make Flexibility Count framework, which rethinks where, when and how work can be done while delivering the same or better services for NSW. This does not mean every role or every employee can or must work flexibly, but it does mean they can discuss available options.



## 4.2 Contributing NSW Public Service Commission initiatives

### We manage recruitment and professional development

We introduced NSW Public Service Recruitment Pools to recruit for common roles. By submitting one application, candidates can be considered for many roles across multiple public service agencies.

Along with the ACLDP and AEDP, we also manage two other professional development programs:

- the NSW Government Graduate Program
- the NSW Leadership Academy.

The Graduate Program focuses on exposing graduates to a broad range of projects and work by rotating them through different NSW agencies to provide a whole-of-government experience.

The Leadership Academy includes several programs designed to create a pipeline of future sector leaders at each key level. It promotes public sector excellence by boosting the skills and capabilities of current and emerging leaders.

Each Leadership Academy program targets the specific capabilities the next level of leadership requires. They use international best practice from public and private sectors, and offer custom support to maximise participants' development.

### We use surveys to collect and report data

The NSW People Matter Employee Survey is open to all of our almost 400,000 NSW public sector employees each year. The online tool gives them a say about their workplace and making the public sector a better place to work.

The Workforce Profile report has been produced and published each year since 1999, as a companion to the 'State of the NSW Public Sector' report. It includes the whole sector's:

<b>Demographic information</b>	age, gender and diversity group
<b>Employment information</b>	hours worked, leave patterns, remuneration and sector mobility

### We produce guides to the government's ethical framework

The *Government Sector Employment Act 2013* legally requires all government sector employees to act ethically and in the public interest. Part 2 of the Act details the 4 government sector core values and 18 implementation principles.

To help employees better understand these obligations, we produce 'Behaving Ethically: A guide for NSW government sector employees'.

We also produce the 'Positive and Productive Workplaces Guide' to help NSW government sector agencies, their leaders and their employees prevent, identify and respond to workplace bullying.

### We publish information on our website

Further details on our initiatives are available at [www.psc.nsw.gov.au](http://www.psc.nsw.gov.au)



### 4.3 Understanding common terms and acronyms

<b>Aboriginal</b>	In this document Aboriginal includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
<b>ACLDP</b>	Aboriginal Career and Leadership Development Program
<b>AEDP</b>	Aboriginal Employment and Development Program
<b>career mobility</b>	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.
<b>Community of Practice</b>	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.
<b>identified roles</b>	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.
<b>secondments</b>	The temporary transfer of employees between departments and agencies or other organisations.
<b>senior leader</b>	Under the Premier's Priority, these are non-casual government sector employees whose salary equals or exceeds senior officer grade 1 (\$161,707 for the 2019 financial year). Senior leaders exclude: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• specialist or technical health roles with no leadership or managerial duties</li> <li>• statutory or institutional justice roles, such as judges, magistrates and barristers.</li> </ul>
<b>Stolen Generations</b>	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. (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2018, <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over</i> , <a href="https://aiatsis.gov.au/research/finding-your-family/before-you-start/stolen-generations">https://aiatsis.gov.au/research/finding-your-family/before-you-start/stolen-generations</a> )
<b>trauma informed</b>	Recognising the prevalence and pervasive impact of trauma and developing sensitive or responsive services.
<b>workforce planning</b>	An ongoing strategic process that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• aligns organisations' staff requirements to their business objectives</li> <li>• considers the future business environment and identifies the expected future demand for certain skills and capabilities.</li> </ul>





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