

Culture Strong, Career Proud

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Employment Strategy**

2008–2010





Renae Turvey (seated) and Djuripin Chalker from Central TAFE Leederville Campus.

Cover photo: Graduate AIEOs from the Bachelor of Education Conversion Course at Curtin University 2007.

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From the Director General

Culture Strong, Career Proud is the Department of Education and Training *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2008-2010*. It covers all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees of the Department of Education and Training and TAFEWA Colleges.

The strategy is a specific commitment within the Department's *Equity and Diversity Management Plan 2007-2010* to increase the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the workforce. Our aim is to achieve maximum workforce diversity, reflecting that in the broader Western Australian community.

Currently, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are under represented in the workforce. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, most of who are enrolled in public schools and colleges, also achieve lower outcomes than non-Aboriginal students.

Culture Strong, Career Proud will help us to match or exceed the public sector target of more than three per cent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff by 2010. It will also help to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are represented in growing numbers at all levels across the full range of occupations, particularly in teaching, leadership and management positions.

Culture Strong, Career Proud outlines the commitment of the Department and TAFEWA Colleges to the three key focus areas of activity:

Focus Area 1 – Recruitment and retention

Focus Area 2 – A supportive work environment

Focus Area 3 – Career pathways

Over the next three years, we will build on established partnerships with the community to help us deliver the Strategy. **Culture Strong, Career Proud** is supported at a broader level by our *Equity and Diversity Management Plan 2007-2010* which commits us to creating, developing and encouraging a more equitable workplace for all diversity groups.

Specific Action Plans will be developed each year to facilitate implementation of the Strategy over the agreed timeframe. The Department and TAFEWA colleges will develop an annual Action Plan to highlight initiatives over each year of the Strategy.

An *Action Plan 2008* has been produced to highlight initiatives over the first year.

Staff in executive, leadership and management positions in the Department and TAFEWA Colleges will have direct responsibility for implementing the Strategy. The support of all employees will be critical to its success.

Working together, we can achieve positive employment and educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students.



Sharyn O'Neill
Director General

June 2008

VISION

The vision of the Department of Education and Training and TAFEWA colleges is to build the presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders across all job types and levels as educators, trainers, leaders, administrators and support staff. This will enable the Department to shape and respond professionally to the social and cultural context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners.

FOCUS AREAS

Focus Area 1

Recruitment and retention

To increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders employed by the Department and TAFEWA colleges at all levels and occupations in the workforce.

Focus Area 2

A supportive work environment

To create a work environment that welcomes, supports and recognises the skills and experiences that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees bring to the workplace.

Focus Area 3

Career pathways

To provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders with access to information about career pathways and opportunities for professional and career development.

STAKEHOLDERS

The key stakeholders of this Strategy are:

- the Minister for Education and Training
- all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Western Australia
- existing and potential Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees of the Department and TAFEWA colleges
- school and college leaders, line managers and employees
- Post-compulsory and higher education institutions;and
- the wider Western Australian community.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Director General of the Department and Governing Councils of all TAFEWA colleges are accountable to the Minister for Education and Training for equity and diversity measures. The Office of Equal Employment Opportunity sets annual targets for all public sector agencies to achieve better representation of specific groups.

The Department's Executive Director, Human Resources, has end of line responsibility for delivering the Department's Equity and Diversity Management Plan 2007-2010, including the **Culture Strong, Career Proud: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2008-2010**.

Culture Strong, Career Proud will be sent to line managers in Central Office, district offices, schools and TAFEWA colleges, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

The strategy and related information will be available on the Department's Our Policies website at <http://policies.det.wa.edu.au> and all TAFEWA college websites.

All school leaders, TAFEWA college directors and managers are responsible for implementing the strategy and action plan in their workplaces.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Strategy is comprised of outcomes, strategies and success indicators which will enable the Department and TAFEWA colleges to measure their performance against the targets. Action plans produced each year define the initiatives to be undertaken during the year.

The Department and TAFEWA colleges will develop an annual action plan to highlight initiatives over each year of the strategy.

An Equity and Diversity Advisory Group within Department will oversee implementation of the strategy and action plans with assistance from staff in the Workforce Policy and Coordination Directorate and other Directorates.

Regular reports will be provided to Corporate Executive of the Department and Governing Councils of TAFEWA colleges.

