

Tasmanian  
State Service

Aboriginal  
Employment  
Strategy  
to 2022





# Tasmanian State Service Aboriginal Employment Strategy to 2022

Respecting and celebrating the survival and enduring strengths of Aboriginal people, culture and history, and valuing the inherent and unique qualities, knowledge and experiences that Aboriginal employees bring to the Tasmanian State Service.

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**We would like to acknowledge the valued contribution of Aboriginal State Service employees, other State Service employees, Aboriginal Organisations and Service Providers in the development of the Strategy.**

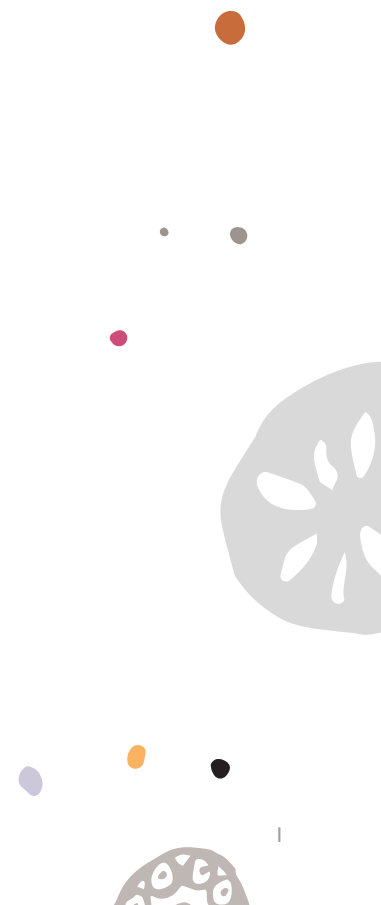
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The Tasmanian State Service acknowledges Aboriginal people as the traditional owners and custodians of lutruwita (Tasmania) and recognises Tasmanian Aboriginal people's deep and continuous historical connection to the land and sea.

# Contents

Artwork details	2
Message from the Head of the Tasmanian State Service	4
Guiding Principles	7
Strategy Target	8
Making a Change	
<b>Action area 1:</b> Attract, recruit and retain Aboriginal employees	10
<b>Action area 2:</b> Develop career pathways for Aboriginal employees	12
<b>Action area 3:</b> Respect and celebrate Tasmanian Aboriginal people, their values, culture and knowledge	14
<b>Action area 4:</b> Employ Aboriginal people to deliver culturally safe and inclusive services and programs	16
Governance, monitoring and reporting	18
Support and Contacts	18





## About the artwork – *Linking Journeys*

The artwork featured on the inside cover of this Strategy (elements of which also appear throughout) is a printed lino-cut design with each section and image contained within the artwork representing Tasmanian Aboriginal people and culture. The kelp is a reminder of the need to sustain and look after our valuable resources and the background design represents different Tasmanian Aboriginal groups. The first of the three central circles represents Tasmanian Aboriginal organisations, the second represents Government agencies connecting with Aboriginal organisations, and the third represents all coming together with a strong focus on sustaining Tasmanian Aboriginal culture and Country.

## Artist background and statement

Takira Simon-Brown is a Palawa woman born in Nipaluna (Hobart) in 1983 and resides on the Trumanyapayna area of Paradareme country. The majority of Takira's family reside at Truwuna (Cape Barren Island).

Takira is a descendant of Chief Mannalargenna of the Plangermaireener nation, and her grandmother, Joan Brown, was a well known and highly respected shell stringer from Cape Barren Island.

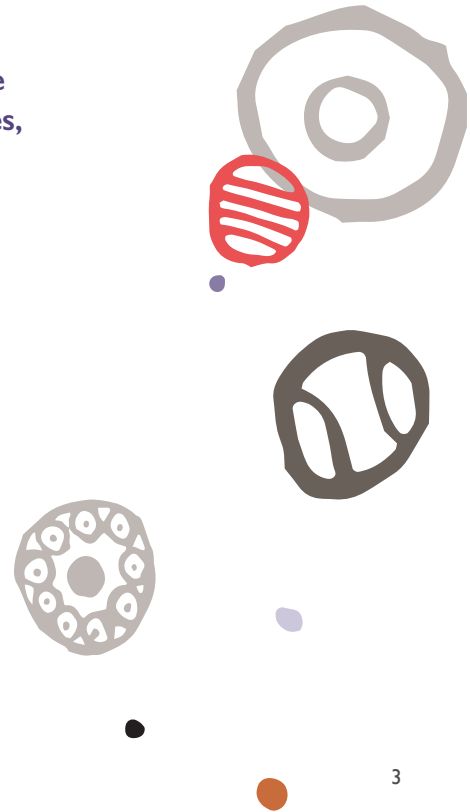
Takira's mother, June Brown, continues to practice the ancient and unique cultural practice of shell stringing. Takira is an advocate of Aboriginal mental health and firmly believes that art, music, healthy food and supportive family and friends are essential for everyone, particularly those who struggle with mental health issues.

