



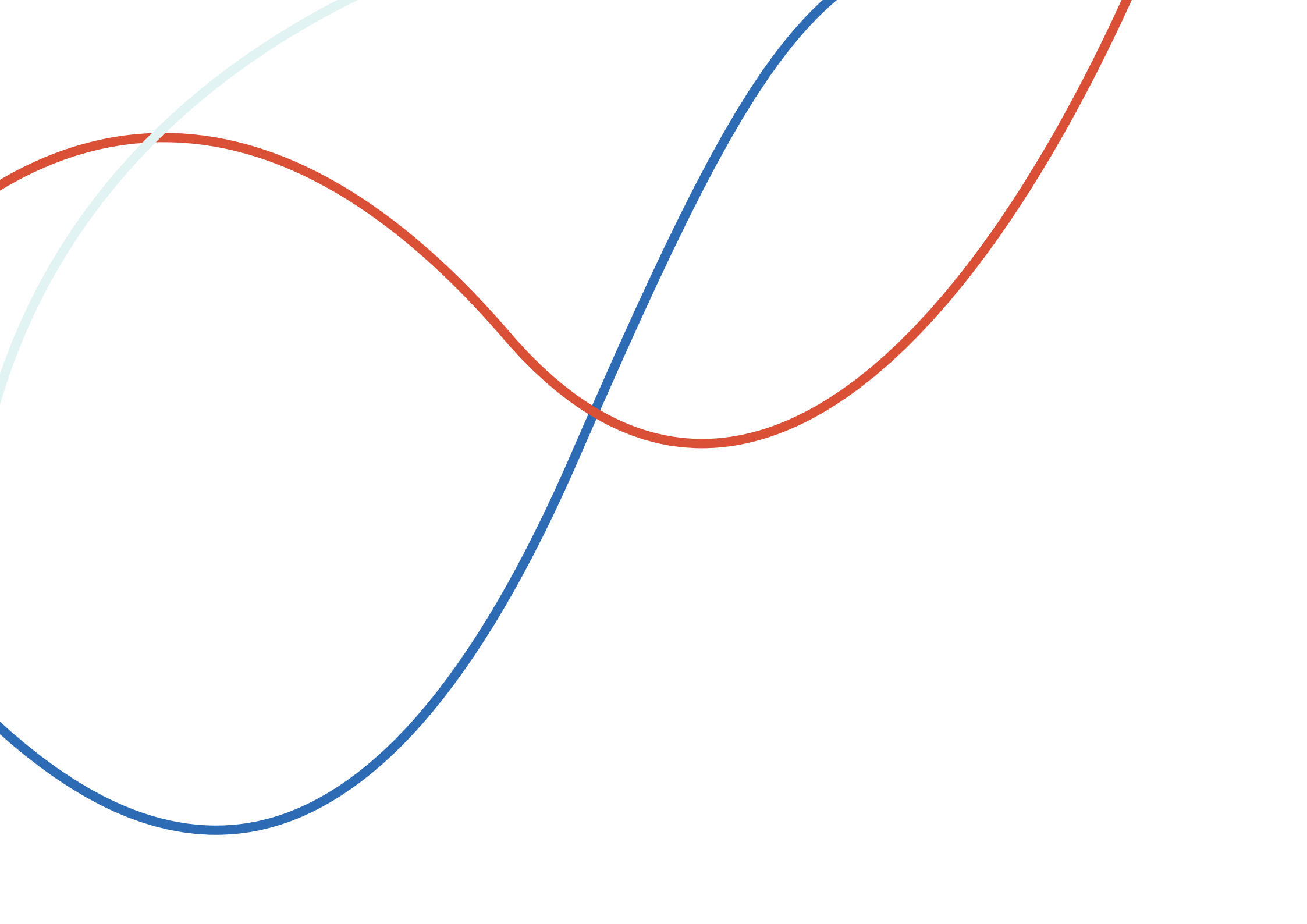
Recruiting & Retaining Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Workers

SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL



Gulanga
Program





About ACTCOSS

ACTCOSS acknowledges Canberra has been built on the land of the Ngunnawal people. We pay respects to their Elders and recognise the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. We celebrate Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures and ongoing contributions to the ACT community.

