



**Aboriginal
and Torres
Strait Islander
Workforce Plan**

2024 – 2029

**MISSION
AUSTRALIA**

Mission Australia Copyright Statement

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Plan

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Acknowledgement

Mission Australia acknowledges the traditional custodians of lands throughout Australia, and we pay our respects to the Elders past, present and future for they hold the memories, the culture and dreams of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's first peoples and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and continual relationship with the land, and we acknowledge the importance of the young people who are the future leaders.

Mission Australia acknowledges the divergent cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This cultural safety framework is intended for both Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders living across Australia.





A message from the Knowledge Group

“We, the Knowledge Group, proudly present the forward for Mission Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Plan. This Plan embodies our collective commitment to fostering a culturally safe, inclusive, and respectful environment where the diversity and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are valued and celebrated.

In partnership with the Mission Australia People and Culture Team, we have developed a Workforce Plan to support cultural safety, ensure respect, and enhance the capability of our staff and leaders to engage effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

At the heart of our approach is deep listening and storytelling, which form the foundation of how we connect, learn, and grow. The wisdom shared among us creates understanding and opportunities for reflection and learning.

We acknowledge the deep cultural responsibility we feel to keep our family, communities, and people safe through truth-telling and sharing knowledge. This Workforce Plan invites you to join us in embracing that responsibility as we collectively build a stronger, connected, and culturally safe Mission Australia.

This Plan is just the beginning of our journey towards reconciliation and cultural safety. Its success relies on the active participation and collaboration of all Mission Australia staff. We extend our gratitude to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, stakeholders, and leaders who have contributed their knowledge and insights to its development.

Together, we have the opportunity to create an organisational culture that values diversity, respects cultural knowledge, and embraces the unique perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. By working collectively and committing ourselves to the objectives outlined in this Workforce Plan we will build a more inclusive, equitable, and culturally adept Mission Australia.

Join us on this important journey, and together, let us build a stronger, connected Mission Australia.”

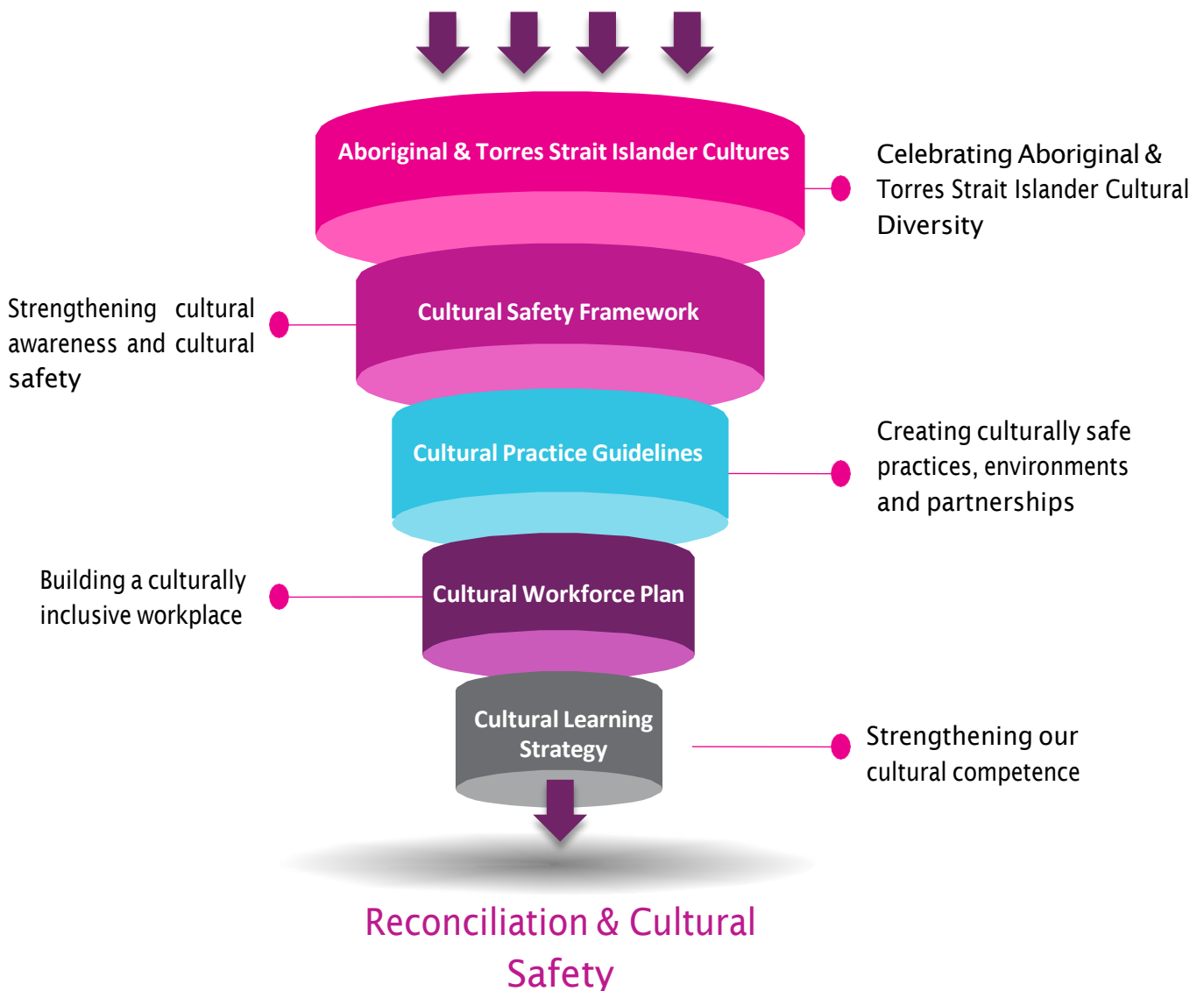
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Supporting our commitments to reconciliation, Mission Australia has committed to strengthening our cultural safety over the next five years, 2024-2029.

