

## SUBMISSION TO THE ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, AGEING, COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES FOR THE INQUIRY INTO ACT PUBLIC SERVICE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EMPLOYMENT

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Informing Decisions





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## 1 ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT IN THE SA PUBLIC SECTOR

This Submission summarises findings from a research study into Aboriginal employment in the SA Public Sector (SAPS), highlighting factors which encourage and factors which hinder recruitment and retention. The findings are of direct relevance to the *Inquiry into ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employer* by the ACT Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Health Ageing Community and Social Services.

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

Objective 6 of the *South Australian Strategic Plan* has an accompanying target to increase the employment of Aboriginal employees in the public sector from 1.2% to 2% by 2009.

The Don Dunstan Foundation<sup>1</sup> allocated funding for a project to identify the factors which are assisting and the factors which are impeding progress towards the achievement of the 2% Target.

The Project was undertaken in the period 2006 to 2007 by the then Australian Institute for Social Research (AISR) now known as the Australian Workplace Innovation and Social Research Centre (WISeR) at The University of Adelaide. The Final Report *Equity Works: Achieving the Target of 2% Aboriginal Employment in the SA Public Sector* was released by the Don Dunstan Foundation in 2007. It can be accessed at <http://www.dunstan.org.au/resources/dunstanpapers/>

### 1.2 METHOD

A five part methodology was adopted involving:

- 1 Review of the literature.
- 2 An analysis of 2 sets of SAPS data sets – the Office of Public Employment (OPE) *Workforce Information Collection* and DFEEST *Contract of Training* (ie apprenticeships and traineeships) information.
- 3 Interviews and focus groups with key Aboriginal stakeholders (within the SA public sector and externally).
- 4 Case Studies exemplifying good practice.
- 5 A survey with **173** Aboriginal employees from the SA public sector, distributed on the project team's behalf by the SA Public Sector Indigenous Employees' Network.

Further details about the method are provided in **Appendix 1**.

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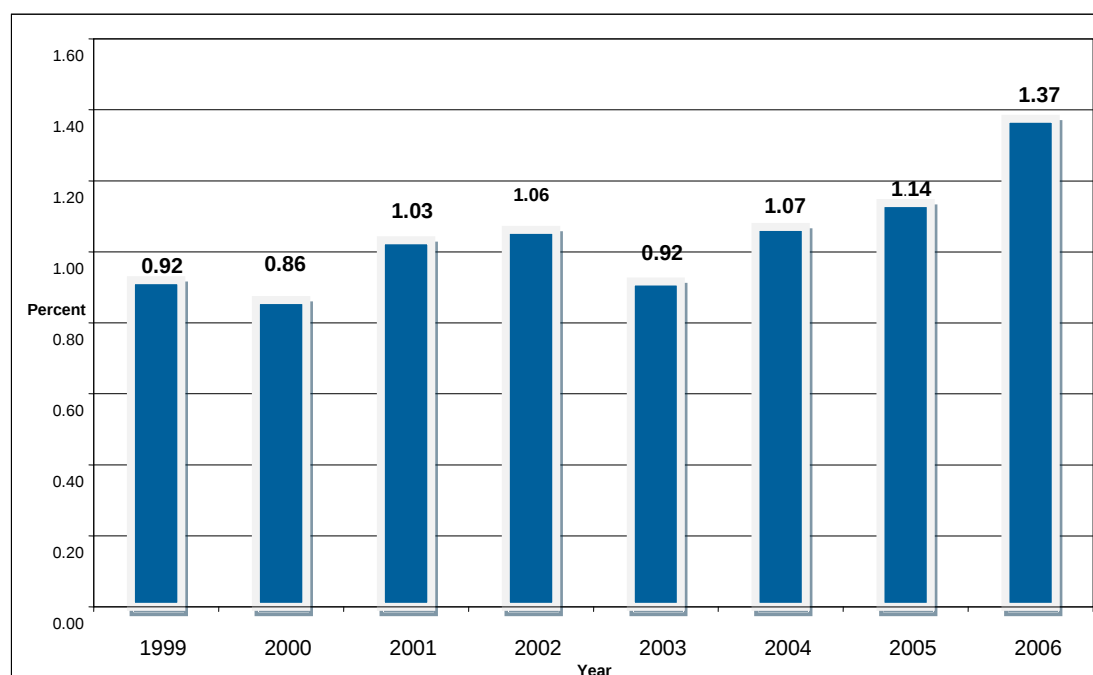
<sup>1</sup> The Don Dunstan Foundation was established in 1999 with a view to perpetuating the memory of Don Dunstan and reflecting his life's work through fostering research, education and discussion on a broad range of issues, including social development. The Foundation is a public charitable trust that has a Mission to be a rich reservoir of innovative ideas and information about reshaping our future; to facilitate collective debate and action to enliven participatory democracy; to build a bridge between academic analysis, government policy and the people.

### 1.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

#### *Reaching the Target of 2% Aboriginal Employment in the SA Public Sector*

- The **number** of Aboriginal employees in the **SA Public Sector (SAPS)** increased from 784 in 2003 (representing 0.92% of the SAPS workforce) to **1,276** in 2006 (representing **1.37%** of the SAPS workforce).

FIGURE 1: ABORIGINAL EMPLOYEES - PERSONS AS A % OF TOTAL SA PUBLIC SECTOR



While this finding seems positive, there were a number of other findings which emerged from a deeper analysis of available data which are less positive and signal the need for further equity-promoting initiatives in the SAPS. These relate to the type of employment and salary level (and from this, *inferred* level of appointment).