Takira is currently studying a combined Bachelor of Arts at the University of Tasmania.



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Tasmanian Aboriginal people have survived for over 40,000 years and belong to one of the oldest living cultures in the world. Tasmanian Aboriginal people are resilient, strong and dynamic and continue to expand the narrative to ensure their connectedness with culture, Country and Ancestors, thus, reaffirming the relationships between all things; to each other, to the environment and to the people that came before. This evolving narrative reinforces and strengthens interdependencies and reciprocal responsibilities which are fundamental to concepts of identity and the holistic wellbeing of Tasmanian Aboriginal people. Despite ongoing disadvantage and the impact of historical, cultural and social legacies, Tasmanian Aboriginal people are significant contributors to the Tasmanian community excelling in all aspects of life.







# Message from the Head of the Tasmanian State Service

The Aboriginal Employment Strategy is a whole-of-Service approach that demonstrates the Tasmanian Government's commitment to building a capable and versatile Aboriginal workforce across all levels and classifications of the Tasmanian State Service.

The Strategy is grounded in the knowledge that Aboriginal people face long standing historical, cultural and social barriers to accessing employment. By providing improved employment opportunities, the Tasmanian Government is contributing to extending economic participation for Tasmanian Aboriginal people, with the follow-on benefits including improved health outcomes and a higher standard of living for Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

The Strategy has been developed following statewide consultation with State Service Aboriginal employees, Tasmanian State Service agencies and Aboriginal organisations, unions and service providers.



**Jenny Gale**

Head of the Tasmanian State Service



## The consultation process identified key themes including:

- respectful and culturally safe workplaces;
- development opportunities for current employees;
- opportunities for employment pathways and scholarships;
- indigenisation of State Service work places/physical environment; and
- the need for Aboriginal employees to be employed in areas that deliver services to Aboriginal people.

The Strategy sets out the key objectives and actions to be implemented across the Tasmanian State Service to attract, retain and support the careers of Aboriginal people. The Tasmanian State Service Aboriginal Employment Strategy is supported by an Action Plan that provides implementation details and timeframes.

While the Strategy focuses on attracting, retaining, supporting and progressing the employment of Aboriginal employees, it also recognises the important role that the Tasmanian State Service can have in providing opportunities for Aboriginal employees to gain transferable skills and experiences to progress career options both within and outside of the State Service.

We will continue to work collaboratively across agencies and with Aboriginal people to implement the Strategy as we strive to attract, retain and support more Aboriginal people in all occupations and across all classifications, agencies and locations of the Tasmanian State Service.







# Guiding Principles

- Aboriginal employees value-add to all workplaces.
- Aboriginal people are resilient and draw on a range of inherent cultural strengths.
- Aboriginal employees bring a unique set of knowledge, skills and experiences to the workplace.
- Acknowledge that Aboriginal people have specific cultural and kin obligations.
- Recognise the ongoing impact of historical, cultural and social legacies on Aboriginal people.
- Recognise that Aboriginal employees may need to navigate a range of moral, cultural, political and personal dilemmas where their own values and expectations may not align with workplace policies, practices and expectations.
- The business of workplaces and work requirements can be personal for Aboriginal employees where kin and/or community expectations can impact beyond the work environment.
- Aboriginal people are not necessarily Aboriginal 'experts'.
- Accept that in order for people to be equal, sometimes we need to treat people differently.

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**Please note:**  
Throughout the Strategy the term 'Aboriginal' refers to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders people. In line with concepts of indigeneity the Strategy will incorporate the use of local language names for specific geographical locations as appropriate.

