



Australian Government
**National Health and
Medical Research Council**

N H M R C

INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

February 2011

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FROM THE CEO

As the Chief Executive Officer of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), I am pleased to present to you the NHMRC's Indigenous Employment Strategy (IES).

As an agency, the NHMRC is working to overcome the disparity between non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health in Australia. Additionally the NHMRC has an ongoing commitment to diversity in the workplace as articulated in our Workplace Diversity Plan.

Under the *National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation* the Government has determined it will increase Indigenous employment in the Commonwealth public sector to 2.7 per cent by 2015. Achieving this target will require significant effort and commitment from APS agencies. The NHMRC is committed to the challenge of increasing our Indigenous employment levels and our aim is to be an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The purpose of this IES is to assist the NHMRC to implement culturally aware, best practice methods of attraction, recruitment and retention. This will ensure that we get the best people for our jobs and reflect our goal of an open and inclusive workforce that is reflective of Australian society.

This strategy will be managed by the Indigenous Employment Coordinator, in conjunction with the Executive and I have appointed an Agency Champion to ensure that the IES remains high on our agenda. The IES will be reviewed annually and the outcomes and achievements against it reported to me.

I encourage all of you to make yourselves familiar with the IES and through your support for this strategy, contribute to making it a success.

Warwick Anderson
Chief Executive Officer
National Health and Medical Research Council

16 February 2011

INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

Strategy	Initiative	Action	Reporting mechanism	Responsibility
Attraction – ensuring the NHMRC is an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people				
Improve the marketing of NHMRC vacancies to Indigenous communities to increase the number of Indigenous applicants	Advertise relevant positions in appropriate media	Promote advertising avenues to selection panels and monitor compliance	Data about number of Indigenous applicants reported to Director Human Resources six-monthly	Human Resources, Director Human Resources, selection panel chair
	Advertise all positions to the Indigenous APS Employees Network (IAPSEN)	All NHMRC vacancies e-mailed to IAPSEN for dissemination	N/A	Human Resources
	Develop an Indigenous employment section on the NHMRC's internet site	Website to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> message from the CEO this strategy tools to assist applicants contact information to enable assistance from Indigenous support staff 	N/A	Indigenous Employment Coordinator
	Advertise positions using clear, easy to understand, inclusive, culturally appropriate language	All advertisements are developed using these criteria	N/A	Human Resources, selection panel chair
		Include the tag line 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are encouraged to apply' on all advertisements	N/A	Human Resources
		'Special Measures' and Identified Positions are used when appropriate	Data about number of times Special Measures or Identified Positions are used is reported to Director Human Resources six-	Indigenous Employment Coordinator, selection panel chair

Strategy	Initiative	Action	Reporting mechanism	Responsibility
			monthly	
Recruitment and Selection – ensuring the NHMRC utilises culturally appropriate best practice recruitment and selection methods				
Provide the best possible experience to Indigenous applicants	Indigenous applicants are provided with assistance throughout the application process	Contact officers provide candidates with the option to discuss working at the NHMRC with a current Indigenous employee	N/A	Human Resources, contact officers, Indigenous employees
		Ensure selection panels are briefed in appropriate recruitment practices, including 'reasonable adjustment'	N/A	Human Resources, selection panel chair
		Indigenous employment section of the internet to include APSC information about applying for jobs in the APS	N/A	Indigenous Employment Coordinator
		All applicant kits advise that there is an Indigenous Employment Coordinator available to talk through the application process with Indigenous applicants	N/A	Human Resources, Indigenous Employment Coordinator
Ensure selection panels have culturally appropriate expertise	Selection panels include appropriate members	Selection panels that assess Indigenous applicants will include an Indigenous person. As a transitional arrangement for the first 18 months of this strategy, where no Indigenous panel member is available, any panel that assesses Indigenous applicants will include a member that has completed cultural	N/A	Human Resources, selection panel chair