#### *Type of employment*

- A smaller proportion of the Aboriginal workforce was employed on an **ongoing** basis (**50.5%**) compared with the non-Aboriginal workforce (63.2%). Since 2000, there has been a **reduction in ongoing appointments** which has been more marked for Aboriginal employees, (from **55.0% to 50.5%**), compared with non- Aboriginal employees (from 64.7% to 63.2%).
- There was a **growth in short-term contractual** appointments for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal employees during the period 2000-2006. However, this trend was more pronounced for Aboriginal employees – increasing from **21.1% to 30.4%** compared with a growth from 15.3% to 19.9% for non- Aboriginal employees.
- During the same period, there was a **reduction in long term contractual** appointments which was much more pronounced for Aboriginal employees. This

involved a minor change from 7.9% to 7.6% for non-Aboriginal employees, compared with a change from **14.8% to 8.1%** for Aboriginal employees.

- Perhaps reflecting the relatively **younger** age profile and the greater use of **short term contractual** employment for the Aboriginal public sector workforce, there was a pronounced trend for length of service with an agency to involve **shorter** periods of time for Aboriginal employees. By comparison, non-Aboriginal employees were notable for having longer periods of service with the same agency.

### **Level of appointment**

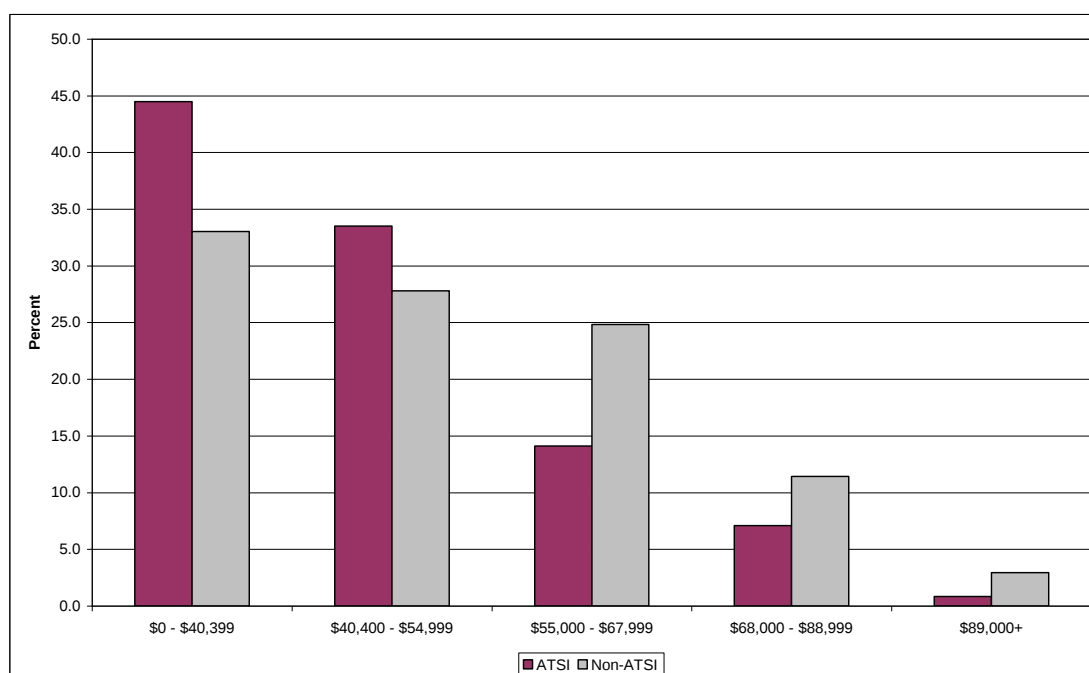
Although a global target of 2% Aboriginal employment had been set, it is also important to augment that benchmark by aiming to achieve this **across all levels** of appointment. At the time of reporting there were no data that reported on the achievement of the target at different levels of appointment in the South Australian public sector.

The Project therefore used salary as an **indicator of appointment level** in analysing South Australian public sector workforce data. This showed an unequal distribution with lower proportions of Aboriginal employees in the higher salary groupings and a higher incidence in the lower salary groupings, relative to non- Aboriginal employees.

### **Salary levels**

- A far greater proportion of Aboriginal employees were remunerated in the two **lowest salary groups** than the proportion of non-Aboriginal employees. **78%** of Aboriginal employees fell within the \$0-40,399 and \$40,400-\$45,999 salary groups, compared to **60.8%** of non-Aboriginal employees.
- There were relatively low proportions of Aboriginal employees in the higher salary groupings - **7.1%** in the \$68,000 - \$88,999 salary group (compared to 11.4% for non-Aboriginal employees) and **0.8%** in the \$89,000+ salary group (compared to 2.9% for non-Aboriginal employees).
- More than half (54.1%) of non-Aboriginal employees in the lowest salary grouping, \$40,399 or less, were appointed on an *ongoing basis* compared to just over a third (**36.8%**) of Aboriginal employees. 34.2% of Aboriginal employees in this salary group were on **short-term contracts** compared to 22.6% of non- Aboriginal employees.
- There were marked differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal employees in the highest salary group (\$89,000 or more). **Ongoing** appointments existed for **30.0%** of Aboriginal employees, compared to 44.9% of non-Aboriginal employees, and **long term** appointments applied to **50%** of Aboriginal employees compared to 36% of non-Aboriginal employees.