We have identified and will continue to develop, monitor and evaluate key initiatives that will strengthen our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural responsiveness in our work practices, environments and behaviours.

To achieve this, we have developed a suite of cultural tools that will work alongside our Reconciliation Action Plan:



Introduction

Mission Australia is committed to providing more employment and professional development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and aims to build a workforce that represents the local communities we serve. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment builds Mission Australia's cultural capability enabling us to develop more responsive services and programs.

We currently employ 171 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff (May 2023); this represents 7.25% of our total workforce. Of the 126 executive or senior manager positions, 5 (4%) are held by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander leaders. We also have 7.7% of staff who have opted not to disclose their cultural identity.

Over the next 5 years, we are committed to improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership representation and ensuring our workforce reflects the cultural diversity of our clients and the communities we serve.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Plan 2024 - 2029 sets out a range of initiatives to address these imbalances and increase representation across all services and business units within Mission Australia.

Developing the Framework

The Workforce Plan has been informed by evidence and consultations including:

- A series of consultations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and community members
- Consultations with Mission Australia's Knowledge Group and Quality Practice and Evaluation and Services
- Co-design workshops with Corporate Services and Knowledge Group
- A desktop review of Mission Australia's recruitment, employment and professional development documentation
- A literature review on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment practices

Strategic Alignment to Mission Australia's Commitments

The Workforce Plan will be supported by commitments and initiatives of key People Strategies and other key organisational policies and statements. These include:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Safety Framework 2024-2029
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Learning Strategy 2024-2029
- [Learning and Development Strategy 2022-2025](#)
- [Employee Guide to Career Development](#)

- Diversity & Inclusion Plan (currently in development)
- [Mission Australia Strategy 2020-2025](#)
- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [Values & Behaviours Statement](#)
- Ethics Policy
- [Good Working Relationships Policy](#)
- [Statement of Enterprise Ethics](#)
- [Reconciliation Action Plan 2022-2023](#)

Our Cultural Snapshot

As at May 2023, Mission Australia employs:

- 171 Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander staff, this represents 7.25% of our total workforce.
- NSW (89) and QLD (45) employ 78% of the total Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander workforce.
- Of the 126 executive or senior manager positions, 5 (3.97%) are held by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander leaders.
- A total of 182 (7.71%) staff have not disclosed their cultural identity.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees have a higher representation in lower salary bands and are underrepresented in the higher salary bands and leadership roles.

Staffing profile

State	Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Staff	Non-Indigenous Staff	Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Executive/Senior	Not recorded	Totals
ACT		2			2
NSW	87	1098	2	137	1322
NT	17	100		3	120
QLD	44	234	1	20	298
SA	5	156		5	166
TAS	4	118	1	3	125
VIC	1	72		3	76
WA	8	232	1	11	251
Total	166	2012	5	182	2360

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Plan

Purpose

For Mission Australia to become an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by creating culturally safe environments where diversity is embraced, and individuals are valued for their cultural knowledge and lived experience.

Objectives

The goals of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Plan is to:

- Attract, recruit, retain and develop more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff across Mission Australia.
- Provide leadership development pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.
- Educate, empower and promote understanding to build a culturally inclusive workplace that supports the values of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures.
- Strengthen accountability, monitoring and reporting of progress.