## STRATEGY TARGET

# What the Strategy aims to achieve

Those who participated in the consultation identified four key areas of action.

1. Attract, recruit and retain Aboriginal employees
2. Develop career pathways for Aboriginal employees
3. Respect and celebrate Tasmanian Aboriginal people, their values, culture and knowledge
4. Employ Aboriginal people to deliver culturally safe and inclusive services and programs

The current Tasmanian State Service workforce estimation is that approximately 2.9% identify as Aboriginal<sup>1</sup>. ABS data<sup>2</sup> shows that 5.5% of the Tasmanian population identifies as Aboriginal. ABS data also records that 3.8% of the total Tasmanian workforce are Aboriginal.

The Aboriginal Employment Strategy introduces an aspirational target to increase the number of Aboriginal employees working in the Tasmanian State Service from 3.0% in 2016 to 3.5% in 2022. This targeted increase equates to approximately an additional 150 Aboriginal employees and contributes significantly to an enhanced, inclusive and diverse State Service workforce that represents the Tasmanian community it serves.

1. 2018 Tasmanian State Service Employee Survey

2. 2016 ABS Census



## STRATEGY TARGET

# How the Strategy will achieve the target

Achieving the Tasmanian Aboriginal Employment Strategy target requires a demonstrated and ongoing commitment to working with and involving Aboriginal employees, Aboriginal organisations and services and Aboriginal people in the implementation of the Strategy and its associated actions. Regular and consistent Aboriginal input, feedback and advice relating to the Strategy and its actions will continue to inform and shape current and future initiatives.

The State Service Management Office, in the Department of Premier and Cabinet, will lead the Strategy's implementation and will collaborate across all Tasmanian State Service agencies. In addition to this the Office will undertake regular reviews to update the Action Plan and ensure that actions, including responsibilities and timeframes, are implemented, kept up to date and amended as appropriate.



# Attract, recruit and retain Aboriginal employees

The Tasmanian State Service is committed to increasing the employment of Aboriginal people to ensure a workforce that is representative of the wider Tasmanian population.

To achieve this, the Aboriginal Employment Strategy and associated Action Plans rely heavily on authentic, meaningful and ongoing consultation with Aboriginal State Service employees, Aboriginal stakeholders, Aboriginal organisations and service providers.

Aboriginal employees have the capacity to bring new ideas, perspectives and strengths to the workforce and help to ensure the provision of culturally responsive and respectful services to customers and clients. The Tasmanian State Service is committed to creating and maintaining a work environment that is attractive to Aboriginal employees and is a culturally safe workplace that can create, offer and support a range of employment opportunities and career options for Aboriginal employees.

Currently, the Tasmanian State Service has created 70 roles that are specifically for Aboriginal employees. These roles cover a range of occupations across various levels and awards including:

- rangers;
- policy officers;
- education officers; and
- health liaison officers.

An Aboriginal Employment Register is also available to directly recruit Aboriginal people into fixed term roles within the Tasmanian State Service.

To address this action area the Tasmanian State Service will focus on the following:



## Objectives

**Encourage and support Aboriginal people to apply for jobs in the Tasmanian State Service**

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**Develop and support career pathways for Aboriginal people**

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**Promote job opportunities to Aboriginal people**

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**Remove barriers to recruitment and selection processes**



## Actions

Work with Aboriginal organisations and service providers to facilitate workshops for Aboriginal people that provide information and assistance on how to apply for jobs in the Tasmanian State Service.

Investigate mentoring options for Aboriginal people seeking employment in the Tasmanian State Service.

Review 'Identified' and 'Tagged' Statements of Duties to remove barriers to employment for Aboriginal people.

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Dedicate specific positions for young Aboriginal people in Tasmanian State Service school-based traineeships.

Expand scholarship programs that support Aboriginal people's career pathways into the State Service.

Increase participation of Aboriginal people in graduate and agency led cadet programs.

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Develop a guide for agencies on how to promote job opportunities and encourage Aboriginal people to apply for jobs in the Tasmanian State Service.

Review the Aboriginal Employment Register to ensure its effectiveness and to increase its use within agencies and by Aboriginal people.

Review the use of identified and tagged positions to ensure they are effective and facilitate engagement and employment of Aboriginal people in the State Service.

