

Tasmanian State Service

Aboriginal Employment Action Plan 2026-2028



The Action Plan is to be read in combination with the Tasmanian State Service Aboriginal Employment Strategy Working together to create change.



Aboriginal Employment in the Tasmanian State Service – Our journey so far

Since the first Strategy and Action Plan in 2019 major changes have been achieved for Aboriginal people working in the Tasmanian State Service (TSS). Key achievements include enabling the valuable role of the Aboriginal Employee Network, access to Aboriginal Cultural Leave, recognition of Aboriginal family relationships across all leave types, Acknowledgements, and more Aboriginal visuals across workplaces and set employment targets were achieved.

While these achievements are important to recognise, there is further significant work to do to ensure that Aboriginal people in the TSS are treated fairly in a culturally respectful environment. Through a number of sources, including the formal review of the previous Aboriginal Employment Strategy, the TSS Employee Survey, the Aboriginal Employee Network, and feedback from Aboriginal people who have left the TSS, we know we need to do better. We need to improve not only the number of Aboriginal people in the TSS, but also the experience that current Aboriginal employees are having by providing meaningful careers, job security, and appropriate recognition of the value of Cultural knowledge.

The Aboriginal Employment Action Plan 2026-2028 (the Action Plan) articulates agreed actions to achieve the five focus areas set out in the Aboriginal Employment Strategy. To support the Action Plan, we will track progress of the following key targets:

- Increase the representation of Aboriginal people working in the Tasmanian State Service from 3.65% (2024) to 4.5% (2028).
- Increase the proportion of Aboriginal identified positions (ED10) which are permanent appointments to at least the equivalent proportion of the broader TSS workforce.
- Improve the experience of Aboriginal employees working in the TSS.
 - Lift the percentage of Aboriginal people who feel respected in their workplace from 57% in 2024 to 80% by 2028.
 - Lift the percentage of Aboriginal people who feel valued in their workplace from 55% in 2024 to 80% by 2028.

An explanation of terms used

- The term **Aboriginal** is used throughout this document and respectfully includes both Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- **Cultural load** is the (often invisible) additional workload borne by Aboriginal people at work, where they are the only Aboriginal person or one of a small number of Aboriginal people.

This is often done without any discussion or agreement (formal or informal), no agreed reduction or alteration to their workload, or paid more responsibility duties allowance.

There is a fine line between working with Aboriginal people and burdening Aboriginal employees with extra, unpaid work.

Cultural load takes its toll on Aboriginal people and needs to be recognised as a work health and safety issue and should be managed in the workplace as such.

Cultural Load is often in the form of extra work demands, which often include, but not limited to, being asked to organise significant (NAIDOC) events, or being asked to deliver a Welcome to Country or Acknowledgment.

There is also an expectation to educate other colleagues on Aboriginal Culture and represent (speak for) all Aboriginal people.

Please note: This definition has been adapted from the Diversity Council of Australia and continues to evolve.

- **Cultural Safety** – An environment where Aboriginal people are safe to be themselves and respected for who they are spiritually, socially, emotionally, and physically.

Aboriginal people have a right to bring their 'whole selves' (cultural identity) to the workplace and not experience any challenge or assault on their Identity or culture.

Please note: This is a general definition and a shortened version.

- The **Tasmanian State Service** is shortened to TSS.
- **Agencies** include all Government Departments and State Authorities as defined in the State Service Act 2000.

The Action Plan 2026 to 2028

How we will collectively achieve objectives in the priority focus areas.

To achieve the Tasmanian State Service Aboriginal Employment Strategy, priority focus areas and objectives will require an ongoing commitment from all agency employees to involve, work with, and listen to Aboriginal colleagues and Aboriginal people in the implementation of the Strategy and its associated objectives and 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. The Strategy is ongoing and driven by three-yearly Action Plans. The Action Plans will be formally reviewed within each three-year period.

The Aboriginal Employment Action Plan 2026-2028 is the first of these action plans and aims to set a strong foundation for ongoing improvement and change for Aboriginal employees in the Tasmanian State Service.

Focus Area 1 – Retain and develop Aboriginal employees

Build the leadership and management capabilities of Aboriginal employees

State Service Management Office Initiatives

Action 1.1

Develop and implement a State Service-wide leadership program tailored for Aboriginal employees, focusing on skills such as strategic leadership, people management, and cultural leadership.

Agency Initiatives

Action 1.2

Enable, support, and encourage Aboriginal employees to engage in leadership and management development opportunities.

Action 1.3

Provide Aboriginal employees with increased exposure to the operations of boards, committees, and other decision-making forums.