The ACT Council of Social Service Inc. (ACTCOSS) advocates for social justice and represents not-for-profit community organisations in the ACT.

ACTCOSS is a member of the nationwide COSS network, made up of each of the state and territory Councils and the national body, the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS).

ACTCOSS's vision is that Canberra is a just, safe and sustainable community in which everyone has the opportunity for self-determination and a fair share of resources and services.

The membership of the Council includes the majority of community-based service providers in the social welfare area, a range of community associations and networks, self-help and consumer groups and interested individuals.

ACTCOSS is supported by funding under the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA), which is jointly funded by the ACT and Australian Governments. ACTCOSS is also supported by funding under the Child, Youth and Family Services Program, an ACT Government funded initiative.



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About the Gulanga Program

The Gulanga Program is designed to support ACT community sector organisations to develop and improve upon good, culturally appropriate practice standards.

The program employs Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers and aims to provide better engagement with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and their families to access the services that will best meet their needs.

Contact the Gulanga Program via [email](#), phone us on 02 6202 7200, or find out more [online](#).

Cover artwork by Shannen Ella

The cover artwork was created in 2019 by young Canberra-born Aboriginal artist, Shannen Ella, who has Ngoongar and Koori heritage. Shannen has been painting as a hobby since a young age and enjoys painting birds. The gang-gang cockatoo is unique to the Canberra region and is the faunal emblem of the ACT.

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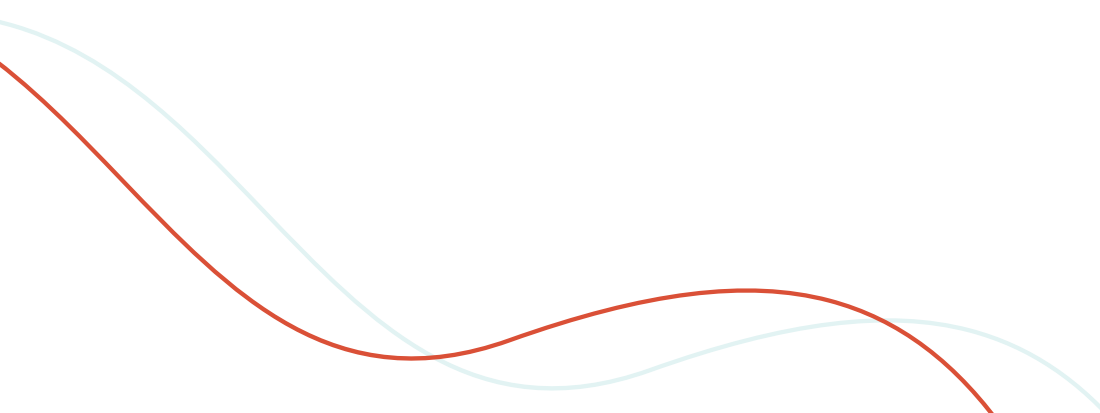
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What is this tool?

The *Self-Assessment Tool for Recruiting & Retaining Aboriginal &/or Torres Strait Islander Workers* is designed to help you think holistically about how to seek, engage, employ and retain Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff within your organisation.

The scope of this self-assessment covers elements such as:

- Planning for new/upcoming roles
- Designing your roles to fit your organisational need
- Shaping a culturally appropriate approach for organisational contact and interview processes
- Considering your culturally appropriate 'go to market' strategy to ensure optimal reach and uptake
- Including appropriate role supports to maximise the success of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff.

This tool reflects your opinion of your current organisational capacity with a point-in-time view. It is not an objective measure of your organisation's capability.

The 4 areas captured in this assessment are:



1 Pre-recruitment



2 Organisational readiness



3 Recruitment strategies



4 Retention

Upon completion of this assessment, the 'Opportunities and Recommendations' page contains suggestions for you to consider. This will act as a guide only and will indicate suggested strategies, options, pathways and/or advise connections that may be relevant to you at the time of assessment. Please note these are suggestions only and all decisions remain at your discretion.

