



Australian Government
Department of the Environment

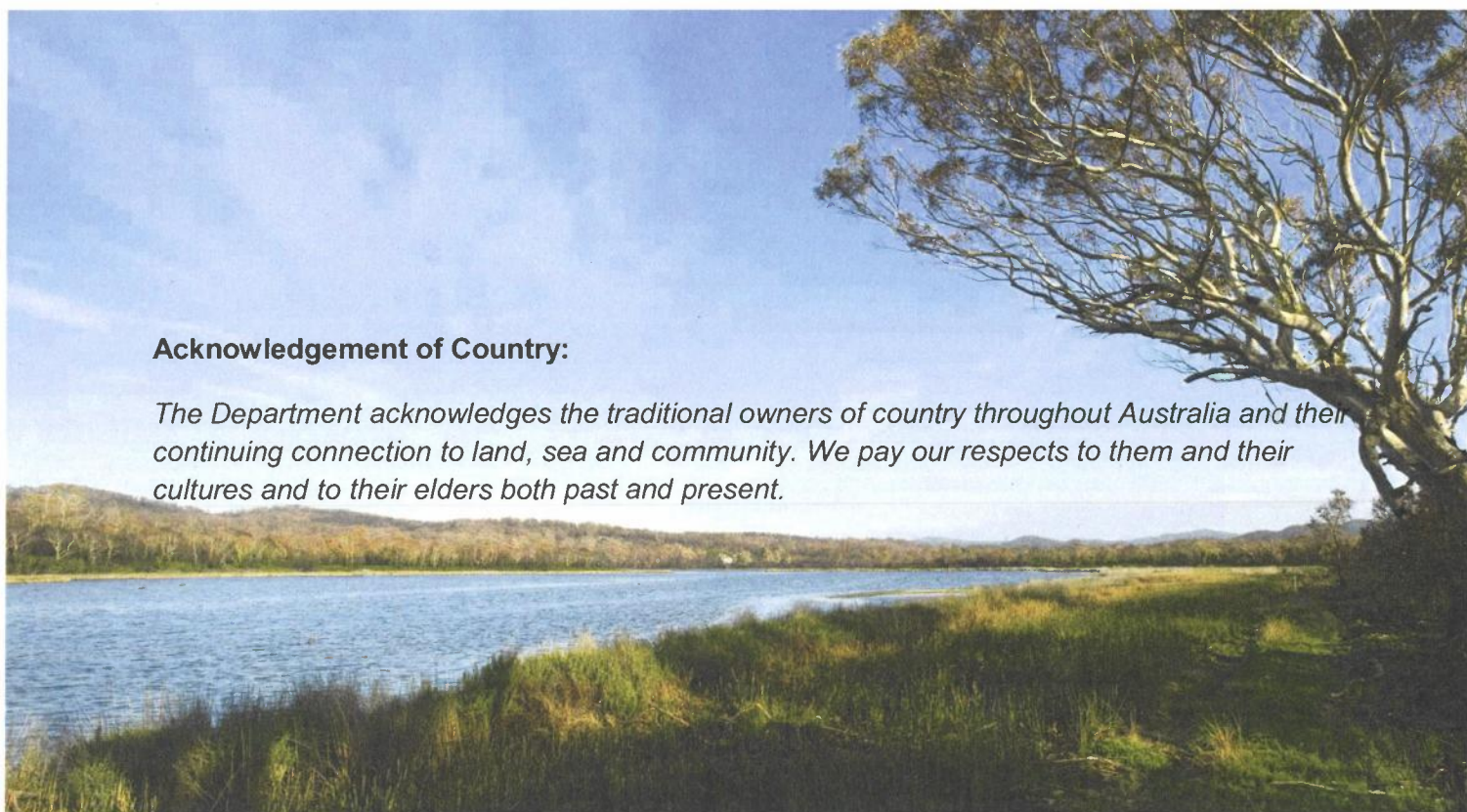
Indigenous Employment and Capability Strategy

2016-2019

A strategy for the recruitment, development, and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the Department of the Environment

Acknowledgement of Country:

The Department acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures and to their elders both past and present.



SECRETARY'S FOREWORD

I am delighted to present the Department's third *Indigenous Employment and Capability Strategy 2016–2019*. The Department is committed to increasing its representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to 4.5 per cent by 2018. This target can only be achieved if Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people see the Department as an 'employer of choice' and this strategy sets out how we hope to achieve that.

Achieving greater representation of capable and engaged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees remains a priority in our efforts to protect and preserve the environment. The Department places great value on the relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees with the land and water and animal and plant life. Their insights are vital to our conservation and cultural heritage work and our engagement with Indigenous communities.