Provide Aboriginal employees with development and learning opportunities

State Service Management Office Initiatives

Action 1.4

Develop and implement a State Service-wide Aboriginal Employee Mentoring Program, partnering Aboriginal employees with leaders and recognised experts to support career growth and success.

Agency Initiatives

Action 1.5

Implement individual work plans for all Aboriginal employees which focus on their specific career goals and provide personalised development plans.

Action 1.6

Engage in the Aboriginal Employee Mentoring Program, enabling and encouraging Aboriginal employees, leaders, and recognised experts to participate in the program.

Focus Area 2 – Attract and recruit Aboriginal people



Embed Cultural best practice in attraction and recruitment of Aboriginal people

State Service Management Office Initiatives

Action 2.1

Develop and publish guidelines that outline culturally appropriate and safe practices for the attraction and recruitment of Aboriginal people.

Agency Initiatives

Action 2.2

Ensure attraction and recruitment processes are culturally appropriate for, and vacancies are appropriately appealing to, Aboriginal people.

Increase the proportion of Aboriginal people working in the Tasmanian State Service with a focus on young Aboriginal people

State Service Management Office Initiatives

Action 2.3

Ensuring the Aboriginal Employment Portal remains contemporary and effective in providing support to Aboriginal people to be job ready and gain employment with the Tasmanian State Service.

Agency Initiatives

Action 2.4

Create dedicated targeted roles for Aboriginal people within recruitment programs such as the Tasmanian Graduate Development Program and School-based Trainees Program.

Action 2.5

Increase the number of Aboriginal people employed to support Aboriginal children and young people, with a primary focus on the delivery of Commission of Inquiry recommendations.

Action 2.6

Advertise targeted, identified and tagged roles through avenues that will provide Aboriginal people with the best opportunity to notice opportunities.

Action 2.7

Proactively provide Aboriginal people opportunities to participate in mobility and development opportunities such as peer mentoring, secondments, and projects.

Focus Area 3 – Provide culturally respectful (safe) workplaces which are responsive to the needs of Aboriginal people

Enable Tasmanian State Service employees to improve their cultural understanding and respect

State Service Management Office Initiatives

Action 3.1

Review and continue to deliver TSS Aboriginal Cultural Respect Training across the Tasmanian State Service.

Action 3.2

Improve the understanding of safety and cultural load through the development, publication, and promotion of guidance material.

Agency Initiatives

Action 3.3

Reinforce zero tolerance for discrimination, racism, and harassment, and provide a clear complaints pathway for staff to feel confident to raise concerns.

Action 3.4

Support all staff, particularly senior leaders, to attend TSS Aboriginal Cultural Respect Training.

Recognise and respect Aboriginal culture and people in the Tasmanian State Service

State Service Management Office Initiatives

Action 3.5

Support the appropriate recognition of Aboriginal people through the review and publication of the TSS Aboriginal Acknowledgement and Welcome to Country Guide.

Action 3.6

Lead the annual Tasmanian State Service acknowledgments and celebration of NAIDOC Week.

Agency Initiatives

Action 3.7

Support Aboriginal people to participate in cultural traditions, and community and family obligations.

Action 3.8

Support the recognition and respect of Aboriginal culture and people through the appropriate application of Aboriginal Acknowledgement and Welcome to Country, and engagement in appropriate events.



Focus Area 4 – Employ Aboriginal people to deliver culturally informed services and programs with and for Aboriginal people

Improve job security for employees in Aboriginal identified and tagged positions (ED10)

State Service Management Office Initiatives

Action 4.1

Review, publish and provide guidance on Employment Direction 10 – Aboriginal identified and Tagged positions.

Agency Initiatives

Action 4.2

Increase job security for employees in Aboriginal identified positions.

Action 4.3

Minimise the time that Aboriginal identified and tagged positions are vacant to reduce negative impact of unfilled positions on vital Aboriginal support and services.

Appropriately recognise the cultural knowledge required to meet the Essential Requirements of an Aboriginal Identified positions under Employment Direction 10

State Service Management Office Initiatives

Action 4.4

Conduct a Tasmanian State Service-wide review of the classification of Aboriginal identified and tagged positions to ensure appropriate moderation and recognition of cultural knowledge and unique capabilities required.

Action 4.5

Develop guidance material to support the appropriate classification of Aboriginal identified and tagged positions.

Agency Initiatives

Action 4.6

Ensure appropriate processes are in place to enable Aboriginal identified and tagged roles to be appropriately classified.



Focus Area 5 – Improve data collection, reporting, and sharing

Improve data and reporting to better enable evidence-based decision making

State Service Management Office Initiatives

Action 5.1

Design safe and culturally appropriate ways to encourage staff to share information about their identity.

