



Connecting Business and young Aboriginal
people in the workplace

Aboriginal Employment Strategy Template

*Delivered by Regional Chambers of Commerce and Industry, funded by Department of
Training and Workforce Development*



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Training**
and **Workforce Development**



08 9193 5553 PO Box 1307, Broome WA 6725 ABN 12 061 483 997

workingtogether@broomechamber.com.au
www.broomechamber.com.au



Contents

Introduction	4
Stage One: Pre-Employment	6
Stage Two: Getting Ready (Recruitment).	8
Stage Three: New Employee Appointment.....	10
Induction	10
Stage Four: Retention.....	12
Mentoring and Workplace Buddies	12
Resources	14

This page has been intentionally left blank

Introduction

Many businesses are unsure of how to engage with Aboriginal people.

Developing and implementing an Aboriginal Employment Strategy (AES) provides opportunities and benefits for Aboriginal people, the community and your business.

The Broome Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) fully support this initiative. Working in collaboration with the local Aboriginal Workforce Development Centre (AWDC), the program *Working Together West Kimberley* aims to expand employment, training and mentorship opportunities for Aboriginal people by connecting them with local business.

Emerging and current labour and skill shortages within the Kimberley means our Members need to think strategically about building their workforce for the future.

This Template has been developed to assist your business to develop and implement a strategy to engage and retain local Aboriginal staff. Working Together West Kimberley has provided an overview of methods in which a business can employ and retain Aboriginal people. There is no 'one size fits all' approach.

If it is your intention to build your employee capacity, retain long term employees and provide for the economic development and progress of our community, this template will provide a blueprint for you to get started. Please don't consider this as the only tool, feel free to review other literature (as BCCI has); consider consulting key stakeholders and develop your strategy to be reflective of what you wish to achieve in your business (see Resources - page 15).

In addition to this template, please *use the BCCI Aboriginal Employment Guide for Business West Kimberley (2017)* as you develop your strategy to connect with services and programs that can assist your progress.

The Template is by no means exclusive or exhaustive, the intent will be to utilise this resource along with the services of the Working Together West Kimberley to ensure your Aboriginal Employment Strategy is developed in-line with your unique business requirements. Not all Strategies or Stages will be required by all businesses to progress the employment of Aboriginal staff; it will be up to each individual business /organisation to consider their specific requirements.

Employing Aboriginal staff from our local community can be a very rewarding experience for your business and assist the community to recognise and embrace the diversity that is the West Kimberley.

Many employers consider Aboriginal employment as a pathway to building a sustainable, local, and dedicated workforce. It can also help to address the current skill shortages, labour shortages, and staff turnover.

Although human resource methodologies will differ for each business, if you wish to be successful, the following (in no order of importance) should be considered:

- An effective support infrastructure needs to be in place to attract and retain Aboriginal staff.
- There is a genuine commitment to employing Aboriginal employees – persistence and patience in progressing the employment initiative.
- Treating Aboriginal employees in a manner no different to other staff in terms of equity and performance expectations.
- Providing staff with the opportunity for professional development and greater responsibilities in the work place.
- Recognising/understanding cultural differences.
- Consider undertaking cultural awareness training prior to employment, for yourself and staff members.
- There may be opportunities to further build your relationship with the local Aboriginal community (sponsorship, attending events such as NAIDOC etc.).

Please be aware – the information presented in this template is only a guide and each business' outcome may be different.

Building and growing your business by employing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff may take time, but if you persevere, improved employment outcomes within the West Kimberley will improve social and economic wellbeing for the local community and at the same time assist in changing attitudes in the broader community.

February 2017

Stage One: Pre-Employment

Outcome Required	How	Lead	By When	Final Outcome
1.1 Confirm local assistance available.	Liaise with <i>BCCI Working Together team</i> to understand the local support networks available.	<i>[Your Business – or add the individual responsible].</i>	Pre-engagement.	<i>[Your Business]</i> has developed a working relationship with <i>BCCI Working Together team</i> and understands the support networks available (for example local training providers, government support networks, etc). Confirm any government assistance/funding opportunities
1.2 Draft/finalise your Employment Strategy.	Liaise with <i>BCCI Working Together team</i> to draft/finalise your AES.	<i>[Your Business – or add the individual responsible].</i>	Pre-engagement.	<i>[Your Business]</i> has developed a draft AES.
1.3 Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).	Liaise with <i>BCCI Working Together team</i> to discuss if a RAP would assist your business.	<i>[Your Business – or add the individual responsible].</i>	Pre-engagement. (or) an on-going process.	<i>[Your Business]</i> has either agreed to/not agreed to develop a RAP.
1.4 Develop support & mentoring systems.	Liaise with <i>BCCI Working Together team</i> to discuss the best options for your business. Develop draft process to discuss at interview stage.	<i>[Your Business – or add the individual responsible].</i>	Pre-engagement and on-going throughout employment.	Support mechanisms are developed to ensure smooth transition/retention practices are in place.