FIGURE 2: SALARY GROUP COMPARISON, JUNE 2006



### 1.3.1 RECRUITMENT FINDINGS: DATASET ANALYSIS

- More than **80%** of Aboriginal employees who were recruited to their public sector position during the year ending June 2006 were recruited from **outside** the public sector. This compared to 72.5% of non-Aboriginal employees.
- Less than **20%** of Aboriginal appointments to SA public sector positions during the year ending June 2006 were made from **within** the public sector. This compared to slightly more than 25% of non-Aboriginal employees.

### 1.3.2 RECRUITMENT-RELATED FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY

#### *Motivating Factors to work in the SA public sector*

- The most common motivation to seek employment in the SA public sector was to 'make a difference for Indigenous South Australians' (68.2% of the sample).
- The second most common motivation was to obtain secure employment (52.6%).
- Both of these findings were evident in responses to other survey questions, reinforcing their importance to Aboriginal public sector employees, and the need to take these findings into account in designing recruitment and retention strategies.

#### *Barriers to recruitment*

These were the barriers to recruitment most frequently identified –

- 👤 Negative perceptions of government (and therefore, of the public service) as abusing their authority in relation to Aboriginal Australians, originating with British colonisation, and including the role played in relation to the *Stolen Generation*.

-  Negative perceptions of government as an employer, with the public service being regarded as overly bureaucratic and involving excessive administrative work, and an overly formal work style.
-  The need for improved cultural competence on the part of non- Aboriginal public sector employees. This included a general lack of knowledge of Aboriginal issues and history as well as more specific cultural understanding.
-  Intimidating application and selection processes lacking in cultural sensitivity and which do not acknowledge the need by many Aboriginal applicants for information about the public sector and its workplace.
-  Insufficient information about the public sector and how it operates, and the need for improved communication to Aboriginal communities about employment in the sector.
-  Racism and discrimination against Aboriginal public sector employees.
-  A lack of understanding of the unique pressures faced by Aboriginal employees in representing their communities in the public sector workplace and representing the public sector (and by association, government) in Aboriginal communities.
-  The training and qualifications required for many public sector positions, together with insufficient recognition of (non-credentialed) Aboriginal expertise prevent many applicants from seeking and attaining public sector positions. It was often the case that Aboriginal people were not aware of the training and professional development available to public sector employees.
-  Insufficient permanent or ongoing positions and the trend for the public sector to offer short term contract work also acts as a deterrent.
-  An important component of equity promotion involves recruiting minority groups in sufficient numbers to create 'critical mass' and so prevents them from feeling isolated in the workplace. For some of the survey sample, feeling outnumbered and overwhelmed, especially if they were the only Aboriginal person in their work setting, acted as a barrier to both recruitment and retention.

In most instances, the barriers faced by an individual were multiple, often intensified by their combined impact. **One of the Project's conclusion was that it is important that no single strategy is adopted to address them.**

### ***Improving the recruitment process***

The barriers associated with the recruitment process had been eased for those surveyed when –

- ⇒ they knew someone in the unit where the position was based **(38.7%)**
- ⇒ the selection panel included an Aboriginal person **(38.2%)** and/or
- ⇒ had members who were sensitive to Aboriginal people and issues **(37.6%)**.
- ⇒ They were well informed – both about the position concerned **(33.5%)** and about the public sector **(28.9%)**.

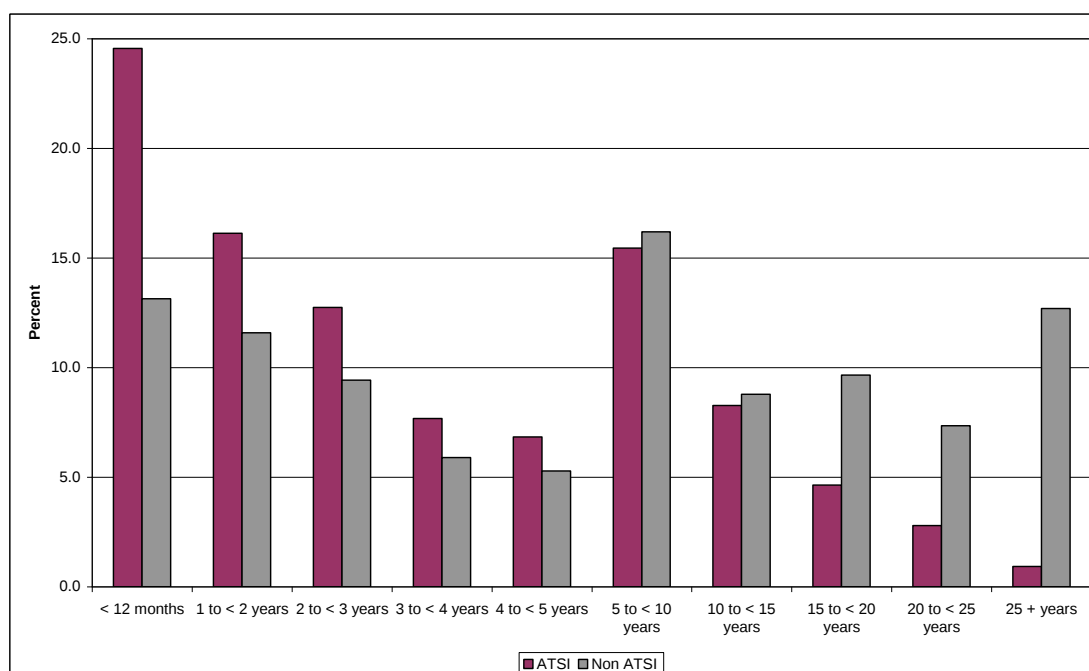
The four strategies most commonly proposed by the survey sample to attract Aboriginal recruits were –