Strategic Priorities

Priorities	Initiatives
1. Cultural Integrity and Voice	<p>Strengthen cultural inclusion and capability.</p> <p>Co-design systems embedded in Corporate Services practices.</p> <p>Cultural communication strategy that promotes achievements and builds cultural knowledge</p>
2. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employee Lifecycle	<p>Attraction, recruitment and selection</p> <p>Onboarding and induction</p> <p>Retention and professional development</p> <p>Career pathways</p> <p>Leadership pathways</p>

Culturally responsive practices to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experience

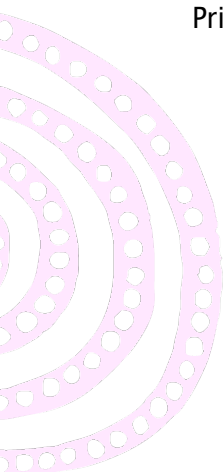
3. Inclusive Leadership

Senior cultural leadership of cultural safety
Senior leadership pathways and succession pipeline
National workforce strategy with a localised approach.

Priority I Cultural Integrity and Voice

Priority Initiatives

- Strengthen cultural inclusion and capability.
- Co-design systems embedded in Corporate Services practices.
- Cultural communication strategy that promotes achievements and builds cultural knowledge.



Priority 2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employee Lifecycle

Priority Initiatives

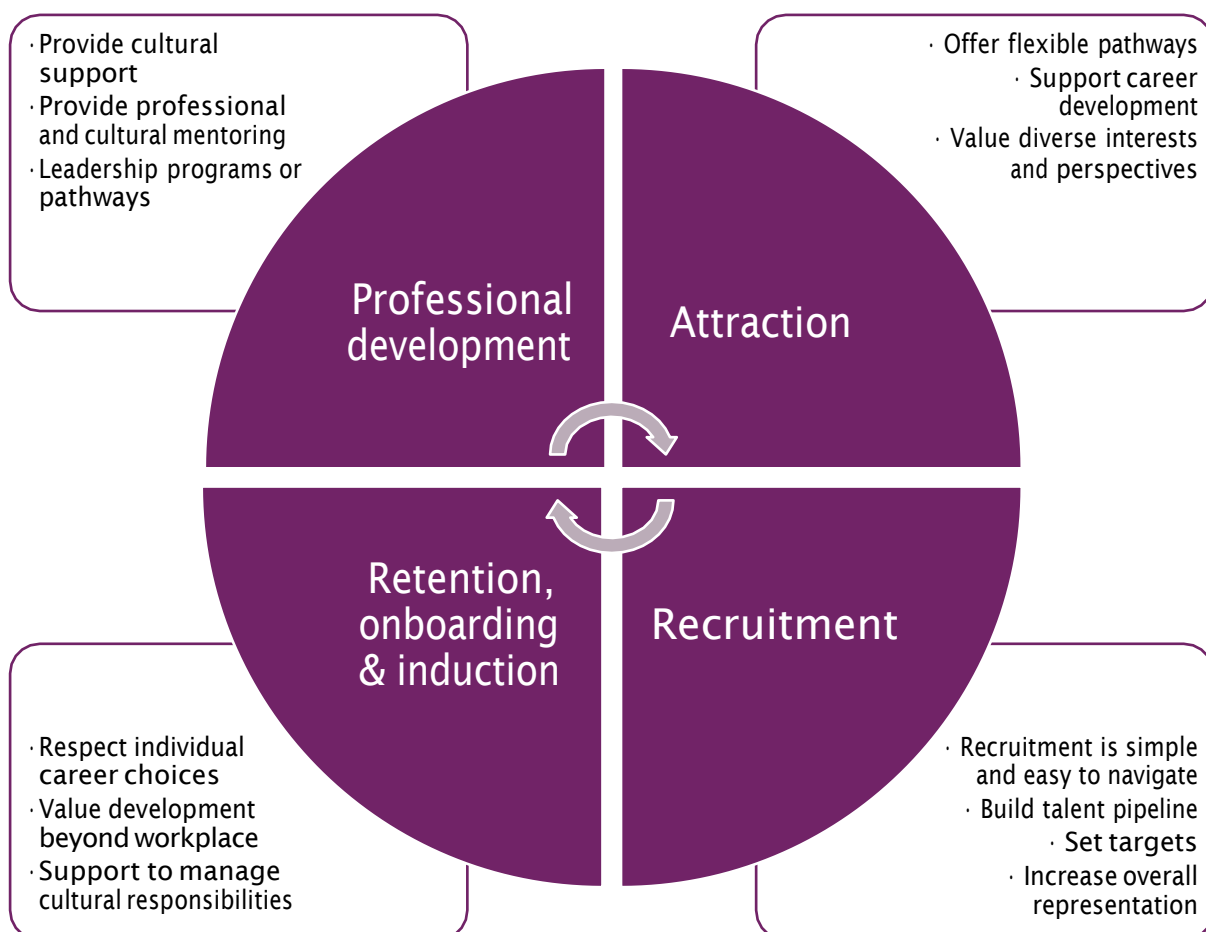
- Attraction, recruitment and selection
- Onboarding and induction
- Retention and Professional Development
- Career pathways
- Leadership pathways
- Culturally responsive practices to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experience.