Explore secondment opportunities between the State Service and Aboriginal organisations and other services who employ Aboriginal people.

Investigate opportunities for mobility within the State Service for Aboriginal employees.

Facilitate work experience opportunities for Aboriginal students.

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Develop Aboriginal cultural understanding training for selection panel members and delegates.



# Develop career pathways for Aboriginal employees

The Tasmanian State Service aims to encourage and support Aboriginal employees in the Tasmanian State Service to have rewarding, valued and fulfilling careers. The Tasmanian State Service aims to create and drive workforce change to facilitate an increase in the number of Aboriginal employees in senior leadership and management roles.

Currently the Tasmanian State Service:

- manages an Aboriginal Trainee Ranger program that enables trainee Aboriginal rangers to gain skills in land management;
- sponsors the Ida West Scholarship, which provides financial assistance to Aboriginal students completing formal qualifications at university or through vocational education (such as TasTAFE) in health and human services fields; and
- offers scholarships to Aboriginal employees to undertake a Graduate Certificate in the Public Sector Management Program.

To address this action area the Tasmanian State Service will focus on the following:





## Objectives

**Better understand the  
Tasmanian State Service  
Aboriginal workforce**

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**Build the leadership and  
management capabilities of  
Aboriginal employees**

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**Identify factors which  
prevent the career  
progression of Aboriginal  
employees**

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**Promote learning and  
development opportunities  
for Aboriginal employees**



## Actions

Map demographic profiles and classification levels of Aboriginal employees working in the Tasmanian State Service.

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Investigate, recommend and support initiatives to build Aboriginal leadership and management capabilities.

Identify opportunities for scholarships for Aboriginal employees who want to undertake further education.

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In collaboration with Aboriginal employees identify factors that impact on Aboriginal employees' attraction, retention and career progression.

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Develop and pilot an Aboriginal employee mentoring program.

Develop and pilot an Aboriginal employee buddying scheme.

Implement an Aboriginal employee newsletter to promote learning and development opportunities, and celebrate the strengths and success of Aboriginal employees.

## MAKING A CHANGE : ACTION AREA 3

# Respect and celebrate Tasmanian Aboriginal people, their values, culture and knowledge



The Tasmanian State Service respects and celebrates Tasmanian Aboriginal people and their culture, and recognises Aboriginal employees as important and valued members of the workforce. The Tasmanian State Service acknowledges the need for an explicit service-wide cultural respect framework. The framework will outline the commitment to the process of indigenisation across State Service workplaces thus ensuring inviting, culturally representative and inclusive work environments for Aboriginal employees and Aboriginal service users.

Aboriginal people are acknowledged as Tasmania's traditional owners at significant State Service events. Aboriginal cultural respect training is a key component of building inclusive

workplaces and improving service delivery and was included in the 2018 trial of the school-based trainee program and training for kindergarten teacher assistants.

The State health sector is implementing the *Cultural Respect Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health 2016–2026*, incorporating an e-learning cultural respect training module and it is exploring ways to increase cultural respect training opportunities.

To address this action area the Tasmanian State Service will focus on the following:



## Objectives

**Demonstrate respect for  
Aboriginal culture**

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**Build cultural  
understanding and respect**

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**Provide opportunities and  
support for Aboriginal  
employees to connect,  
participate in, and  
contribute to a range of  
cultural and professional  
initiatives and experiences**

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**Value and celebrate  
Aboriginal culture in  
Tasmanian State Service  
workplaces**

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**Include Aboriginal  
employees in the policy  
development process  
and the design of service  
delivery (refer to Action area 4)**



## Actions

Improve awareness of significant Tasmanian and national Aboriginal events.

Clarify and promote leave provisions, including flexible work practices to support Aboriginal employees to participate in significant Aboriginal cultural events, activities and obligations.

Develop guidelines for employees and managers to clarify, inform and promote parameters relating to leave entitlements for Aboriginal employees.

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Develop and implement a Tasmanian State Service Aboriginal cultural respect training program.

Develop protocols and procedures for providing an Acknowledgement and a 'Welcome to Country'. This will include consideration of use for internal meetings.

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Establish a voluntary group of Aboriginal employees in the Tasmanian State Service which provides a forum for employees to raise issues, support each other and review the progress of this Strategy and future initiatives.