- ☑ Ensuring that Aboriginal people are well informed about public sector employment opportunities and what is required of public sector employees, and promoting this through Aboriginal networks (rather than relying on mainstream advertisements and related approaches).
- ☑ A supported application, selection and induction process. This strategy provides support coupled with more specific information and advice about applying for a public sector position and the components of the selection process, and being appropriately inducted if the application is successful. It is also important that those managing the application, selection and induction of Aboriginal candidates are culturally sensitive and work to make these processes as inclusive as possible.
- ☑ Providing a culturally inclusive workplace that promotes cultural competence and addresses racism. Many Aboriginal people are deterred from applying for public sector employment because of the negative experiences of Aboriginal employees.
- ☑ Providing ongoing employment that provides career development opportunities.

### 1.3.3 RETENTION FINDINGS: DATASET ANALYSIS

- Nearly **1 in 4** (24.6%) of Aboriginal employees had been with their **current agency** for **less than 12 months**. This was nearly **twice** the proportion of non- Aboriginal employees (13.1%).
- As was the case with length of service with agency, a similar pattern of difference between the two groups of employees was evident in relation to length of service with the **public sector**. Nearly **60%** of Aboriginal employees had been in the public sector for **less than 5 years** compared to 36.3% of non-Aboriginal employees.

FIGURE 3: LENGTH OF SERVICE WITH AGENCY COMPARISON, JUNE 2006



- **More than 5 percent** of Aboriginal employees reported resigning due to **family responsibilities** compared to only 1.6% for non-Aboriginal employees. This may well reflect broader cultural issues than can be captured by the current data fields. It also reflects the greater likelihood that Aboriginal employees will have family care-giving responsibilities of a greater magnitude than other employees.
- Aboriginal employees were more than twice as likely to resign due to **ill health** compared to non-Aboriginal employees, **2.8%** compared to 1.2%.

### 1.3.4 RETENTION FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY

#### FACTORS THAT DISCOURAGE RETENTION

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-  Although the SA public sector provides cultural awareness raising and some cultural competence training, this survey identified the need for more effort for both employees and managers.
-  Three factors shared equal top place as deterrents to remaining in the SA public sector. Two of these involve **lack of understanding of Aboriginal culture** by non- Aboriginal employees (**43.4%**) and non- Aboriginal managers (**43.4%**).
-  This may also be influencing the third most frequently cited deterrent to retention, having **knowledge, skills and experience under-utilised (43.4%)** – possibly because this is not being understood within culturally inclusive parameters. Feeling **under-valued (39.3%)** would also relate to lack of recognition of individual capacity.

Consequently, it is important to regard the first three barriers to retention as inter-dependent.

-  More material factors that relate to seeking higher salaries (27.7%) and career opportunities elsewhere (23.1%) have been less important than these barriers.
-  Interestingly, although the survey sample had identified the experiences of bullying (13.3%), harassment (13.3%) and discrimination (13.3%), they regarded them as less significant in influencing their decision to remain in the SA public service. The fourth excluding experience – racism – emerged as more significant than these three (16.8%), but not as important to retention as a culturally inclusive workplace that enabled the use and recognition of Indigenous employees' expertise. However, this does not lessen the negative impact of such experiences on job satisfaction, personal happiness and retention outcomes.

#### FACTORS THAT ENCOURAGE RETENTION

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There are a number of factors that were considered to influence retention.

- ☒ Those that were given the highest priority involve **secure, ongoing employment (78%)**, followed by **being able to contribute to the well-being of other Aboriginal people (71.1%)** – this finding reinforces the finding about the main reason for joining the SA public service which was to make a contribution to the Indigenous community.
- ☒ The third and fourth most frequently cited factors were having a **good manager or supervisor (65.3%)** and **opportunities for training and development (64.7%)**.
- ☒ The next most important factors were **salary (60.7%)**, **flexible working conditions (59.5%)** and working with **managers who understand, or try to understand, Aboriginal culture (59.0%)**. Interestingly, working with employees who understand,

or try to understand, Aboriginal culture was less frequently cited (49.1%) – highlighting the important leadership role of management.