Culturally safe work environments contribute to positive working experiences that underpin the recruitment, development and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

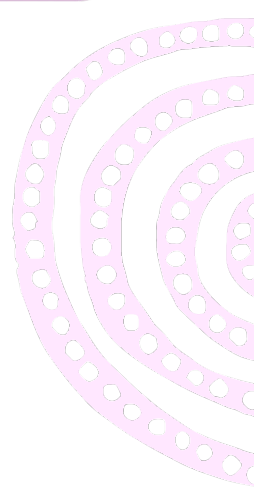
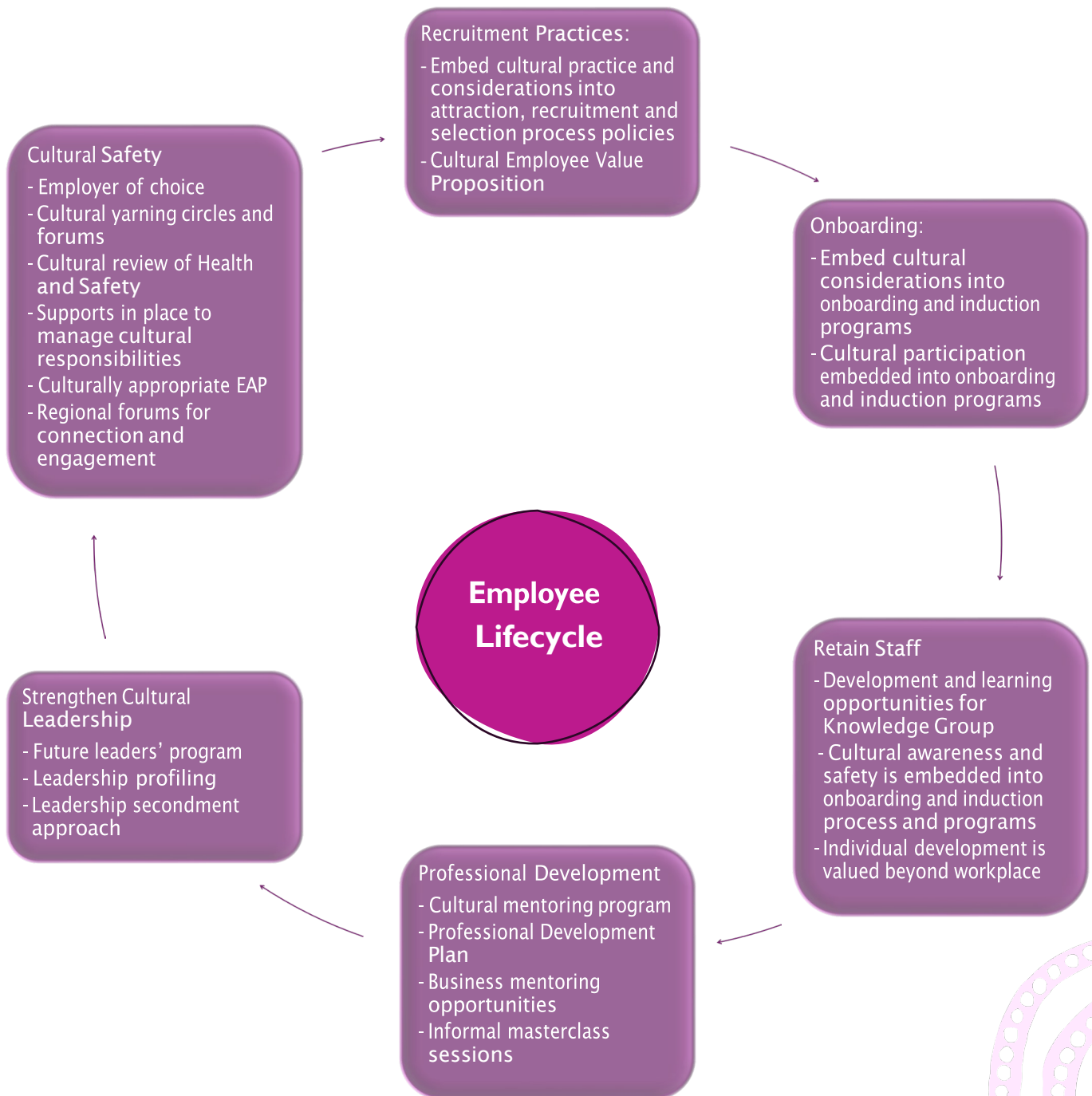
Improving employment and development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff supports building a workforce that embraces cultural diversity and responds to clients and community needs and Mission Australia's priorities.

We will achieve this by an ongoing review and evaluation of commitments for each of the four stages of the employee lifecycle.