This tool was developed in consultation with Julie Moore, the Principal of [Koorimunication](#), an Indigenous-owned consultancy.

The tool is intended to be self-managed, however, ACTCOSS can offer assistance if required. Please contact us via [email](#), phone us on 02 6202 7200, or visit our [website](#).

But first ... Tell us a bit about you!

What is your current workforce?

Organisation size	<5 people	5-20 people	21-50 people	51-100 people	>100 people
What is the size of your organisation?					

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workforce	Nil	<5 people	5-20 people	21-50 people	51-100 people	>100 people
How many Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people does your organisation currently employ?						

Self-assessment

For each of the 4 areas below you should consider the options and select the response that best fits you for each one. There are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions.



1. Pre-recruitment

Starting the journey in a culturally appropriate way.

Defining your people need	To fill an existing role	To create a new role
What is the purpose of your intended recruitment action?		

Nature of the role	Temporary	Ongoing
Is this a temporary or ongoing position?		

Funding	Yes	No
Do you have funding for the position?		
Does the role have specific Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander requirements tied to the funding?		

For an existing role

Existing role – Work change	Substantially the same	Substantially different
Is the work the same as when it was previously advertised or has it changed?		

Existing role – Reporting lines	Yes	No	N/A
Have reporting lines changed?			
Does the role still operate in the same team/unit/function?			

For a new role

Creating a new role	Yes	Not yet
Have you clearly defined the scope of the work to be done with appropriate role boundaries?		
Have you written a role profile that accurately reflects the level, nature and type of person you require based on the work to be done?		
Does the proposed work environment allow flexibility in how work is performed?		
Have you determined the reporting line for this role when considering who can best support the person to succeed?		

Creating a new role	Yes	Not yet
Have you considered what support mechanisms (cultural and other) need to be in place to ensure the person has the best chance of succeeding in the role?		
Are you able to allow applicants to 'almost' meet the criteria or modify the criteria to build in time for job readiness training to occur if needed?		

For both existing and new roles

Qualifications	Yes	No
Have you carefully assessed whether the role actually requires qualifications as an essential versus a desirable consideration?		
Would equivalent experience be as valid as a qualification for this role?		
Would you support potential applicants to attain work related qualifications for the role?		



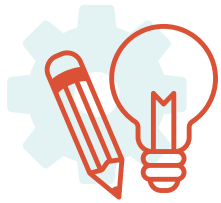
2. Organisational readiness

Positioning for inclusion, cultural competence and sustainable success.

Organisational culture	Yes	Emerging	No
Does your organisation demonstrate cultural competence in supporting Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff?			
Does your organisation reflect a culturally inclusive environment in practice where learning can be shared between Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff?			
Have you considered internal and external mentors that could connect directly with this role?			
Have you addressed any potential barriers that could affect a person's chance of being successful in their role and therefore your organisation?			
Have you considered reviewing your policies to ensure they are flexible in line with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff needs?			

Organisational structure	Yes	Not yet
Does your structure appropriately position the role in terms of function, decision making, delegation and support to allow individuals to be successful in performing the duties of their role?		
Does your structure allow for different entry points or pathways (such as traineeships) into roles for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff?		
Does your structure allow for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander progression either vertically or horizontally?		
Does your structure take into account team size and function when positioning Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander roles?		

Funding	Yes	No
If you have specific Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander requirements tied to funding, have you considered how to best position and utilise these roles to ensure appropriate workload balance?		
If you have specific Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander requirements tied to funding, have you carefully considered the key accountability areas and tasks the associated role(s) will need to perform and matched that to appropriate remuneration levels?		



3. Recruitment strategies

Taking a holistic view of the person, the role and the organisation.