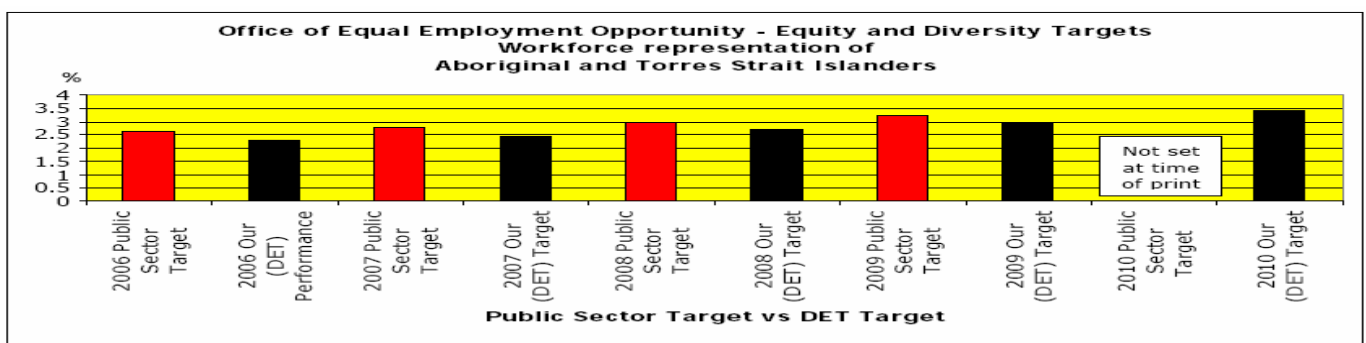
CURRENT EMPLOYMENT PROFILE

In 2006 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees comprised 2.3% (832) of the Department's workforce and 6% (198) of the TAFEWA workforce, compared with 3% of the population of Western Australia. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are not evenly distributed across the workforce, clustering at lower salary levels and in a limited range of occupations.

The Department's Annual Report 2006-2007 shows that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are also under represented in the education sector. Retention rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students are lower than those of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and they are over-represented at the lower Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) levels of study in vocational education and training.

The Office of Equal Employment Opportunity sets annual targets for public sector agencies to improve representation of workforce diversity groups. The Department's Equity and Diversity Management Plan 2007-2010 sets out activities that the Department will undertake to achieve these aims. Development and implementation of the *Culture Strong, Career Proud*: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2008 -2010 is one of the employment strategies within the plan.

The Department of Education and Training targets set for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in the workforce are:



FOCUS AREA 1: RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

The level of employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the workforce reflects the extent to which the Department and TAFEWA colleges value and are committed to the principles of workforce diversity.

To increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, public sector authorities are encouraged to use flexible recruitment approaches to “deliver appropriate services to diverse customers.”¹ This applies in all circumstances but particularly in areas where there is a significant number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (e.g. remote communities).

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in Western Australia is considerably younger than the non-Aboriginal population. This means that some communities (particularly in remote areas of the State) have high numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school enrolments. 84% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people attend public schools². To enable the Department to respond professionally it is desirable that its workforce reflects the community with which it resides by increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed by the Department.

Many existing employment policies and procedures, such as those focusing on recruitment and retention, demonstrate how these approaches are applied, but there is more that can be achieved.

Importantly, existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff:

- provide role models for students, other staff and the community;
- add a cultural dimension to programs in schools, TAFEWA colleges and other worksites;
- participate actively in and add value to policies and programs; and
- contribute to the reconciliation process through activities that foster respect and inclusiveness.

Current initiatives include scholarships for final year Bachelor of Education and Graduate Diploma of Education students and the Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer Certificate III and IV traineeships.

FOCUS AREA 2: A SUPPORTIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT

The Department is the largest employer of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the State. It is essential that all Department staff understand the cultural and behavioural differences that may affect the interface between cultures in the workplace.

The Department and TAFEWA colleges aim to ensure that all students and employees are treated with dignity and respect, and are provided with opportunities to achieve their potential in environments that are free from harassment and discrimination. Supporting legislation includes the Western Australian *Equal Opportunity Act (1984)*.

The Department and TAFEWA colleges are committed to the development of a culturally diverse workforce that promotes knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and experiences.

¹ Office of the Public Sector Standard Commissioner, Public Sector standard for recruitment, selection and appointment, Explanatory Notes.

² Department of Education and Training, *Annual Report 2006-2007*, p.87.

A range of resources exists to promote positive teaching and learning experiences for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal people including:

- *Our Story*: An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness Training Program (Department of Education and Training);
- Cross Cultural Consideration Pack/Program (TAFEWA);
- *Aboriginal Perspectives Across the Curriculum*;
- *Follow that Dream* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary student support program;
- *Working in Harmony* program; and
- Aboriginal Education and Employment Training Councils in all TAFEWA colleges.