Key commitments over the five years include:



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employee Lifecycle:

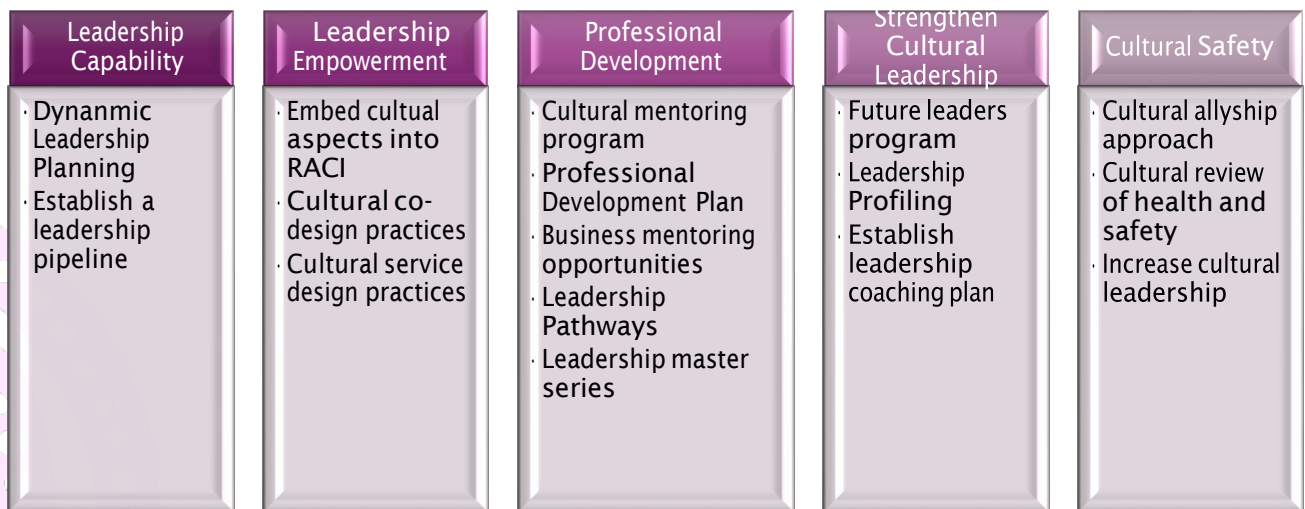


Priority 3 Inclusive Leadership

Priority Initiatives:

- Senior cultural leadership of cultural safety.
- Senior leadership pathways and succession pipeline.
- National workforce strategy with a localised approach.

Key commitments over the five years include:



Monitoring and Evaluation

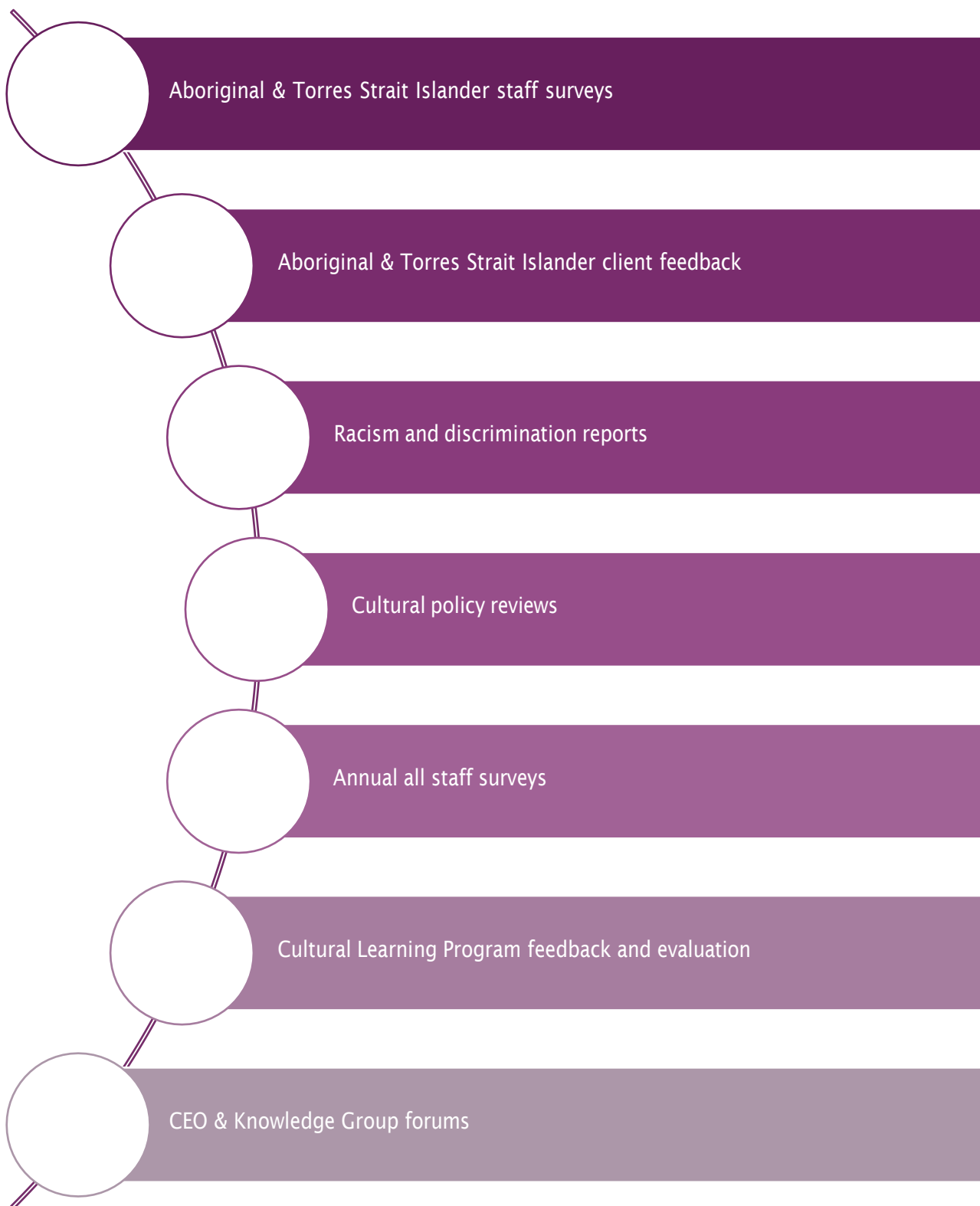
Success against the following measures will help us meet our cultural workforce commitments by June 2029:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff assess cultural safety and wellbeing at or above 80%
- Retention rates – turnover rates will be assessed annually and may require a review of the Workforce Plan initiatives and actions.
- Growth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in senior leadership roles across Mission Australia
- Growth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce across Mission Australia
- Cultural safety is led by a senior Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander leader
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, clients and communities feel valued and supported
- Increased cultural awareness and competence amongst non-indigenous staff