Action 5.2

Determine requisite qualitative and quantitative data to improve information and knowledge relating to Aboriginal employees.

Action 5.3

Develop effective mechanisms for agencies to provide data to SSMO for analysis and reporting.

Agency Initiatives

Action 5.4

Encourage, and provide opportunities for staff to safely share information about their cultural identity.

Action 5.5

Provide quality data and reporting relating to the employment and experience of Aboriginal people within their agency.

Enable collaboration and information sharing

State Service Management Office Initiatives

Action 5.6

Continue to lead the Aboriginal Employee Network, providing an opportunity for Aboriginal employees to collaborate.

Agency Initiatives

Action 5.7

Enable Aboriginal employees to actively engage in the Aboriginal Employee Network.

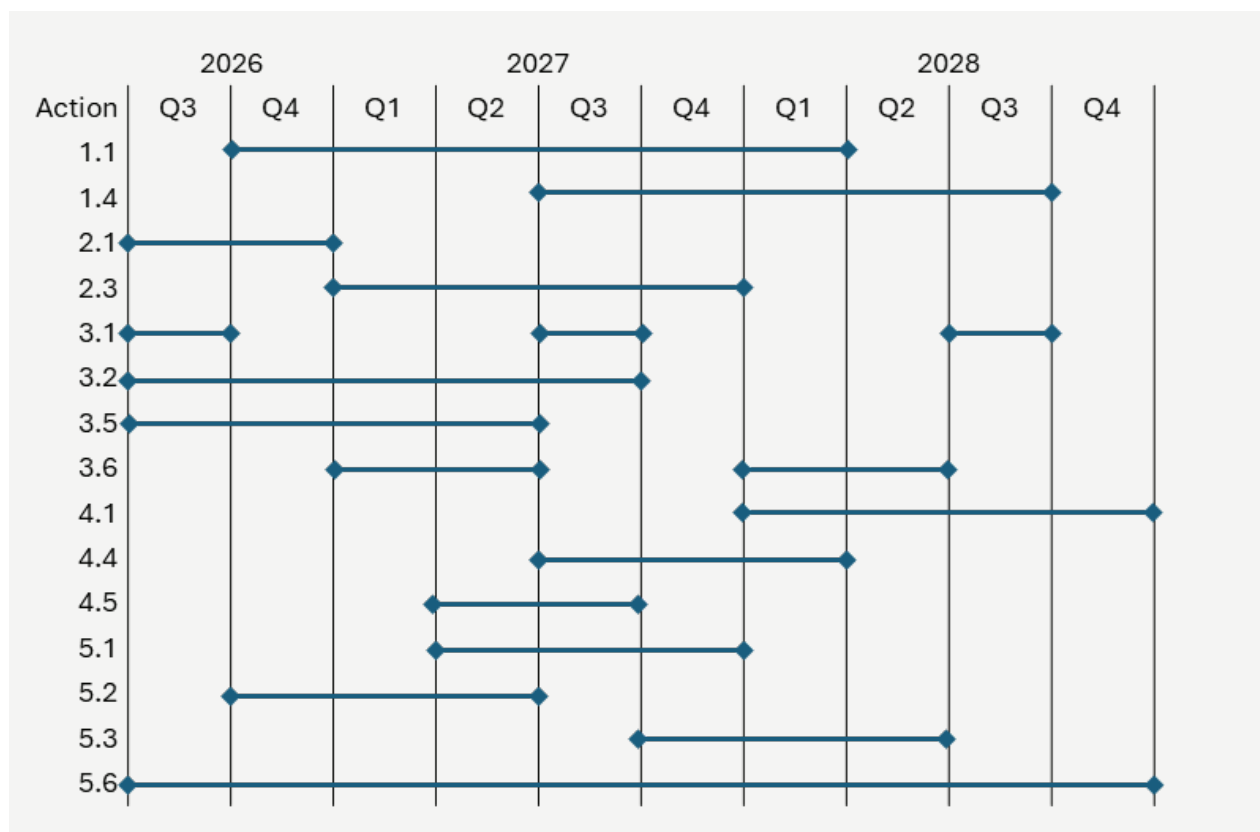
Action 5.8

Enable Aboriginal employees with the agency to effectively engage with other agency leadership to discuss employment related issues.

Implementation timeline

Delivering meaningful outcomes for Aboriginal employment in the Tasmanian State Service requires sustained focus and coordinated action over the life of this plan. To support implementation, this high-level timeline has been developed to provide clarity around the sequencing of key actions lead by the State Service Management Office, promote accountability, and ensure momentum is maintained across the plan's five focus areas.

The timeline recognises that some actions are foundational and must be prioritised early to enable progress in other areas, while others require continued effort over the life of the plan.





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Government

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