Readiness	Yes	Not yet
Can you allow a longer lead in time for hard to fill or new roles and modify selection criteria to allow applicants to undertake job readiness training or gain qualifications as part of their role?		
Have you considered the specific types of skills, knowledge or experience/qualification requirements and weighed up the capacity to grow some of them in over time whilst on the job?		
Is there an option for potential applicants to receive support/advice in preparing their CVs and/or applications?		
Do you know how your organisation is perceived and understood in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities?		

Recruitment strategy	Yes	No
Have you allowed additional time (as compared to traditional recruitment processes) to conduct the end to end Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander recruitment process?		
Have you considered how to best tailor your advertising to ensure the most effective approach for potential applicants (for each and every role to be filled)?		
Do you have detailed information kits that step applicants through how to prepare their applications?		
Have you considered who would be the most effective contact person for the role?		

Recruitment strategy	Yes	No
Would it be appropriate to have more than one contact person for a particular role?		
Have you worded your advertisements to better fit Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander expectations?		
Do you have flexibility to offer a transition time to commence a role or contribute to travel costs if travel is an issue?		
Can you involve community sessions to encourage potential applicants to feel comfortable enquiring about the role(s)?		
Are you able to adapt your recruitment process to make it more culturally appropriate?		

Conducting interviews	Yes	No
Are your questions culturally appropriate?		
Does your interview room reflect a less formal/structured setting to put applicants at ease?		
Does your interview process connect to creating eligibility pools of applicants who may be suitable for other/similar roles should they arise within a twelve-month period?		
Do you ensure your interview panel is culturally appropriate and best positioned to holistically assess Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander interviewees?		

Logistics	Yes	No
Are you able to provide options to cover the cost of travel to and from work?		
Have you considered the physical design of the work area to enable an open, collaborative work environment?		

Onboarding	Yes	No
Have you structured a culturally appropriate first two weeks on the job for your new staff member?		
Have you allowed additional time for adjustment to work, environment and team relationships?		
Do you have your initial mentoring and support people identified and ready to be introduced to your new staff member on their first day?		
Have you organised to introduce your new staff member to other Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff members within your organisation?		



4. Retention

Creating sustainable futures that recognise and reward Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff as an integral part of organisational delivery and success.

Planning	Yes	No
Do your business planning processes consider current and future Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander service provision and client demographic?		
Do you undertake workforce planning exercises that incorporate a view of how to meet the needs of your Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander service users?		
Do you have a succession plan that reflects horizontal and vertical career pathways?		
Have you considered how to engage in partnerships/connections with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander business leaders and/or community to ensure your planning processes incorporate holistic Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staffing requirements?		
If your organisation has a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is it reflective of the considerations contained above to maximise attraction and retention factors?		
Do you collect and measure attraction and retention data to feed into your planning?		

Review processes	Yes	No
Do you have review processes in place to check your expectations between what you anticipated the role could achieve and how it operates in practice?		
Do you have regular 'check-in' points with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff to gauge their level of comfort in the role and determine any supports or adjustments that may be needed?		
Do you incorporate health and wellbeing checks into regular reviews/discussions between Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff members and their mentors/managers?		
Do you liaise with ACTCOSS to participate in reviews with you and offer advice/recommendations?		

Performance	Yes	No
Do you measure the success of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff performance in your organisation?		
Do you measure the performance of your attraction and retention strategies/approaches to determine their effectiveness over time or on each occasion?		
Do you review and assess levels of job satisfaction/engagement/support requirements for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff?		

Opportunities / Recommendations

Pre-recruitment

Before you embark on recruiting to a new role, it is vital to carefully consider all aspects both of the individual role itself, as well as its place within a team, unit, function and the organisation as a whole. Here are some key considerations you may wish to consider and/or address before making your decisions.