Progress of the Workforce Plan actions and milestones will be reviewed quarterly to confirm initiatives are having a positive impact and progress is being made against our targets.

A mid-term project review will be conducted to ensure the focus and resource requirements for our Workforce Plan strategies are sustained and appropriate to achieve our 5-year objectives.

Feedback mechanisms will include but not be limited to:



Resources

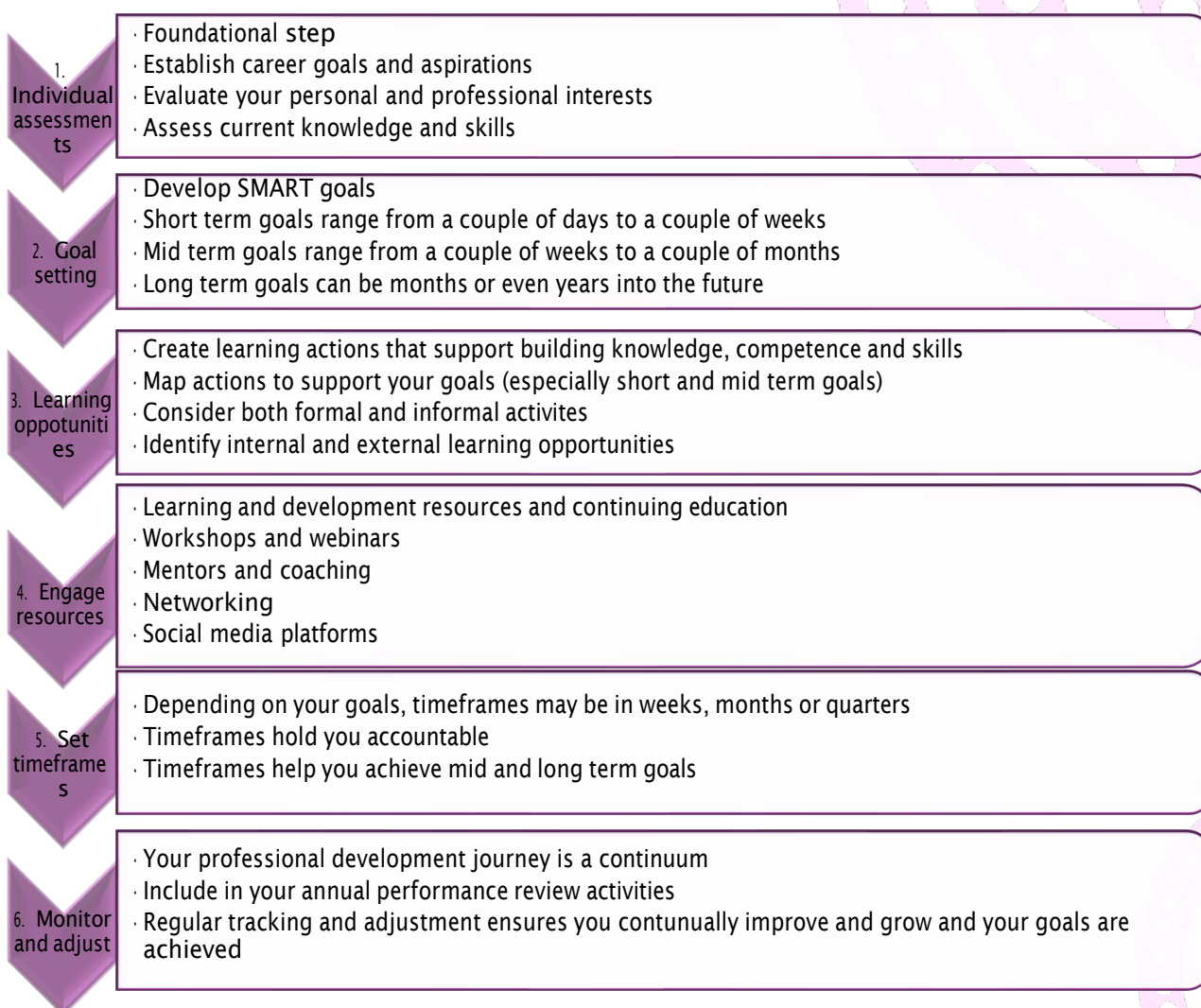
Professional Development

To ensure the commitments of the Workforce Plan are achieved, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander staff will be supported with ongoing tailored professional development activities and opportunities focussed on increasing their cultural and business knowledge, skills and capability.

It is intended that the professional development activities and plans established as part of the Workforce Plan are integrated into current Mission Australia practices including our Learning & Development Strategy and the Performance Management Review process.

A professional development plan maps out an ongoing learning journey and is used to assess your current skills, set career goals, create learning opportunities, and identify resources that will help you reach your goals.

There are six key steps in developing a professional development plan:



An effective Professional Development Plan incorporates directed and self-directed learning opportunities.

Good practice ideas include:





Considerations for your Professional Development Plan

Cultural mentoring & support

A mentor is someone who shares their knowledge and experience and helps guide you through reflection and exploratory activities in order to develop and grow both personally and professionally.

Mentoring is a learning and empowerment tool rather than a teaching method that will provide you with holistic support and will help to build your knowledge and skills with cultural integrity.

The mentoring process will assist you to reflect on your own experience and make informed decisions to solve problems and achieve your goals. Mentoring complements the support and assistance you may already receive.

A powerful cultural mentoring model includes support and guidance from internal peer networks, community Elders or engagement with an external cultural mentor or educator.

Connecting to culture

Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to stay connected to country and culture is critical for social and emotional wellbeing and provides a positive sense of belonging and identity. Support may include:

- Cultural education
- Time spent on Country
- Attending ceremonies
- Engagement in local community events and activities
- Recognition and use of languages at a local level
- Engagement and participation of community elders in workplace activities and training