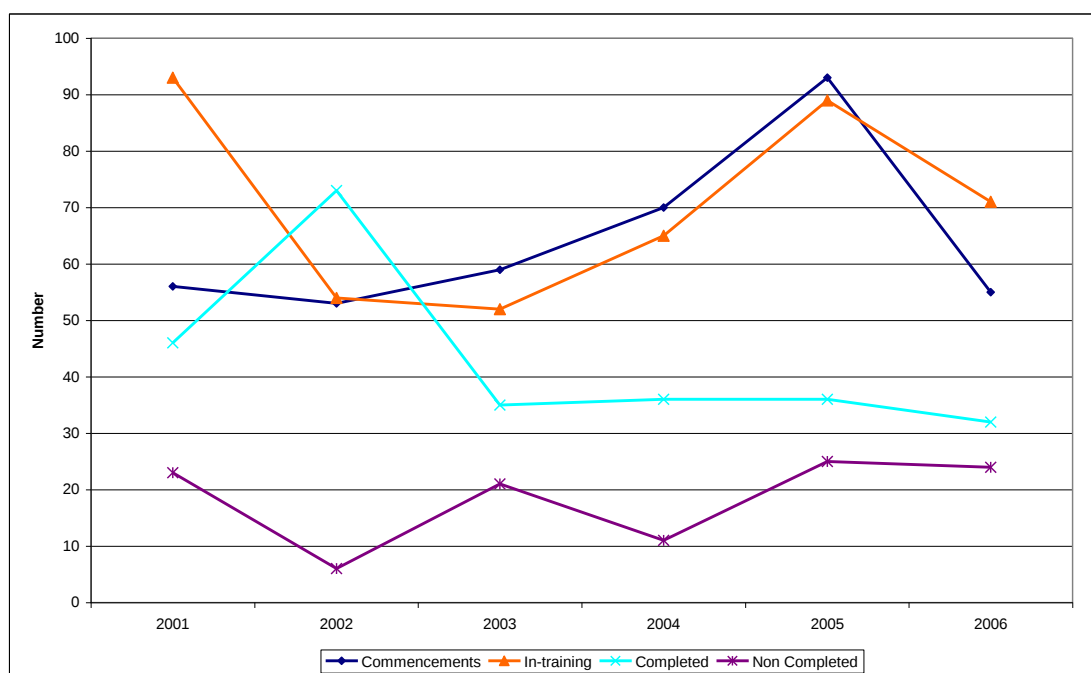
- ☑ One interesting finding was that being in a workplace where the Aboriginal person **feels valued** (51.4%) emerges as more important than being valued for being Aboriginal (38.7%).
- ☑ Other factors of importance included having opportunities to use skills and expertise (56.1%) and for career development (54.3%), being supported in the workplace (54.9%) and being part of an Aboriginal employee network (56.6%) – which highlights the valuable role of SAPSIEN.

### 1.3.5 APPRENTICESHIPS AND TRAINEESHIPS FINDINGS: DATASET ANALYSIS

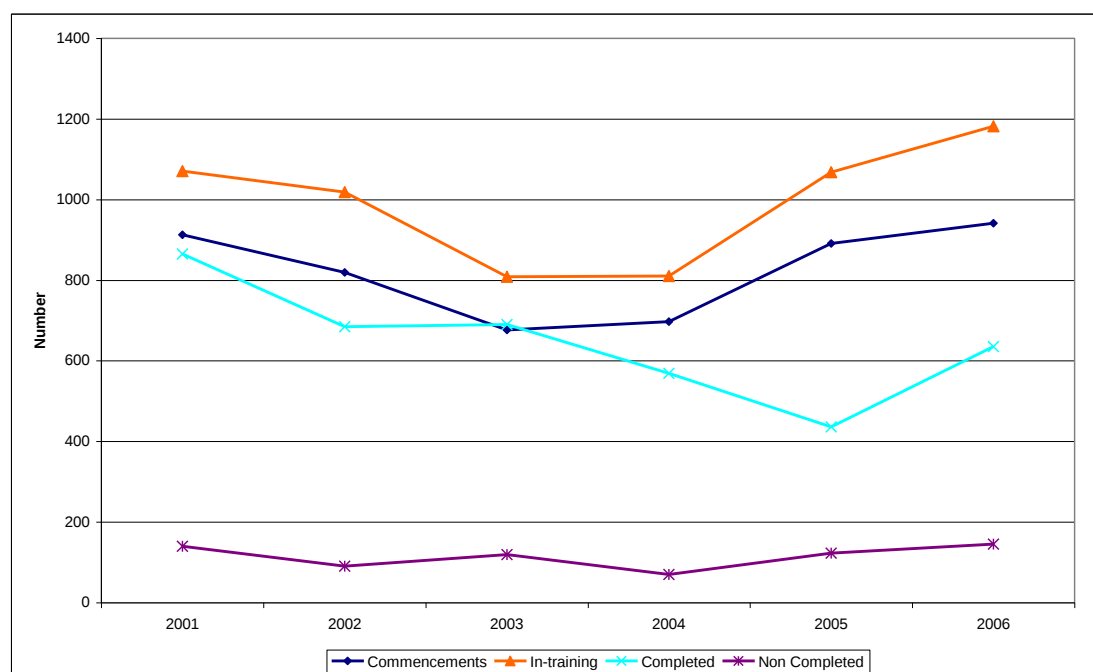
- The characteristics of SAPS apprentice and trainee activity, from the period April 2000 to March 2006, were quite **different** for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal apprentices and trainees. As a percentage of in-training:
  - **Commencements** were consistently been higher for Aboriginal apprentices and trainees than for non-Aboriginal apprentices and trainees during the years 2002 to 2005. However, in 2006, the difference had reduced.
  - **Completions** were lower for Aboriginal apprentices and trainees in 2001, 2003, 2004, and 2005, but higher in 2002 and similar in 2005.
  - **Non-completions** were **higher** for Aboriginal apprentices and trainees in all of the years 2001-2006.

The following 2 graphs summarise the differences for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal apprentices and trainees in terms of commencements, completions and non-completions.