Key considerations	Comment
Are you clear on why this role will or does exist? What is its purpose?	Without a clear purpose, anybody stepping into this role will flounder trying to understand what they are employed to do on a day to day basis.
Will the creation/renewal of this role create/ exacerbate any duplication or gaps?	If there is confusion caused because of duplications in tasks or areas of responsibilities or, alternatively, gaps, this can lead to miscommunication, assumptions and challenges to team members in the workplace.
Does this role have clear boundaries in place?	<p>Do you know where this role's accountability stops, and another role begins? That question applies both vertically (i.e. to the next level manager as well as with peers at the same level).</p> <p>It is vital to have boundaries in an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander context so that one person does not feel that the responsibility for all things Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander falls on their shoulders. This is one of the main reasons for burnout in these roles.</p>
How flexible is the environment that this role will operate within?	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander roles require a degree of flexibility in how they operate. If this role will be part of a team, have you considered how to accommodate this without creating imbalance in the team?

Key considerations	Comment
<p>Is this a standalone role or does it operate within a team context?</p>	<p>If the role is standalone, are you willing to have a person operate on a flexible basis with either working hours, conditions or how work is completed?</p>
<p>How will this role be supported in a real and meaningful way?</p>	<p>There is a world of difference between espousing what supports might be considered versus ensuring you have culturally appropriate people to mentor, guide and advise Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff members. Appropriate in an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander context means understanding the cultural norms, practices, kinship, community expectations and protocols – how these can interact with the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff member’s role.</p>
<p>Do applicants really need to meet ALL of the criteria you are proposing to include as soon as they commence in a role? Are you able to allow applicants to ‘almost’ meet the criteria or modify the criteria to build in time for job readiness training to occur if needed?</p>	<p>There are many times when role profiles are fully loaded with an ideal view of the skills, knowledge and experience required to perform the duties of a role. Have you reviewed your stated essential requirements carefully and considered whether someone who could meet most of the criteria could be upskilled in the other desired areas once they were in the role?</p> <p>Alternatively, if this is a hard to fill role because you do require specific kinds of skills or knowledge, are you able to modify the criteria to build in time for job readiness to occur prior to the person commencing in the role?</p>

Appendix: Resources

Further reading

The following is a list of links you may find helpful for further information and research.

Tick if you find them useful and share them with your co-workers.

Useful?	Topic	Agency / Publisher	URL and description
	2021 Census: Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples (ACT)	Australian Bureau of Statistics	www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-people-census/2021 Some quick statistics on a range of topics such as employment, education and population.
	Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples	ACT Government - Community Services	www.communityservices.act.gov.au/atsia/indigenous-protocols A useful resource guide for an organisations seeking to engage with ACT Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities.
	Reconciliation Insights: Employment	Reconciliation Australia	www.reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Australian-Reconciliation-Barometer-2022.pdf Findings from the 2022 Australian Reconciliation Barometer (the Barometer).