Coaching support

Depending on your learning needs, coaching support is mainly short-term and generally involves knowledge building and training.

Coaching support is mostly provided by line managers, although it may also be provided peer-to-peer or by a specialist area such as People and Culture.

A coach will be focussed on your day-to-day activities and will encourage you to develop new skills or knowledge to improve your performance and capability.



Considerations for your Professional Development Plan

Skills assessment Skills assessments aim to evaluate your current skills, knowledge and behaviours and identify immediate gaps and/or challenges.

Assessment outcomes should be considered when establishing learning opportunities and professional development plans.

Skills assessment examples include:

- Job knowledge assessment
- Personality assessment
- Integrity assessment
- Mental ability assessment

Leadership profiling A leadership profile describes the attributes a leader within Mission Australia should have.

By completing a leadership profile assessment, you will:

- Have greater clarity of your personal and leadership qualities, traits and characteristics
- Identify strategies to tap into your strengths as well as development opportunities
- Be able to identify leadership role opportunities most suited to your attributes

Networking Opportunities Building and maintaining meaningful relationships and connections with your peers, both internal and external to Mission Australia is an important tool that will support your professional and career development.

Networking:

- Professional networks are two-way interactions that foster relationships that are mutually beneficial
- Your professional network is built of relationships of trust that can help improve your knowledge or advance your career
- Builds your knowledge and skills
- Co-workers, managers, friends, and family can all be members of your professional network.
- Stay in touch with members of your network. Check in periodically to maintain the relationship.

Common places where you can network with others:

- Knowledge Group
- Project teams and working groups



Considerations for your Professional Development Plan

- Industry or sector forums or networking events
 - Internal to Mission Australia - your current job, team, state or department
 - Peak Body engagement
 - Community events
 - Conferences and expos
 - Social events
 - Online social media platforms
 - University alumni
-

Technical skills training

Technical skills (or hard skills) refer to role-specific skills that are required to perform a job. Unlike soft skills, which have more to do with personalities and character, hard skills are learned and mastered over time. They can be measured through performance, task outcomes, adherence to compliance criteria or efficient utilisation of systems.