FIGURE 4: SAPS ABORIGINAL APPRENTICE & TRAINEE ACTIVITY, 12 MONTHS ENDING QUARTER, MARCH 2001 TO MARCH 2006



**FIGURE 5: SAPS NON-ABORIGINAL APPRENTICE & TRAINEE ACTIVITY, 12 MONTHS ENDING QUARTER, MARCH 2001 TO MARCH 2006**



### **Contract of Training and Existing SAPS Workers**

- Of SAPS contracts of training that commenced in the 12 months ending 31 March **2006**, **10.9%** of Aboriginal contract of training commencements were **existing workers** (that is, were recruited from inside the SAPS). This compared with 57.4% of non-Aboriginal Contract of Training commencements. Data for the 12 months ending 31 March **2005** show a similar difference.
- Contract of Training **in-training** figures at 31 March **2006**, indicated that only **21.4%** of Aboriginal apprentices and trainees in-training were **existing workers** (recruited from within the SAPS), compared with 62.4% for non-Aboriginal employees. Data for the 12 months ending 31 March **2005** show a similar difference.

## **1.4 RATING THE ABORIGINAL PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE**

Survey respondents were asked to provide a five-point rating of a number of statements about the experience of being an Aboriginal employee in the SA public sector. An average rating was calculated for each statement, in order to compare the ratings and to identify trends in the survey sample's assessment of the Aboriginal employment experience in the SA public sector. (See table at the end of this section.)

- ⇒ On this basis, survey respondents gave their **most positive rating** to this statement:

*As an Indigenous employees in the SA public sector I have been able to contribute positively to the Indigenous South Australian community.*

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Given that this was the main reason the majority had joined the sector, this was a positive finding.

⇒ The **second most positive** ratings were given to these three statements:

*Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees usually work well together in my **work unit**.*

*Most of **my colleagues** in my work unit work sensitively with Indigenous employees.*

*Most of **the managers** in my work unit work sensitively with Indigenous employees.*

The strong level of agreement with these three statements was encouraging, because it indicated that in their immediate work unit, Aboriginal employees were being treated with sensitivity and that good working relationships exist. This became less positive outside of the work unit with less agreeing with these statements. In part this was likely to reflect the negative perceptions of government and the public service held by many Aboriginal people and stood in contrast to the assessment given to immediate work units.

⇒ It was also likely to reflect the **most negative** assessment given, which again saw the SA public service as a whole being racist to Aboriginal employees:

*In my experience Indigenous employees experience racist behaviour.*

⇒ Having assessed the behaviour of colleagues and managers as sensitive to Aboriginal employees, a distinct difference was apparent in the assessment given to cultural competence. The **second and third most negative** assessments were applied to these statements –

*In my experience, non-Indigenous **employees** in the SA public sector have a reasonable understanding of Aboriginal culture.*

*In my experience, non-Indigenous **managers** in the SA public sector have a reasonable understanding of Aboriginal culture.*

This reinforced the findings made about the need for significant improvement in managers', and more so employees', knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal history, issues and needs, and in the process, developing the cultural competence needed to create fully inclusive work environments.

⇒ Finally, the survey sample was more positive about Aboriginal employees having the same opportunities for training and development as non-Aboriginal employees, but less positive about their opportunities for promotion and career advancement and about their opportunities to act in roles that would advance their career prospects.

TABLE 1: RATING THE PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

| Statement                                                                                                                                                    | Rating                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>As an Indigenous employee in the SA public sector I have been able to contribute positively to the Indigenous South Australian community.<sup>2</sup></i> | (Most positive)           |
| <i>Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees usually work well together in my <b>work unit</b>.</i>                                                            | (Positive)                |
| <i>Most of <b>my colleagues</b> in my work unit work sensitively with Indigenous employees.</i>                                                              |                           |
| <i>Most of <b>the managers</b> in my work unit work sensitively with Indigenous employees.</i>                                                               |                           |
| <i>Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees have the same opportunities for training and development.</i>                                                     | Neutral Rating            |
| <i>Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees usually work well together in my <b>agency/Department</b></i>                                                     |                           |
| <i>Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees usually work well together in the <b>SA public sector</b></i>                                                     | Neutral-Slightly Negative |
| <i>Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees have the same opportunities for promotion and career development.</i>                                             |                           |
| <i>Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees have the same opportunities to act in roles or positions that would advance their career prospects.</i>           |                           |
| <i>In my experience non-Indigenous <b>managers</b> in the SA public sector have a reasonable understanding of Aboriginal culture.</i>                        |                           |
| <i>In my experience non-Indigenous <b>employees</b> in the SA public sector have a reasonable understanding of Aboriginal culture</i>                        | Negative Rating           |
| <i>In my experience Indigenous employees experience racist behaviour</i>                                                                                     | Most negative             |

#### 1.4.1 ACHIEVING THE 2% TARGET – BARRIERS IDENTIFIED BY ABORIGINAL PUBLIC SERVANTS

The sample was asked to identify in their own words the barriers to achieving the 2% Target. These were the most frequently identified barriers–



The need for more culturally inclusive application, selection and induction processes. This includes strategies that address low levels of confidence and self-esteem, and enhanced information about and promotion of the SA public sector.

<sup>2</sup> Given that this was the main reason the majority had joined the sector, this is a positive finding.

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-  The need to increase the cultural competence of the non- Aboriginal workforce, in order to recruit and retain Aboriginal employees.
-  Insufficient support provided to Aboriginal applicants and employees, including skilled mentors and coaches. This support needs to begin prior to selection process, to extend to early phase of employment and continue as part of career development.
-  Insufficient long term, secure employment available. Aboriginal employees are more likely than non-Aboriginal employees to receive short term contracts.
-  Insufficient commitment on the part of many in senior management. This includes under-usage of the Aboriginal Employment Program for recruitment.
-  The need for increased attention to Aboriginal employees' professional and career development.
-  The need to address the lack of formal qualifications by many Aboriginal applicants/employees by providing more training and development opportunities to employees and taking into account Aboriginal-specific expertise that does not necessarily translate into recognised credentials.
-  The need to address racism, discrimination and bullying by some public sector employees.

