Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Strategic Workforce Plan

at a glance

Actions and Initiatives

2008 - 2011
Our Vision

• DHF Attracts and Retains a Skilled, Diverse and Responsive Workforce.
• To create an inclusive work environment, where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are valued for their individual experiences, knowledge and abilities.

The Department is committed to taking a proactive approach to supporting potential and existing DHF Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. This is reinforced through a wide range of past and ongoing employment, training and career development strategies.

Implementing and maintaining effective measures for attracting and retaining a skilled workforce are a core focus of our approach to “Closing the Gap” on continuing disparities in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, education, employment and socio-economic status. DHF aims to build a capable and sustainable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce that is equipped with the skills needed to achieve continued improvement in outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Territorians.

Optimise Our Workforce

Attract and Retain Talent

Build a Sustainable Workforce

Strengthen a Capable Workforce
Build a Sustainable Workforce

**What you should notice**

- Evidence based approach – Better Data = Better Decisions
- Strong research agenda – current and future decisions
- Enhanced cross-cultural and community knowledge
- Build Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment into core DHF business

**Key Points**

- Research to determine what factors influence high rates of voluntary turnover among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees will help us better plan so that we may address any preventable turnover of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.
- The collection and reporting of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing, health or other data is often difficult to identify or assess for accuracy. Through improved data collection we will be better equipped to make better decisions that may impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Strategies aimed at creating a work environment that acknowledges community obligations, uses traditional knowledge and skills, provides opportunities for education and training of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and encourages career progression with opportunities for mentoring and career planning, are important to retaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

**Performance Measures**

- Extent to which DHF Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee numbers are reported in workforce activities
- Number and scope of research activities undertaken on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce
- Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees involved in decision-making forums
- Proportion of DHF staff participation in Cultural security training.
What you should notice

- Greater engagement with the Education Sector
- More career development opportunities available for DHF staff – building a learning culture

Key Points

- Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander jobseekers have great difficulty understanding English and the various aspects of the job search process, e.g. selection criteria and government policies. Understanding the determinants of what discourages Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from seeking employment in the health and community services sector will assist the department in overcoming the labour force disadvantage faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and improve the department’s recruitment and retention strategies.

- The Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council 2006 research report on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in VET found that more women than men access health training.

- Research has shown a clear link between poor health, economic and social status and poor education and literacy among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

- Over the last couple of years DHF has increased the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitments to higher positions in the Administration, AHW and Professional occupation streams. In this way we are working towards achieving greater Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in decision-making forums and planning processes.

Performance Measures

- Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees participating in career development and training programs
- Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees provided with leadership and professional development opportunities
- Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduates, including National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cadetship Program graduates, employed by DHF

Strengthen a Capable Workforce
Attract and Retain Talent

What you should notice

- Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed by DHF
- Targeted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander attraction, retention and development strategies
- Increase collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff
- Focus on ‘Growing Our Own”

Key Points

- DHF Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment rate is approximately 10. DHF aims to increase this employment to 15% by 2013.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are employed across a range of health, community services and other occupations within DHF. The most significant representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are found in the Administrative and Aboriginal Health Worker Occupation streams.
- The Territory’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population has been described as a fast-growing, working-aged segment of the population. Additionally, the Territory’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are less likely to move away from the NT in significant numbers, as opposed to non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who present with high levels of transience. Targeted education, training, development and support initiatives aimed at the section of our population that is younger, growing faster and less likely to move away from the NT are important to strengthening our workforce

Performance Measures

- Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed with DHF
- Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people recruited to DHF
- Change in the rate of voluntary turnover for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff
- Employee participation in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff network
Key Points

- Often unique and valuable skills and knowledge are lost when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are not provided with career advancement opportunities or the right mix of work opportunities to utilise their knowledge and skills.

- The Department is committed to taking a proactive approach to supporting potential and existing DHF Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. This is reinforced through past and ongoing strategies such as:

  - Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to participate in the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cadetship Program
  - Implementation of an ATSI Apprenticeship Program
  - Providing DHF staff with the skills, knowledge and attitude to work effectively with Aboriginal clients in order to achieve improved health outcomes – support for the development of a Cultural Security Policy
  - Provision of a ATSI Studies Assistance Grant
  - Aboriginal Health and Families – A Five Year Framework for Action – “Aboriginal Employment and Career Development”
  - Support to participate in Kigurak program
  - Support to participate in Lookrukin program
  - Public Sector Management Program
  - Support provided through the CRC/CHCS scholarship program 2005
  - DHCS traineeship program 2002
  - Aboriginal Care Worker Career Pathways Strategy 2001-2005

Performance Measures

- Percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees who agree they are supported within their workplace

- Feedback from current and former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff through DHF staff surveys and exit interviews

- Type and nature of learning and development opportunities available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff

What you should notice

- A supportive workplace
- An engaging workplace
- A learning workplace
The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategic Workforce Plan will broadly reflect the “DHF workforce guiding principles” that underpin the Department’s Strategic Workforce Plan. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategic Workforce Plan will be further based on a commitment to the following principles:

**Growing Our Own:**

DHF will develop strategies to maximise its opportunities for “growing our own”. We will develop the skills of current and potential employees to meet future workforce priorities and the needs of the communities. We will work with the community, professional bodies and the education sector to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Territorians are supported and provided with opportunities for improved education and employment within the health, family and community care sector. We will work with local people to strengthen and build local expertise that will equip them to respond to current and emerging community needs.

**Cultural Security and Respect:**

DHF will continue to develop a culturally diverse workforce and a workplace that values and is respectful of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

**Working Together:**

DHF will combine its efforts internally, and with external stakeholders to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with the best employment, training, support and development opportunities.

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation and decision-making authority:**

DHF will increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation across all classification levels and within decision-making forums. The DHF will support and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge as a significant contributor to the Department’s decision-making and planning processes.

**Careers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People:**

DHF will provide employment opportunities and career pathways to support career aspirations and professional development for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. DHF will establish partnerships with education and training providers, professional bodies and the community to maximise career opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.
Where Our Mob Work