Technical skills training can be gained through on the job and formal training programs.

Training should reflect both current and future needs and be captured in your professional development plan.

Soft skills training

Training that is focused on developing abilities such as communication, teamwork, problem solving, emotional intelligence and time management.

Soft skills training will improve how you interact effectively with others, how you respond to challenges, manage difficult situations, and how you manage your emotions and express empathy.

Together soft skills and hard skills represent your talents, knowledge and capabilities.

Leadership development

Developing effective leaders and managers across our business will ensure Mission Australia has the right skills and capability required to foster safe and effective work environments and achieve our goals.

Key leadership development areas include:

- Effective decision making
 - Communicating for impact
 - Fostering positive workplace culture and environments
 - Managing performance
 - Providing mentoring and coaching support
-



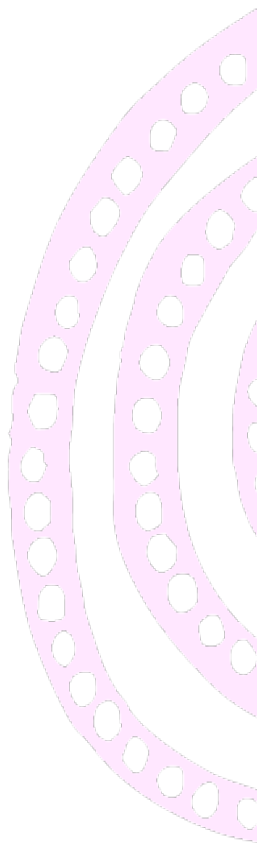
Considerations for your Professional Development Plan

- Productivity & efficiency skills
- Building trust
- Managing change
- Fostering innovation and creativity in the workplace
- Developing your emotional intelligence

Your leadership development activities target specific areas for improvement and should be a mix of critical reflection, hands-on training, coaching support and self-directed learning and knowledge growth.

Individual learning activities link directly to Mission Australia's overall approach to leadership development

Please refer to Mission Australia's Individual Learning Plan for further guidance.



Employee Name: _____

Employee Number: _____

Position: _____

Period: _____

Business Unit: **Select Business Unit** _____

Instructions on submitting the completed form

Responsibility	Employee	People Leader
1. Identify the knowledge, skills, behaviours or experiences that would help you to increase your performance / achieve career goals.	X	
2. Focus on two to three development goals/needs that are critical to your performance and career progression.	X	
3. Ensure all your development goals are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound).	X	
4. Complete all the required fields in the form.	X	
5. Save the document as follows: '[Employee Number] - [Surname] - Individual Development Plan 2016/17'. E.g. 123456 - Jones - Individual Development Plan 2016.	X	
6. Email the document to your People Leader.	X	
7. Discuss the plan with the employee.		X
8. Agree on the knowledge, skills, behaviours or experiences that would help employee to increase their performance / achieve their goals for the next performance cycle / achieve their career goals.		X
9. Once both you and the employee have agreed on the plan save a copy of the signed IDP in a secure location and provide a copy to your employee.		X

Your development plan for practicing, demonstrating, and applying new skills/competencies/behaviours is based on the 70-20-10 model of learning:

70-20-10 Learning Model		
	<p>Experience-based Learning (70%) Employees learn from the processes, tools, language and capabilities they are exposed to on the job as they go about their daily work tasks and activities.</p>	<p>What challenging activities should you work on to build skills and achieve your developmental goals? (e.g. participating on a project, being coached, job shadowing)</p>
	<p>Collaborative Learning (20%) This type of learning is essential for growth and change as employees learn from their networks and relationships.</p>	<p>What types of networks, relationships, professional associations will assist your development?</p>
	<p>Structured Learning (10%) This type of learning supports individual, formal education, professional development, face-to-face courses/workshops and/or e-learning training courses.</p>	<p>What specific training, educational experiences, including online learning will support and build your skills to achieve your developmental goals?</p>

Individual Development Plan

Fill in the template below. You can achieve your development goal through more than one type of learning activity.

Development Goals	Measures of Achievement/ Expected Outcomes	Select Method/s of Learning	Type of Learning Activity	Additional Support Needed to Achieve Your Goal	Due Date
1.		<input type="checkbox"/> Experienced-based			
		<input type="checkbox"/> Collaborative			
		<input type="checkbox"/> Structured			
2.		<input type="checkbox"/> Experienced-based			
		<input type="checkbox"/> Collaborative			
		<input type="checkbox"/> Structured			
3.		<input type="checkbox"/> Experienced-based			
		<input type="checkbox"/> Collaborative			
		<input type="checkbox"/> Structured	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Plan p. 16		

Sign Off

Before signing and saving the final version of this form, please read the Performance Review and Development Planning Process Checklist.

Note: Only sign the form when no reviews/changes are still to be made to the form by the Employee or People Leader.

Employee's
Signature

People Leader's
Signature