## 1.5 SURVEY CONCLUSIONS

Despite the negative perceptions held of the public service as an entity, Aboriginal people are seeking long term involvement with the sector, partly because of their motivation to contribute positively to Aboriginal communities, and partly because of their own need for secure employment and the benefits this brings (for example, ongoing opportunities for professional and career development). The trend to provide more short term contracts of work and less long term employment is seen as one of the major barriers to achieving the 2% target in a way that is sustainable, and therefore, meaningful.

The feedback provided indicates that while the public sector as a whole is regarded as a place where Aboriginal people can experience racism and discrimination, the immediate workplace is seen as one where Aboriginal people are treated with sensitivity by both other employees and managers. At the same time, there is a strong recommendation to address limited knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal history and issues as part of a wider strategy to increase the cultural competence of the public sector non-Aboriginal workforce. It is interesting that this gap in capacity has not clouded the respondents' judgement about the capacity for sensitive behaviour in the workplace. That this exists means that a strong foundation exists from which to develop cultural capability by filling a significant knowledge gap and further developing cross-cultural skills.

Apart from building non-Aboriginal capacity, it is also recommended that more opportunities be made available for Aboriginal employees to develop their skills and career pathways. *Supported learning* is part of this process, with mentors, coaches and others supporting Aboriginal employees across the employment spectrum – by providing information via trusted intermediaries to those interested in seeking public sector employment, to re-designing selection, application and induction processes so that they are culturally sensitive and enable more informed participation by Aboriginal people, and providing various forms of support and supported learning, throughout the working years and through to retirement.

One of the survey's interesting findings is one which is frequently voiced by Aboriginal people but about which less has been written in the literature, and which is not a feature of most public sector Aboriginal employment strategies in Australia or elsewhere. This is the need for support that recognises the unique pressures faced by Aboriginal employees that arise both from being caught between the expectations and standards of the public service and those of Aboriginal families and communities. The Aboriginal public sector workforce can work hard for both in a '24/7' experience and this is not often understood, either by their communities, or by their employers.

Having Aboriginal employees as visible members of the public sector workforce sends a positive message to Aboriginal communities. However, this positive outcome brings its own costs as many Aboriginal workers are placed in the role of straddling their own communities' needs and those of their public sector employing organisation. They can be expected to represent all Aboriginal peoples even though it is possible only to represent themselves. There are often high expectations placed on them in terms of providing role models and mentors to other Aboriginal employees, and in providing time to be official representatives on a range of committees and other structures. These create significant time and personal pressures that are rarely acknowledged in public sector support strategies. Compounding the pressure is that, in common with all minority groups being judged by the majority, every failure is magnified even if it is a failure that also applies to members of the majority group.

There have been numerous equity-promoting strategies developed by the South Australian and other Australian public services and while the intentions are positive, their implementation is often compromised. In part this is a reflection of the sheer difficulty involved in achieving access and equity and cultural inclusion goals. In part it is also due to the commitment to those strategies not being shared by all and by the resistance of some to any change in the *status quo*.

Setting a target is a positive step because it calls agencies to account against a measurable outcome. However, it is important to ensure that sufficient resources exist to meet that target, and survey respondents have commented that this does not appear to be occurring.

## 1.6 SUMMARY OF PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS

### Recommendation 1

It is recommended that the Target of 2% Aboriginal employment in the South Australian public sector be accompanied by sub-targets that measure quality as well as quantity of employment outcomes. These would apply to –

- a) retention as well as recruitment rates;
- b) all levels of appointment;
- c) short term as distinct from ongoing employment;
- d) contracts of training as distinct from other employment;
- e) employment in Aboriginal-specific units as distinct from employment in broader agency roles.

### Recommendation 2

It is recommended that existing strategies to increase workforce cultural competence be continued and with greater attention to developing knowledge of Aboriginal culture and history. It is also recommended that cross-cultural training be designed to develop skills as well as raising awareness and sensitivity, and that training be ongoing.

### **Recommendation 3**

It is recommended that training to enhance cultural competence include specific attention to the role of managers in promoting culturally secure work environments that actively discourage racism and discrimination. It is also recommended that strategies be developed to further encourage Aboriginal employees to report experiences of racism and discrimination.

### **Recommendation 4**

It is recommended that greater attention be paid to recruitment and work placement that achieves 'critical mass' for Aboriginal employees.

### **Recommendation 5**

It is recommended that recruitment and retention strategies reflect the importance placed by Aboriginal employees on having the opportunity to enhance the well-being of Aboriginal South Australians, and on having their expertise valued and utilised more effectively.

### **Recommendation 6**

It is recommended that existing strategies designed to build pathways for Aboriginal people into the South Australian public sector are continued, and that a stronger emphasis is placed on an early intervention approach that involves developing pathways from secondary school onwards.

It is also recommended that Aboriginal traineeships and apprenticeships are linked to ongoing employment in the public sector, and that increased numbers of Aboriginal cadetships and scholarships are provided.

### **Recommendation 7**

It is recommended that a specific communication strategy is developed in collaboration with Aboriginal community representatives to promote the South Australian public sector as an employer to Aboriginal people and that this strategy addresses information gaps about how the sector operates and what is expected of its employees. The strategy should have multiple components and communication techniques, including word of mouth through trusted intermediaries, including existing Aboriginal public sector employees.