FOCUS AREA 3: CAREER PATHWAYS

Training and development are essential to assist all employees to acquire new skills, improve their work performance and enhance career development.

The Department and TAFEWA line managers have a responsibility to facilitate employees' access to professional development opportunities and career advice and ensure they are supported during their studies. This is especially important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, many of whom are clustered at lower salary levels and in a limited range of occupations.

Strategies such as mentoring, work shadowing and job rotation can provide wider experience and increase knowledge and confidence. Existing initiatives that may enhance the career development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff include:

- Bachelor of Education Conversion Course program (Curtin University);
- formal agreement with Murdoch University for recognition of prior learning for Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers (AIEOs);
- Annual Aboriginal Teachers and Administrators Conference;
- biannual TAFEWA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff seminar; and
- Women in Leadership Strategy: Professional Learning Program.

New career development initiatives will include:

- a succession program;
- traineeship programs for TAFEWA colleges
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Lecturer Cadetship Initiative;
- Insight program.



Jo Lilley and Lyall Garlett from Canning District Education Office

FOCUS AREA 1: RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

OUTCOME The Department of Education and Training and TAFEWA colleges increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders employed in all occupations and levels within their workforce.

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME			SUCCESS INDICATOR
		2008	2009	2010	
Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees at higher salary levels in the workforce.	Executive Directors Managing Directors TAFEWA Central Offices District Offices			√	•1 Increased percentage of staff at management/ executive levels who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Ensure executive level performance agreements include a 3% target for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.	Executive Directors Managing Directors TAFEWA		√	√	•1 Increased percentage of executive performance agreements with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment targets
Provide financial and non-financial incentives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to take up positions in schools and colleges with high Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments.	Executive Director Human Resources		√		•1 Incentives developed
Review workforce profiles of remote community schools and TAFEWA colleges regularly.	Executive Director Human Resources		√		•1 Profiles reviewed
Designate as s.50 (d) selected positions in public schools and TAFEWA colleges where there is high Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolment.	Line Managers in Central Office District Offices Schools	√	√	√	•1 Increased percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees (target 2.7%) especially in areas of high Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments

Continued

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME			SUCCESS INDICATOR
		2008	2009	2010	
Advertise all employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through culturally appropriate media and job centres.	Line Managers in Central Office, District Offices and Schools	√	√	√	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •1 Percentage of jobs advertised via appropriate channels.
Organise targeted information sessions on job application processes for the Department and TAFEWA positions for prospective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.	District Offices and TAFEWA Colleges in collaboration with Workforce Policy & Coordination		√	√	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •1 Number of Information Sessions held per District.
Review selection processes to ensure they are culturally appropriate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees on s.50(d) panels - selection panel training includes Cultural Awareness/EEO training - recognition of prior learning and experience. 	District Offices and TAFEWA Colleges in collaboration with Workforce Policy & Coordination	√			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •1 Selection processes and selection training reviewed. •2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are represented on selection panels for S50D positions. •3 RPL embedded in job criteria for Department and TAFEWA positions.

FOCUS AREA 2: A SUPPORTIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT

OUTCOME The Department of Education and Training and TAFEWA colleges ensure a supportive work environment for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME			SUCCESS INDICATOR
		2008	2009	2010	
Establish and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Support program that includes: - a specific Induction program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff - mechanisms to identify employment opportunities for existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff - communication strategy.	Workforce Policy and Coordination Workforce Management TAFEWA colleges	√	√	√	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •1 Program established and promoted throughout the Department and all TAFEWA Colleges •2 Program participation rate
Establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peer Support Group to provide networking, mentoring and work shadowing opportunities.	Workforce Policy and Coordination	√	√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •1 Group established and activities reported •2 Case studies developed
Develop recognition awards for school leaders and TAFEWA college directors whose institutions achieve positive outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.	Workforce Policy and Coordination Workforce Management TAFEWA colleges		√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •1 Awards scheme established
Develop and implement a cultural awareness training program for all Department and TAFEWA employees.	Workforce Policy and Coordination - Equity and Diversity TAFEWA colleges	√	√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •1 Program established and implemented •2 Increased participation rates

Continued

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME			SUCCESS INDICATOR
		2008	2009	2010	
Establish a register of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees who are skilled and interested in participating on decision-making boards and committees.	Workforce Policy and Coordination in consultation with District Offices Schools TAFEWA colleges	√			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •1 Register established •2 Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees participating on decision making boards and/or committees
Promote flexible work practices and leave provisions that acknowledge cultural obligations of employees.	Workforce Policy and Coordination - Equity and Diversity Workforce Management	√			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •1 Cultural leave obligations are identified •2 Cultural leave management and support, policy and procedures established

FOCUS AREA 3: CAREER PATHWAYS

OUTCOME The Department of Education and Training and TAFEWA colleges provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees with access to information and opportunities for career development.