This strategy is an integral part of the Department's corporate strategic framework and, together with our Reconciliation Action Plan, maps out an approach to deepening our understanding of Indigenous culture and connection to country and continuing our reconciliation journey. The strategy also complements our ongoing work to broaden Indigenous employment opportunities in non public service roles by encouraging enterprises and activities in the three jointly managed national parks that have the potential to provide employment for Indigenous people.

I commend this strategy to you and commit to its implementation.



Gordon de Brouwer

Secretary

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1. OVERVIEW

1.1. Introduction

Attracting, developing and retaining skilled Indigenous employees is critical to the Department delivering initiatives against its purpose of promoting the conservation and sustainable use of Australia's natural resources. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a strong and ongoing connection with and responsibility for land, water and community. It is important to use this knowledge and the Department needs a workforce that is able to work effectively across cultures.

The Department launched its first Indigenous Employment and Capability Strategy in 2007 to articulate its commitment to diversity and reconciliation in the workplace through specific initiatives that supported the recruitment, retention and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. This strategy for the period of 2016 to 2019 is the third iteration and will strengthen the Department's performance as an 'employer of choice' for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The strategy incorporates improvements suggested by internal consultation during the evaluation of the previous strategy, including suggestions for:

- a stronger focus on outcomes and clear measures linked to agreed outcomes rather than just provide a list of activities
- a streamlined implementation plan that outlines initiatives that can be achieved within existing resources and enables regular reporting on progress
- clarifying the links with the Department's *Reconciliation Action Plan* and with training initiatives developed under joint management arrangements in Parks Australia.

1.2. Outcomes

The Strategy aims to strengthen engagement with and input to policy and program development from Indigenous Australians by improving the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the Department's workforce and to recognise their connection to land, water and country in contributing to the delivery of our business outcomes.

The principal aim of the Strategy is for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ongoing employees to represent 4.5 per cent of the Department's ongoing workforce by 2018. This outcome will be achieved by implementing initiatives that align with the four specific outcomes:

- *Recruitment:* The Department attracts and provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with employment opportunities at all classification levels.
- *Development:* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are able to access appropriate professional development opportunities and are supported to achieve their career goals.
- *Workplace Support:* The Department has an inclusive workplace that values, respects and develops employee competence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.
- *Retention:* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees feel supported and consider the Department as an employer of choice.

The Implementation Plan in Section 2 provides details of the goals and specific activities to achieve these outcomes over the life of the Strategy. The Indigenous Development Coordinator will develop a work plan at the commencement of the Strategy and on each anniversary to report on progress and identify activities or shifts in focus to be implemented in the following 12 month period. The annual work plan will be endorsed by the People Committee which is accountable to the Executive Board for advising, direction setting, decision making and monitoring on the Department's people and leadership program.

1.3. Links with other strategies and plans

The Strategy forms an integral part of the Department's people management framework and draws on the guidance provided in the *Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy*. The *Indigenous Employment and Capability Strategy* contributes to the employment outcomes identified in the Department's *Reconciliation Action Plan* and supports initiatives identified in plans that aim to strengthen employment outcomes for employees in the jointly managed National Parks.

1.4. SES Leadership and central support

The Indigenous and Reconciliation Champion promotes and supports the Department's broader engagement in Indigenous affairs and activities that build stronger and more effective and mutually respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and staff. The role is undertaken by one of the Department's Deputy Secretaries.

The Indigenous Development Coordinator (People Strategies Branch) supports the development and implementation of the initiatives and provides a central point of contact for Indigenous employees and their managers on general employment-related issues.