Outcome Required	How	Lead	By When	Final Outcome
1.5 Increase workplace understanding of local Aboriginal Culture.	<p>Provide Cultural Awareness Training – either as factsheets or as a seminar.</p> <p>Consider acknowledging cultural days of importance (potentially as part of contract/workplace practices).</p> <p>Acknowledge traditional owners in workplace practices where appropriate e.g. meetings, if providing welcome to guests/tours etc.</p> <p>Are there opportunities to use local art in your business (or other cultural opportunities)?</p>	<p><i>[Your Business – add either individual staff names/or whole of organisation.]</i></p>	<p>Either pre-engagement or during the initial weeks of employment program.</p> <p>These initiatives can be consistent and on-going.</p>	<p>Training completed/greater understanding of local culture and issues that impact the Aboriginal community.</p> <p>Workplace is more “inviting” for new employees.</p> <p>Current employees have a greater appreciation local Aboriginal people and issues.</p> <p>Customers awareness of your business’s commitment for an inclusive workplace.</p>

Stage Two: Getting Ready (Recruitment).

When recruiting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, it is possible for advertisements to state you are seeking Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants, otherwise you could use the following techniques to attract interest from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants:

- Promote abilities required to undertake a role, not qualifications
- Develop partnership with Aboriginal Employment organisation
- Use word of mouth for advertising
- Talk with school career advisors and offer your business for work experience placement
- Selection of the person should be based on capability or potential to perform the job.
- Clearly communicate your expectations while maintaining flexibility in relation to cultural issues

Outcome Required	How	Lead	By When	Final Outcome
2.1 Develop a job description.	<p>Develop as per normal HR practices (liaise with <i>BCCI Working Together</i> team to draft/finalise if required).</p> <p>Consider skills and qualifications required prior to employment.</p> <p>Consider the selection criteria - potentially recognise life experience valid (e.g. workplace/ community / volunteering /CDEP).</p> <p>Consider skills/qualifications and training you are willing to provide once employed.</p>	<i>Your Business – or add the individual responsible].</i>	Prior to advertising position.	<p>A job description is developed.</p> <p>If required - liaise with <i>BCCI Working Together</i> team to develop.</p>

Outcome Required	How	Lead	By When	Final Outcome
2.2 Design an effective job advertisement.	<p>Use wording such as “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are encouraged to apply”.</p> <p>Local paper/radio; Aboriginal (web/email) forums; ‘word-of-mouth’ – consider placing flyers at local Aboriginal Community organisations/ TAFE/University campuses.</p> <p>Ask applicants how they found out about the position</p>	<p><i>Your Business – or add the individual responsible].</i></p>	<p>Once Stage One has been completed.</p>	<p>Advertisement available for placement.</p> <p>Number of Applications received.</p> <p>If required - liaise with <i>BCCI Working Together team</i> to consider applications</p>
Outcome Required	How	Lead	By When	Final Outcome
2.3 Job Interview.	<p>Create a relaxed environment for interviews.</p> <p>Consider the use of an Aboriginal person / <i>BCCI Working Together team member during your interview process.</i></p> <p>When contacting applicants for interview – clearly articulate how the interview will be conducted.</p> <p>Consider providing a list of questions to the applicant prior to interview.</p> <p>Ensure applicant understands the necessary skills required (rather than qualifications).</p>	<p><i>Your Business – or add the individual responsible].</i></p>	<p><i>Add your date.</i></p>	<p>Successful interviews are conducted.</p> <p>Preferred candidate is selected.</p>

Stage Three: New Employee Appointment

Induction

Induction is an important opportunity to clearly communicate your expectations and to advise new staff of their responsibilities. It is also a time to inspire new staff to work with you. First impressions are important.