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME			SUCCESS INDICATOR
		2008	2009	2010	
Review fixed term contract positions (Commonwealth and Supplementary Recurrent Assistance-funded) for conversion to permanent positions.	Central Office District Offices TAFEWA colleges	√			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •1 Number of contract positions converted to permanent
Review research on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mentoring, work shadowing and job rotation programs and develop a policy for implementation.	Workforce Policy and Coordination TAFEWA colleges	√	√	√	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mentoring, work shadowing and job rotation programs developed and implemented
Develop and promote an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Career Pathways program with three key streams: - Teachers Assistant (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Certificate III and IV - expanded BECC program - teachers, administrators and lecturers' workshops on career development and promotion.	Workforce Policy and Coordination TAFEWA colleges	√	√	√	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •1 Program developed •2 Increased participation rates per stream
Provide funding to schools for relief staff to cover AIEOs undertaking block release and practicums as part of Bachelor of Education Conversion Course.	Workforce Policy and Coordination	√	√	√	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •1 Funding available

ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS

Aboriginal - “Means pertaining to the original inhabitants of Australia and to their descendants”
- *Source: Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972 (WA)*.

AEETC – Aboriginal Education and Employment Training Council (in each TAFEWA College).

AIEO - Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer.

BECC - Bachelor of Education Conversion Course (Curtin University).

MCEETYA - Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs.

NAIDOC - (1) National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee; (2) National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Celebration.

OPSSC - Office of the Public Sector Standards Commissioner.

Person of Aboriginal descent: “Means any person living in Western Australia wholly or partly descended from the original inhabitants of Australia who claims to be an Aboriginal and who is accepted as such in the community in which he/she lives” – *Source: Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972 (WA)*.

RPL – Recognition of prior learning (and experience).

s.50(d): “Providing persons of a particular race with services for the purpose of promoting their welfare where those services can most effectively be provided by a person of the same race” – *Source: Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA), Section 50(d)*.

Torres Strait Islander: “A Torres Strait Islander means a person who (a) is descended from a Torres Strait Islander and (b) identifies as a Torres Strait Islander and (c) is accepted as a Torres Strait Islander by a Torres Strait Islander community” – *Source: Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)*

Useful information

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholarships	W: Teaching WA T: 9264 5155
Advice, information and support on the Department and TAFEWA employment and industrial relations issues	T:92644728
Apprenticeships and traineeships	W: apprenticentre.wa.gov.au T: 13 19 54
Bachelor of Education Conversion Course (BECC)	W: www.gunada.curtin.edu.au T: 9266 4192 (Centre for Aboriginal Studies, Curtin University)
Becoming a teacher and teaching as a career	W: Teaching WA
Becoming an Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer (AIEO)	Check with the Manager, Aboriginal Education at the local District Office or visit www.jobs.wa.gov.au
Department of Education and Training	W: det.wa.edu.au
Initiatives and development programs offered by the Department for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	9264 5155
Jobs in the Western Australian Government	W: www.jobs.wa.gov.au
National support	Specific outcomes and objectives outlined in <i>Australian Directions in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education 2005-2008</i> are being monitored by the MCEETYA Performance Measurement and Reporting Taskforce.
Pay	W: det.wa.edu.au/education/staffing 9264 4447 9264 8660
Publications	<i>Aboriginal Education and Training Operational Plan 2005-2008</i> www.det.wa.edu.au/education/abled/Policies Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), <i>Australian Directions in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education 2005-2008</i> . www.mceetya.edu.au/verve/resources/Australian_Directions_in_Aboriginal_and_Torres_Strait_Islander_Education_2005-2008.pdf
TAFEWA	W: tafe.wa.edu.au
Unions	- State School Teachers' Union (SSTUWA) www.sstu.wa.org.au 9325-5311 - Liquor Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union (LHMU) www.lhmu.org.au 9388-5400
Women in Leadership program	W: womeninleadership.det.wa.edu.au/wil

Notes

These are recommended useful sites/information and neither the Department of Education and Training nor TAFEWA necessarily endorses their contents or warrants the accuracy of the information they contain.