Strategy	Initiative	Action	Reporting mechanism	Responsibility
		awareness training		
	Selection panels are supportive of Indigenous applicants in the interview process	Adequate advice about the interview process provided to applicants to enable them to prepare for the interview	N/A	Selection panel chair, contact officer, Indigenous Employment Coordinator
		All Indigenous applicants are advised they can bring a support person to the interview	N/A	Selection panel chair, contact officer, Indigenous Employment Coordinator
Improve the capability of the NHMRC to work with and for Indigenous communities	All positions which require knowledge of, or communication with, Indigenous communities are recruited using <i>identified criteria</i>	Identify positions that require knowledge of, or communication with, Indigenous communities, and use <i>identified criteria</i> when recruiting for these positions	N/A	Directors, Human Resources, Indigenous Employment Coordinator, selection panels
Retention – ensuring that work environment at the NHMRC is supportive of Indigenous employees				
Ensure successful implementation of this Indigenous Employment Strategy (IES)	High level commitment provided to support the IES initiatives	Appoint a senior manager as an Agency Champion for the IES who will support the IES both internally and externally and report (six-monthly) to the Executive	Executive meetings	Agency Champion, Executive
		Identify and appoint an Indigenous Employment Coordinator	N/A	Human Resources
Know who our Indigenous employees are	Workplace diversity data is accurate and up to date	Employees are regularly reminded to update their workplace diversity information in ESS	HR reports	Human Resources
Value Indigenous employees	All employees are encouraged to develop their work skills and contribute to their maximum potential	Participation by all employees in the NHMRC's Performance Development Scheme (PDS)	A report is provided to the Executive at the end of each PDS cycle advising of participation levels and overall outcomes	Human Resources, the Executive, all employees

Strategy	Initiative	Action	Reporting mechanism	Responsibility
	Employees feel supported to participate in the workplace and offer creative and innovative ideas and solutions	Provide opportunities for employees to reflect their individual diverse backgrounds when providing input to policies, programs and services	Staff survey results	Human Resources
	Improve awareness among Indigenous employees about how the NHMRC works, including awareness of employee responsibility	Participation by all new starters in induction training	Annual report	Human Resources
	Employees leaving the NHMRC provide information about their experience working here	Exit surveys to include option to identify as Indigenous, and reasons for leaving related to cultural background are reported to Director Human Resources	Report to Director Human Resources	Indigenous Employment Coordinator, Indigenous employees
Provide career and development opportunities for Indigenous employees	Performance agreements include learning and development and career plans	Participation by all employees in the learning and development and career development components of the PDS		All employees
	External learning and development and career development opportunities are made available to Indigenous employees	Information about the APSC's <i>Career Trek</i> program is circulated to all eligible Indigenous employees and attendance supported to the best extent possible	N/A	Human Resources, supervisors, Indigenous employees
		Information about the APSC's <i>Indigenous Scholarship Program</i> is circulated to eligible Indigenous employees and enrolment supported to the best extent possible	N/A	Human Resources, supervisors, Indigenous employees
		An Indigenous employee is supported to attend the	Report to the Executive by the conference attendee	Human Resources

Strategy	Initiative	Action	Reporting mechanism	Responsibility
		annual APSC <i>Indigenous APS Employees Conference</i>		
	Study assistance is available with support measures	Indigenous employees are encouraged to access the Study Assistance Scheme to undertake either secondary or tertiary studies	N/A	Supervisors, Human Resources, Indigenous Employment Coordinator
		Additional study time for Indigenous employees is available and where requested, approved, under the Study Assistance Scheme	N/A	Supervisors, Study Assistance Scheme delegates
Support Indigenous employees at work	Indigenous APS-wide networks (eg IAPSEN) are made available and promoted to employees	Networks are promoted to Indigenous employees and are available on the Intranet	N/A	Human Resources
		Indigenous employees are encouraged, and released, to attend Indigenous network meetings or activities to the best extent possible	N/A	Supervisors
		Creation of an internal NHMRC network which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consults on relevant workplace matters • provides support, and • advises on organising occasional social 'events' for all NHMRC staff (eg NAIDOC activities) 		
	Intranet is kept up to date with a range of Indigenous information and activities and	All employees are kept updated about Indigenous intranet changes and notified	N/A	Human Resources