1.5. Measuring progress and success

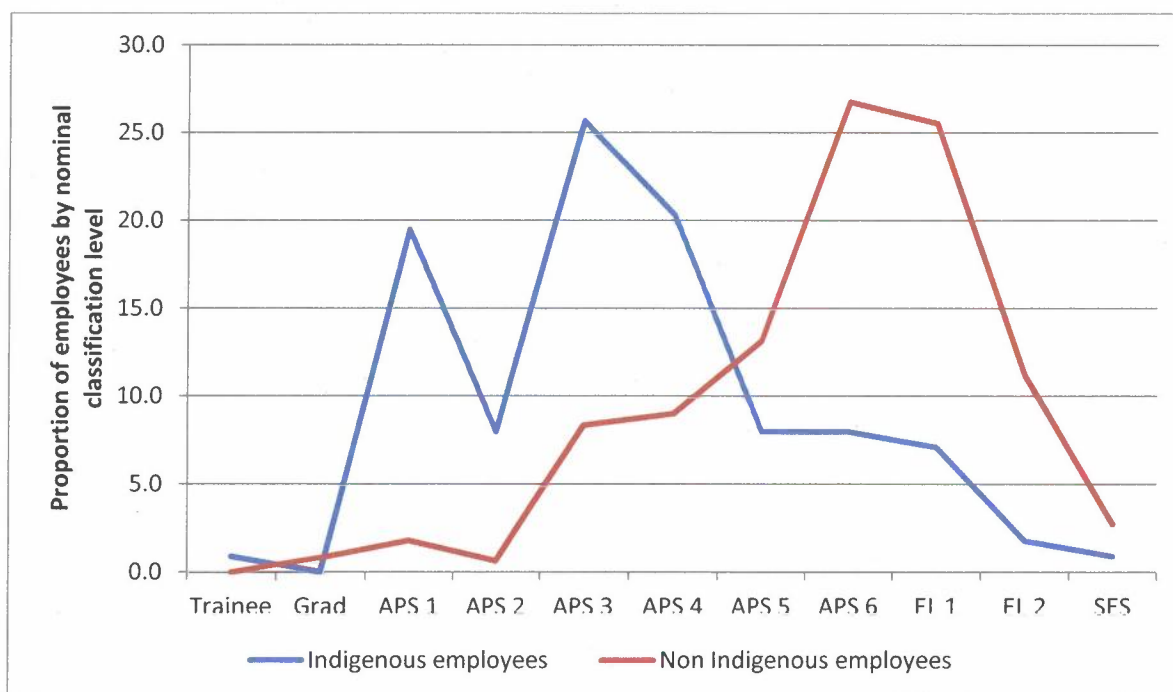
The Indigenous Development Coordinator will monitor the implementation of the annual work plan and report annually to the People Committee on progress. The annual report will be published on the intranet for the information of all employees.

This report will include analysis of the following performance measures to assess progress in achieving the four outcomes over the next three years.

Measure	2015 Benchmark
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ongoing employees represent 4.5 per cent the Department's ongoing workforce	65 ongoing employees representing 4.3 per cent (at 30 November 2015)
The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees at APS 5 to SES classifications mirrors the profile of the overall Department.	See Figure 1
Number of graduates and trainees/apprentices recruited by the Department under <i>Special Measures</i> represent at least 33 per cent of the graduate/trainee pool.	13 per cent (at 30 November 2015)
Vacancies advertised under <i>Special Measures</i> represent at least 10 per cent of all advertised vacancies in a 12 month period.	6.6 per cent (12 months to 30 November 2015)

Measure	2015 Benchmark
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people represent at least 5 per cent of all ongoing commencements in a 12 month period.	3.6 per cent (12 months to 30 November 2015 ¹)
Divisions identify and report on a target for the recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees as part of annual business planning	Not available
More than 70 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees report that their workplace provides access to effective learning and development opportunities.	53 per cent (2015 Employee census)
More than 50 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are satisfied with opportunities for career progression in the Department.	13 per cent (2015 Employee census)
More than 80 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees agree that the people in their work group are accepting of people from diverse backgrounds.	66 per cent (2015 Employee census)
More than 65 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees agree that they would recommend the Department as a good place to work.	50 per cent (2015 Employee census)

Figure 1: Proportion of employees by nominal classification level at 30 November 2015



The extent to which outcomes were achieved will be evaluated by the Indigenous Development Coordinator at the expiry of the term of the Strategy.

¹ The APS Interim Recruitment arrangements were in place until 1 July 2015 and will have influenced recruitment levels during this 12 month period.

2. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Outcome 1: Recruitment

The Department attracts and provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with employment opportunities at all levels

Goals	Activities	Lead Responsibility
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are provided with opportunities to be departmental job ready	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement programs to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with the skills and understanding of the Department's business and APS context to become job ready. Provide Indigenous candidates with access to 'winning that job' recruitment resources through external website links. 	IDC ² /PAD ³ Recruitment/IDC
The Department attracts a strong field of Indigenous candidates for advertised vacancies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a departmental Indigenous employment marketing website via a careers portal to promote the Department to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Promote the Department as an employer of choice and where possible showcase employment pathways such as the Indigenous graduate, traineeship and apprenticeship programs at career events. Advertise vacancies through a range of media/sites including: Indigenous newspapers, billboards and within University/CIT/TAFE career hubs. Promote recruitment under <i>Specials Measures</i> and use of <i>Identified</i> roles at career events to potential Indigenous applicants. Continue the current practice of including the wording '<i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are encouraged to apply</i>' in every job advertisement. 	Recruitment/IDC IDC/Recruitment Recruitment /Divisions Recruitment/IDC Recruitment
Selection processes reflect APS best practice and recognise and address cultural needs of applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate referencing Traditional Skills and Knowledge, where relevant, in recruitment for roles in the jointly managed National Parks. Support Indigenous employees to apply for departmental roles through provision of targeted information and training. 	PAD Capability and Performance/PAD