Like other new employees, new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff may not necessarily be familiar with the workplace practices and culture of your business. Give people time to settle in and see how things are done. Many of the following suggestions make good sense for all employees, irrespective of culture.

- Let other staff know when a new person is starting and to ensure they're prepared to make their new colleague welcome.
- Introduce the new person gradually to other staff – introducing to too many work mates at once can be confusing.
- Discuss fair and realistic expectations with your new employee – ALL need to know where they stand.
- Explain ground rules to avoid any misunderstanding later on. This may include rules around working hours, and who to contact if they need a day off due to sickness or emergency.
- Talk about policies and procedures including:
 - Wages and conditions of employment.
 - Leave entitlements and processes for applying for leave.
 - Occupational health and safety.
 - Training and career development opportunities including career pathways.
 - identify mentors and workplace buddies.
- A workplace buddy or mentor can be very helpful, particularly in the first six to twelve months. This can really help people settle in.
- Encourage your new employee to talk with their supervisors, workplace buddy or mentor to discuss and resolve any personal or work related issues that might arise.
- Build good working relationships and two-way communications. Have realistic expectations and communicate them clearly.

- On occasions, an Aboriginal employee have experience cultural obligations that impact on work. TRUST, RESPECT and CLEAR COMMUNICATION can assist in resolving these situations.

Outcome Required	How	Lead	By When	Final Outcome
3.1 Use the induction phase to communicate clearly work expectations and workplace processes.	Ensure new employee completely understands the requirements of the role on a daily basis. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop “cheat sheets” or a manual that clearly articulates the requirements. 	<i>Your Business – or add the individual responsible].</i>	Prior to first day of employment.	Ongoing reviews with employees about employment role and conditions. Employee retention rates improve.

Stage Four: Retention.

Mentoring and Workplace Buddies

Establishing mentors within the workplace has assisted many organisations improve the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

Mentoring is a partnership that supports the development and development in the workplace by the sharing of experiences and knowledge. This often includes helping staff identify their own learning needs and ways of meeting them through a more experienced person.

A Workplace Buddy provides hands-on practical support to employees and allows on the job support.

Outcome Required	How	Lead	By When	Final Outcome
4.1 Ensure mentor/buddy is place within the first week of employment.	On-going support for the business and new employee through face-to-face meetings.	<p>Liaise with <i>BCCI Working Together</i> team.</p> <p>NB Trainees/apprentices may have support mechanisms as part of their training package.</p> <p>Direct employment of a new employee may require a stand-alone mentor system developed.</p>	From first week of employment & on-going.	Will assist in retention.

Outcome Required	How	Lead	By When	Final Outcome
4.2 On-going training.	<p>Consider developing a “skills audit” for your new employee and provide opportunities for further training.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will be on-going and may be updated in response to actual gaps in skill levels (monitor staff) – develop in consultation with your staff member (goal set). <p>Liaise with <i>BCCI Working Together team</i> for assistance.</p>	<i>Your Business – or add the individual responsible].</i>	On-going. Will be “organic” in nature.	Up-skilling and growth of employee as a fully functioning contributing member to the business.
Outcome Required	How	Lead	By When	Final Outcome
4.1 Celebrate success!	<p>Let the community know what you are doing.</p> <p>Liaise with <i>BCCI Working Together team</i> for assistance..</p>	<p><i>Your Business – or add the individual responsible].</i></p> <p>Liaise with <i>BCCI Working Together team</i>.</p>	From first week of employment & on-going.	Your business

Resources

There are a number of publications and resources that have been developed that can provide further advice and guidance. There are many others available, this is only a small selection.

Regional Planning and Infrastructure Framework - Kimberley

Part A: Regional Strategic Planning (December 2015)

http://www.planning.wa.gov.au/dop_pub_pdf/Kimberley_Regional_Planning_and_Infrastructure_Framework_Part_A.pdf

Reconciliation Australia - Workplace Ready Program

<http://www.reconciliation.org.au/workplace/>

2036 AND BEYOND: A REGIONAL INVESTMENT BLUEPRINT FOR THE KIMBERLEY

Kimberley Development Commission

<http://kdc.wa.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/2036-and-Beyond-A-Regional-Investment-Blueprint-for-the-Kimberley.pdf>

Employ Outside the Box - The Business Case for Employing Indigenous Australia (2014)

Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

<https://www.acci.asn.au/resources/employ-outside-box-business-case-employing-indigenous-australians>