Strategy	Initiative	Action	Reporting mechanism	Responsibility
	employees are encouraged to participate in events	of upcoming events and activities		
	Indigenous counsellor is available through the EAP	Indigenous employees are offered access to an Indigenous counsellor through the EAP	N/A	Supervisors, Human Resources, Indigenous Employment Coordinator
	Enterprise Agreement supports leave for Indigenous cultural purposes	Delegates and Indigenous employees are aware of leave entitlements and utilise them as necessary	N/A	Supervisors, Indigenous employees
	Flexible working arrangements are available to support employee work/life balance	Advice about flexible working arrangements is available to all employees on the Intranet and from Human Resources	Staff survey results	Human Resources
		Manager and supervisors are encouraged to support employees to manage their work/life balance, utilising flexible work arrangements where appropriate	Staff survey results	Human Resources
Provide a safe working environment for employees that is free from harassment, discrimination and bullying	Employees are supported to identify and report harassment, discrimination, bullying or insensitive work practices appropriately	Assistant Director, Human Resources will report significant incidents related to diversity, as notified either by Workplace Harassment Contact Officer, or directly to Human Resources, at the Health and Safety Committee (HSC) meeting	Health and Safety Committee meetings	Assistant Director Human Resources, Workplace Harassment Contact Officers, Human Resources, all Managers and Supervisors
		Employees are encouraged to be involved in making sure their workplace is safe for everyone	N/A	All employees, Managers and supervisors
	Bullying and Harassment training is made available	Mandatory Bullying and Harassment training provided to all new starters within one	Report to Director Human Resources	Learning and Development Coordinator

Strategy	Initiative	Action	Reporting mechanism	Responsibility
		year of commencement Mandatory Bullying and Harassment refresher training provided on a biennial basis to all other employees	Report to Director Human Resources	Learning and Development Coordinator
Encourage respect for Indigenous culture	Increase the profile and understanding of Indigenous culture within the NHMRC	Develop and adopt a protocol for <i>Welcome to Country</i> and <i>Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners</i>	N/A	Human Resources (development), all staff (adoption)
		Budget for and arrange recognition and promotion of days of cultural significance (eg Sorry Day, NAIDOC week)	N/A	Human Resources
		Place plaques acknowledging traditional owners in NHMRC buildings	N/A	Human Resources (wording), Property Services (placement)
		Develop procedures for obtaining permission from family members before using or displaying photographs of deceased Indigenous people	N/A	Strategic Communications
		Develop appropriate wording for displaying photographs of deceased Indigenous people.	N/A	Strategic Communications
	Provide training about Indigenous culture and history to all employees	Regularly promote the <i>Share Our Pride</i> website	N/A	Human Resources
		Make cultural awareness training mandatory for all staff	N/A	Learning and Development Coordinator

USEFUL RESOURCES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Agency Champion – a senior employee appointed by the CEO to champion the IES to employees as well as ensure the IES remains high on the agenda of the Executive.

Australian Public Service Commission resources – these include the document *Building an Indigenous Employment Strategy: A starter kit for APS agencies*, the APS Indigenous Employment section of their website, and the Indigenous APS Employees Network. All of these resources are available from www.apsc.gov.au.

Indigenous – when used in this document this term refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Indigenous Employment Coordinator – this is the Assistant Director Human Resources who can be contacted by telephone on (02) 6217 9291 or e-mailing human.resources@nhmrc.gov.au

Identified Criteria – used when recruiting to roles that have an Indigenous focus. For a detailed explanation of the criteria visit the Australian Public Service Commission’s website (www.apsc.gov.au) and view *Circular 2010/4: Revision of Special Measures and Identified Positions/Criteria provisions*.

Special Measures – used when recruiting Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people only. For a detailed explanation of this criteria visit the Australian Public Service Commission’s website (www.apsc.gov.au) and view *Circular 2010/4: Revision of Special Measures and Identified Positions/Criteria provisions*.