² IDC - Indigenous Development Coordinator

³ PAD - Parks Australia Division

Goals	Activities	Lead Responsibility
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a guide to support culturally appropriate selection practices in the Department and assess key considerations in selection panel accreditation. Selection panels include an Indigenous panel member when assessing roles advertised under <i>Special Measures</i> and consider for <i>Identified roles</i> where necessary. 	<p>IDC/Recruitment</p> <p>Divisions</p>
The Department provides employment opportunities for Indigenous peoples at all classification levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in centralised entry-level recruitment intakes managed by other APS agencies. Implement an annual departmental intake of Indigenous Graduates. Review and update the department's <i>Identified Positions Policy</i> to ensure it reflects current departmental needs and expectations and provides adequate guidance to all areas of the Department. Identify and report on target for the recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees as part of annual business plans. Program and policy areas that engage with Indigenous stakeholders review all vacancies to assess whether the vacant position should be advertised as an <i>Identified role</i> and/or under <i>Special Measures</i> provisions. Promote use of <i>Special Measures</i> provisions for bulk recruitment processes. 	<p>Recruitment/IDC</p> <p>Recruitment/IDC</p> <p>IDC/Recruitment</p> <p>Divisions</p> <p>Divisions/ Recruitment</p> <p>Recruitment</p>

Outcome 2: Development

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are able to access appropriate professional development opportunities and are supported to achieve their career goals

Goals	Activities	Lead Responsibility
The Department supports the professional development of Indigenous employees through initiatives that are mapped to the 70-20-10 principles ⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Indigenous employees complete departmental orientation and participate in local On Country briefing that provides Traditional Knowledge relevant to the country in which they are working. • Promote the Kevin McLeod Awards to all employees and particularly the availability of a <i>Development Scholarship</i> for Indigenous employees. • Scope a secondment program for Indigenous employees to support development of new skills and experiences and career opportunities. • Scope a framework to support development of Traditional Skills and Knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in specific PAD roles. • Develop guidance on how to set up a shadowing arrangement with a senior or experienced employee to transfer knowledge and develop capability. 	<p>Employees/PAD/IDC</p> <p>IDC</p> <p>IDC</p> <p>PAD</p> <p>Capability and Performance</p>
Learning and development initiatives are routinely and appropriately promoted to increase participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote mainstream Indigenous scholarship initiatives to support development needs. • Ensure timely promotion of departmental and external learning and development initiatives to facilitate early planning and uptake of opportunities, particularly for departmental employees located outside of Canberra. • Identify and promote learning and development opportunities available outside of Canberra through APS and State Government networks. 	<p>IDC</p> <p>IDC/Capability and Performance</p> <p>IDC/ Capability and Performance</p>

⁴ The 70:20:10 model describes an expectation that employees invest 70 per cent of their time in learning through doing (eg on-the-job learning); 20 per cent of time is spent in learning through relationships (eg mentoring, coaching, shadowing and feedback), and 10 per cent of time in acquiring knowledge or skills through formal training or study.

Goals	Activities	Lead Responsibility
Indigenous employees are supported to develop their management and leadership skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that departmental leadership development programs consider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in their design. • Promote opportunities for Indigenous employees to develop management skills • Promote opportunities to employees provided through external Indigenous leadership programs. • Promote opportunities for Indigenous employees working outside of Canberra to participate in the Department's Leadership and Management programs. 	<p>IDC</p> <p>IDC/Managers</p> <p>IDC/Managers</p> <p>IDC/Managers</p>

Outcome 3: Workplace Support

The Department has an inclusive workplace that values, respects and develops employee competence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