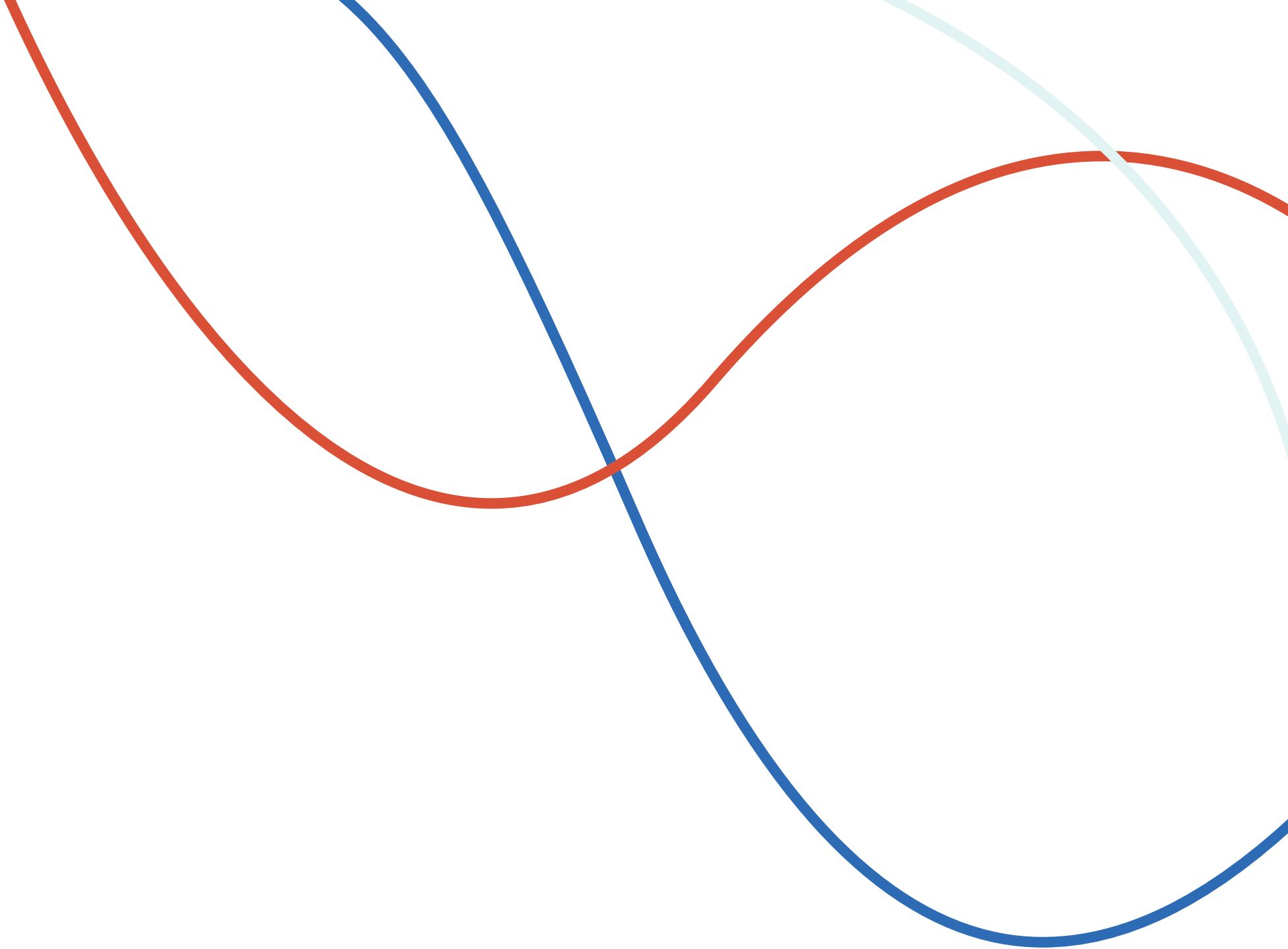
Useful?	Topic	Agency / Publisher	URL and description
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples	Fair Work Ombudsman	<p>www.fairwork.gov.au/find-help-for/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-people</p> <p>Information and resources for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples in the workplace such as taking time off for Sorry Business and sorting out problems at work. Also includes information for employers of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p>
	Identified Positions	Australian Human Rights Commission	<p>www.humanrights.gov.au/quick-guide/12047</p> <p>Factsheet providing information about Identified positions.</p>
	Sample Interview Questions	Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations	<p>www.oric.gov.au/publications/other-publication/sample-interview-questions</p> <p>Sample interview questions developed to assist Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander corporations when recruiting staff.</p>
	Recruiting and Inducting Aboriginal Staff	Victorian Public Sector Commission	<p>www.vpsc.vic.gov.au/workforce-programs/aboriginal-cultural-capability-toolkit</p> <p>The Barring Djinang Aboriginal Cultural Capability Toolkit includes sections on recruiting and inducting Aboriginal staff, supporting Aboriginal staff and career development for Aboriginal staff.</p>
	Literature Review: Recruitment and Retention of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Staff	ACTCOSS	<p>actcoss.org.au/publication/literature-review-recruitment-and-retention-of-aboriginal-and-or-torres-strait-islander-staff</p> <p>Review of current literature about and tools available from other organisations and/or industries to improve recruitment and retention of paid staff who identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.</p>

Find a resource

Use a search engine and search for the keywords 'Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, recruitment, retention'. From the results, choose the resources you think could be practical resources for your organisation. List them below for your future reference.

Topic	Agency / Publisher	URL and description

Notes





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