Work with and support Aboriginal employees to organise regular meetings and Gatherings for Aboriginal State Service employees.

Support Aboriginal employees to attend, participate and contribute to regular meetings and Gatherings.

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Visually reflect Tasmanian Aboriginal culture across State Service workplaces, service delivery areas and online services.

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Develop mechanisms and processes for Aboriginal employees' unique voices to be heard, respected and valued across all sectors and levels of the Tasmanian State Service.

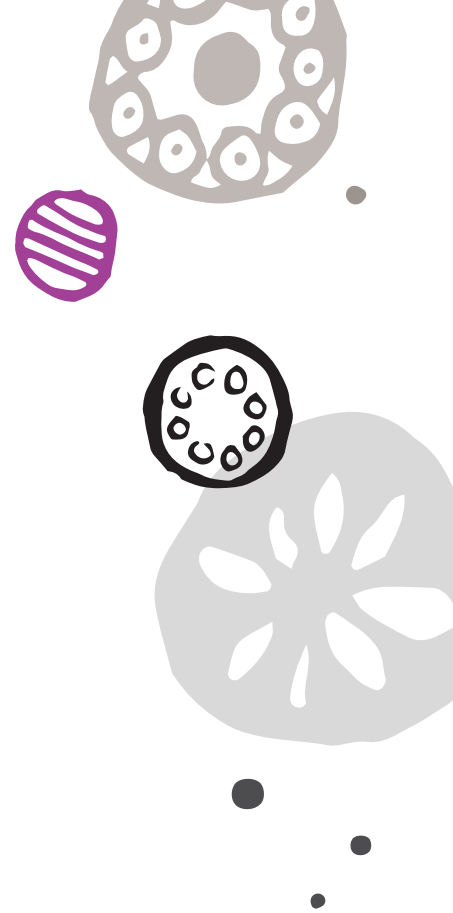
Seek, promote and encourage Aboriginal employees' input into policy development and decision-making.

## MAKING A CHANGE : ACTION AREA 4

# Employ Aboriginal people to deliver culturally safe and inclusive services and programs

The Tasmanian State Service workforce aims to reflect the community it serves, and acknowledges that Aboriginal employees bring value, unique expertise, knowledge and skills to all State Service agencies, service delivery and programs areas.

Further to this, the State Service also recognises that Aboriginal employees are best placed to ensure informed, culturally inclusive and respectful service provision to Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people bring to the workplace unique historical, cultural and social perspectives and understandings based on their collective experiences that they can draw on to inform policy development and advice and service delivery for Aboriginal people across the State Service.



Currently the Tasmanian State Service employs Aboriginal people to deliver services to Aboriginal people including:

- Aboriginal Early Years Education Workers in Child and Family Centres;
- Aboriginal Education Workers and Aboriginal Education Officers in schools;
- Aboriginal Liaison Officers in major hospitals;
- Aboriginal Discovery Rangers in Parks; and
- Aboriginal Learning Facilitator and Senior Curator (Indigenous Cultures) in museums.

While this action area focuses on ensuring culturally respectful and inclusive services to Aboriginal people, we also must recognise that Aboriginal employees should work in diverse roles across a range of Tasmanian State Service agencies and services, to help ensure that State Service programs are culturally responsive and celebrate the unique voices and culture of Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

Opportunities and possibilities for Aboriginal employment in the Tasmanian State Service are not limited to those working in areas providing services to Aboriginal people.

To address this action area the Tasmanian State Service will focus on the objectives and actions above:



## Objectives

**Increase the number of Aboriginal people working in and leading service delivery for Aboriginal people.**



## Actions

Work with Tasmanian State Service agencies to identify opportunities to increase the number of Aboriginal employees directly involved in the delivery of services and programs to Aboriginal people.

# Accountability

On behalf of the Employer, the Head of the State Service has overall responsibility for implementing the Aboriginal Employment Strategy.

Heads of Agencies are responsible for supporting the initiatives, championing and implementing actions within their agency and supporting whole-of-Service initiatives. To ensure successful implementation of the Strategy, including achieving the target of 3.5% Aboriginal employment in the Tasmanian State Service by 2022 it is vital that the key actions are regularly monitored and evaluated.

An important component of the monitoring and evaluation process will involve ongoing, regular and meaningful consultation and communication with Aboriginal State Service employees, Aboriginal organisations and service providers, and Aboriginal people.