Goals	Activities	Lead Responsibility
SES and managers/supervisors understand and promote the value of the strategy's initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departmental Indigenous Champion regularly engages with SES colleagues and staff on the Strategy to lead and promote: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ an understanding and engagement of the relevance and value of the Strategy's initiatives ○ implementation of the Strategy's initiatives by business areas ○ SES participation in cultural awareness briefings and events and opportunities to mentor Indigenous staff ○ staff participation in celebrating Indigenous cultural events. • Departmental Indigenous Champion supports the Executive of all ISNs in their leadership role. • SES are invited to attend ISN meetings as appropriate. • Promote IndECs to Directors through a range of forums including entry level induction briefings. • Provide a cultural briefing to managers/supervisors of participants in Indigenous entry level recruitment programs. 	<p>SES Champion</p> <p>SES Champion ISN ⁵Executives/SES IDC/RAP ⁶Committee members IDC/Recruitment</p>
The Indigenous cultural capability of all employees is developed through a structured programs of activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Department's capability framework with a view to incorporating the APS Indigenous Cultural Capability Framework as appropriate. • Develop and deliver an Indigenous cultural awareness program for all departmental employees, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ foundational Indigenous cultural awareness e-learning module to be 	<p>Capability and Performance</p> <p>IDC/SIPS</p>

⁵ ISN – Indigenous Staff Network

⁶ RAP – Reconciliation Action Plan

Goals	Activities	Lead Responsibility
	<p>completed by all employees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ training that provides tailored content on protocols for engaging effectively with Indigenous stakeholders in the delivery of business outcomes. ○ localised cultural awareness training, including cross-cultural on country tours in all departmental locations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote departmental participation in the Jawun secondment program. • Ensure proposed Jawun secondees have completed departmental cultural awareness training prior to participation in a secondment. 	<p>IDC/Strategic Indigenous Policy Section</p> <p>IDC/PAD</p> <p>IDC/Jawun secondees</p> <p>IDC</p>
Managers and supervisors encourage departmental employees to participate in Indigenous cultural events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage all employees to participate in events that celebrate Indigenous culture. • Ensure employees who engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in delivering business outcomes are culturally competent. • Promote Reconciliation and NAIDOC Weeks as the key events of significance to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and provide opportunities for all employees to participate in internal and external events. • Recognise the outstanding contribution of employees to supporting Indigenous engagement and to promoting Indigenous cultural values through the departmental NAIDOC Awards. 	<p>SES/Managers</p> <p>SES/Managers</p> <p>NAIDOC Committee</p> <p>ISN Executive/IDC</p>

Outcome 4: Retention

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees feel supported and consider the Department as an employer of choice.

Goals	Activities	Lead Responsibility
Indigenous employees are supported to meet regularly and have a platform to contribute to the wider departmental Indigenous agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular Indigenous Staff Network (ISN) meetings are conducted as a work related activity that supports Indigenous employees in the Department. Convene a meeting of ISN Executives at least once annually. Conduct an Indigenous employees' conference every two years. Indigenous employees are supported by their managers/supervisors to attend and participate in regular ISN meetings, biennial Indigenous employees' conferences and ISN Executive meetings. 	<p>ISN Executive and members</p> <p>ISN Executives/IDC</p> <p>ISN Executives /IDC</p> <p>Managers/supervisors</p>
Indigenous employees feel valued and supported by their peers and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managers and supervisors participate in the Department's cultural awareness program and actively support participation of team members. Promote external cultural engagement opportunities during NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week events. Promote an annual census day to encourage Indigenous employees to self-identify to improve the integrity of departmental data used for reporting on Indigenous workforce planning. Develop guidance for managers and staff to support access to cultural leave provisions. Promote flexible working practices and leave provisions to assist Indigenous employees to meet cultural and family responsibilities within operational requirements. Work with Indigenous employees to identify and support their career goals on completion of entry level programs. Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees who are leaving the Department to seek feedback on their experience of working in the Department. 	<p>Managers/supervisors</p> <p>IDC/NAIDOC Committee</p> <p>IDC/ISN members/Managers</p> <p>IDC</p> <p>IDC/Managers</p> <p>Managers/Mentors /IDC</p> <p>IDC</p>

Goals	Activities	Lead Responsibility
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop guidance to support managers/supervisors to implement culturally competent people management practices. 	IDC
Indigenous employees are able to access one on one cultural and workplace support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and review a pilot program for reciprocal Indigenous cultural coaching with Traditional Owners that will assist Indigenous employees with their work performance, community responsibilities, and to help keep Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures strong. Develop an Indigenous Buddy program for new starters to assist their onboarding, particularly when relocating from Country. Implement an Indigenous mentoring program that provides opportunities for Indigenous staff to be mentored by senior managers and to become mentors themselves. 	IDC IDC IDC
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees undertake career development planning with their managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop guidance on career planning and development options for Indigenous employees with reference to the existing departmental and APS frameworks for mapping capability requirements for different roles by classification level. Career development needs of Indigenous staff are met through one on one discussion with managers and documented within individual performance agreements. Develop options to address workplace language and literacy needs of Indigenous employees in consultation with training managers in the jointly managed national parks. 	IDC Managers/Mentors IDC/PAD