### **Recommendation 8**

It is recommended that recruitment processes targeting Aboriginal people include information sessions that provide them with an informed approach to applying for public sector employment.

### **Recommendation 9**

It is recommended that culturally inclusive processes, including informed application and interview preparation, user-friendly wording of Job and Specification statements, and Aboriginal membership of selection panels, be part of established HR policy and practice.

### **Recommendation 10**

It is recommended that existing support strategies (particularly mentoring, 'buddying' and the provision of opportunities for structured Aboriginal networking) be continued and that additional strategies are developed to assist Aboriginal employees in meeting the specific challenges arising from being representatives of the public sector and of their own communities.

### **Recommendation 11**

It is recommended that a strategy is developed by the South Australian public sector to ensure that current caps on full time equivalent positions and the reducing availability of ongoing appointments do not reduce the quantity and quality of Aboriginal employment.

### **Recommendation 12**

It is recommended that succession planning be established in relation to existing Aboriginal employees and that exit interviews are conducted with all Aboriginal employees who leave the South Australian public sector, in order to continuously improve future recruitment and retention strategies.

### **Recommendation 13**

It is recommended that an *Aboriginal Workforce Development Strategy* be planned and implemented to complement the *Indigenous Employment Strategy* and the Target of 2% Aboriginal employment in the South Australian public sector. It is further recommended that this is supported by the establishment of an *Aboriginal Workforce Development Strategy Unit*, an *Aboriginal Workforce Development Strategy Advisory Group*, and a network of *Aboriginal Workforce Development Strategy Liaison Officers*.

### **Recommendation 14**

It is recommended that a regular survey of South Australian public sector Aboriginal employees be undertaken by an external, credible source and that this feedback be considered part of the accountability process associated with meeting the 2% Target, and with informing the *Indigenous Employment Strategy* and the proposed *Aboriginal Workforce Development Strategy*.

## Appendix A. METHODOLOGY DETAILS

### Analysis of SAPS data sets

1. Using OPE *Workforce Information Collection* data, preparation of a **general profile** of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participation in the public sector workforce identifying:
  - a. the number of individual and FTE employees,
  - b. gender profile,
  - c. age profile, and
  - d. agency breakdown.
2. Using OPE *Workforce Information Collection* data, a comparison was undertaken of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal employees in relation to the following **employment characteristics**:
  - a. type of appointment (ongoing, long term contract, short term contract, other),
  - b. retention as measured by the length of service of employee in current agency and length of service of employee in the public sector,
  - c. recruitment to current position, distinguishing between recruitment internal and external to public sector,
  - d. reasons for separation from latest position within public sector, and
  - e. “salary” profile of employees as an indicator of “level” of appointment.
3. Using DFEEST *Contract of Training* data, a comparative analysis was undertaken of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal **contracts of training**, for:
  - a. commencements and recommencements,
  - b. completions,
  - c. non-completions (cancellations and withdrawals), and
  - d. numbers in-training.

### Survey of SAPS Aboriginal employees

A survey was designed in collaboration with the Project Reference Group and distributed by the *South Australian Public Sector Indigenous Employee Network* (SAPSIEN). Survey participants were offered the choice of completing on-line (which all did), by hard copy, or by telephone interview.

There was a positive response to the Project survey, with **173** people participating and representing a response rate of between **58% and 69%**.

the 1990s, the incidence of *S. flexneri* has increased in the United Kingdom [10]. In the United States, *S. flexneri* has been reported as the most common serotype in children with acute bacterial dysentery [11].

There is a paucity of data on the epidemiology of *S. flexneri* in the United Kingdom. In the 1970s, *S. flexneri* was the most commonly isolated serotype from patients with acute bacterial dysentery in the United Kingdom [12]. In the 1980s, *S. flexneri* was the most commonly isolated serotype from patients with acute bacterial dysentery in the United Kingdom [13].

In the 1990s, *S. flexneri* was the most commonly isolated serotype from patients with acute bacterial dysentery in the United Kingdom [14]. In the 2000s, *S. flexneri* was the most commonly isolated serotype from patients with acute bacterial dysentery in the United Kingdom [15].

In the 2010s, *S. flexneri* was the most commonly isolated serotype from patients with acute bacterial dysentery in the United Kingdom [16]. In the 2020s, *S. flexneri* was the most commonly isolated serotype from patients with acute bacterial dysentery in the United Kingdom [17].

In the 2030s, *S. flexneri* was the most commonly isolated serotype from patients with acute bacterial dysentery in the United Kingdom [18]. In the 2040s, *S. flexneri* was the most commonly isolated serotype from patients with acute bacterial dysentery in the United Kingdom [19].

In the 2050s, *S. flexneri* was the most commonly isolated serotype from patients with acute bacterial dysentery in the United Kingdom [20]. In the 2060s, *S. flexneri* was the most commonly isolated serotype from patients with acute bacterial dysentery in the United Kingdom [21].

In the 2070s, *S. flexneri* was the most commonly isolated serotype from patients with acute bacterial dysentery in the United Kingdom [22]. In the 2080s, *S. flexneri* was the most commonly isolated serotype from patients with acute bacterial dysentery in the United Kingdom [23].

In the 2090s, *S. flexneri* was the most commonly isolated serotype from patients with acute bacterial dysentery in the United Kingdom [24]. In the 2100s, *S. flexneri* was the most commonly isolated serotype from patients with acute bacterial dysentery in the United Kingdom [25].