# Reporting

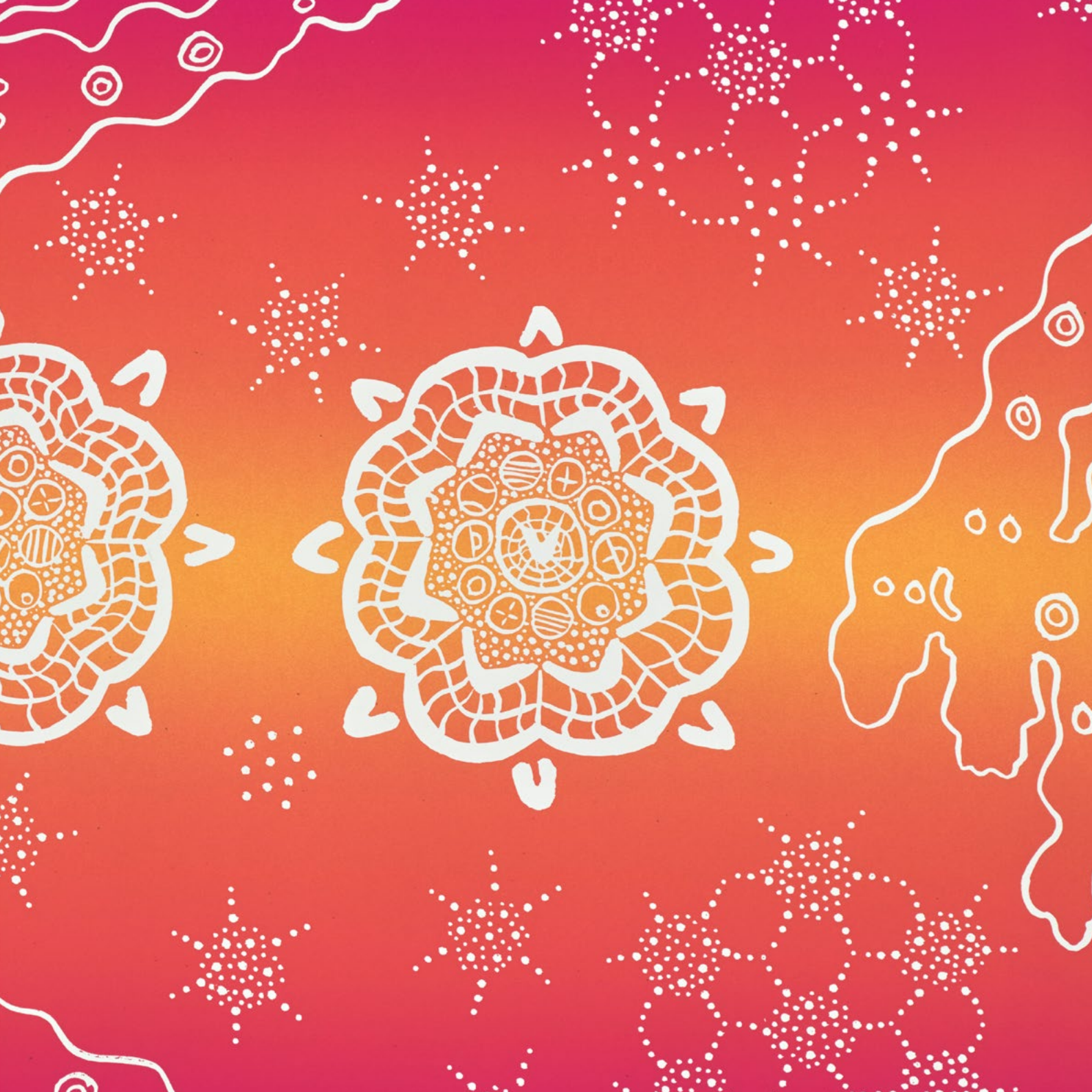
The State Service Management Office is accountable for monitoring and reporting on progress of the implementation of the Strategy to Heads of Agencies, through the Head of the State Service.

Agencies will be required to report annually to the Office on the initiatives and actions they have implemented to support the Aboriginal Employment Strategy and Action Plan.

A progress report will be published each year on the implementation of the Aboriginal Employment Strategy.









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