![The Alliance — THE NATIONAL INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING ALLIANCE]

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

FIRST NATIONS EMPLOYMENT INDEX 2025

RESEARCH PARTNERS

murawin

Social Research Centre

Acknowledgement of Country

Australia is made up of over 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nations that have a responsibility and connection to Country. For First Nations Peoples, sites and places are viewed in the context of Country.

Connections to memories of places are embedded in Country. Continued attempts have been made to overlook and silence Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and history since colonisation. These strong and resilient cultures continue to thrive. First Nations stories are still told and their songs are still sung. First Nations Peoples have continuing connections to Country that are inclusive of lands, waters and skies.

The National Indigenous Employment and Training Alliance (NIETA), Murawin and the Social Research Centre (SRC) would like to acknowledge Country and pay respects to the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the many lands on which this research was conducted. We pay our respects to Elders past and present. We acknowledge all those who have contributed their stories and experiences of their workplaces and their connections to Country for this research. We understand that there is diversity in identities and the lived experiences of participants of this research project.

We would also like to acknowledge the cultural identities of all of the First Nations contributors to the research. We recognise the continuing living cultures of Indigenous Peoples across the globe. We recognise the contemporary stories of displacement and the cultural significance of Country in the continued journey of self-determination in Australia

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BACKGROUND

This work follows the Woort Koorliny Australian Indigenous Employment Index published in 2022. Index 2022 was the first comprehensive snapshot of First Nations workplace representation, practices and employee experiences to be carried out in Australia.

Before the construction of Index 2022, research was undertaken to create a First Nations employment conceptual framework. Published literature was used to develop criteria for what 'good practice' looks like for employers wanting to increase workforce participation of First Nations Peoples. These criteria were ordered into domains and subdomains.

The framework, comprising five domains, was used to develop the 2022 employer survey and qualitative discussion guides. The 2024 survey and discussion guides (for Index 2025) are built on the research framework developed in 2022 to strengthen the Index. The five domains for Index 2025 are:

Domain 1: Attraction and Recruitment – First Nations recruitment processes and support, role availability, pipeline development and pre-employment support;
Domain 2: Retention, Professional Development and Leadership – participation, retention and employee engagement, career pathways and promotion;
Domain 3: Workplace Culture and Inclusion – First Nations cultural awareness, cultural capability and cultural safety;
Domain 4: Commitment and Accountability – policies, strategies, targets and accountability; and
Domain 5: First Nations Community Engagement – strategy, partnerships and First Nations voices.

RESEARCH IDEATION AND INTENT

While there has been progress over recent decades towards First Nations employment parity, a gap of 22% remains. In 2021 around 56% of working-age First Nations Peoples were in work, compared to 78% for non-First Nations Australians. The Closing the Gap target is to reach 62% by 2031.

An ongoing challenge to achieving employment parity is the lack of data and limited reporting on First Nations employment. This means informed decisions cannot be made and implemented to close the employment gap.

The Alliance is committed to advocating for enhanced data collection on the First Nations workforce through collaboration with employers, government agencies and the pursuit of national legislative changes. Index 2022 delivered an in-depth analysis of First Nations workplace representation, practices and employee experiences across Australia.

The research found that one-off measures to create First Nations employment must give way to a more comprehensive and systemic approach. The following factors are critical to

improving First Nations employment outcomes:

- Authentic commitments;
- Tailored strategies with targets; and
- A broader definition of First Nations employment success which includes retention, safety, progression and partnerships.

MURAWIN RESEARCH PRINCIPLES

Respect, reciprocity and relationships are the key principles embedded in the research, defined by a set of common principles of a rights-based approach. The team used the common principles outlined by the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), namely, to ensure everyone has the right to participation, accountability, non-discrimination and equality, empowerment, and legality.

Murawin's overarching framework, 'Barri Marruma', ensures Country, community and Indigenous knowledge informs all the projects worked on to guide researchers through intercultural collaboration and design.

From an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander view, Country is everything. It is not only the place itself but everything that makes up that place, the land, water, skies, the animals, and the people. More importantly are the relationships, the energy, and the space in between the individual parts. Nothing exists in isolation; it is part of a complex system, with all elements constantly interconnecting and interrelating, where context is everything.

Murawin's Country-centric methodology ensures Country, community and Indigenous knowledge informs all the projects we work on and guides us through intercultural collaboration and co-design.

Barri Marruma provides a four-phase framework that acts both as lens to examine projects through, but also as a process for project implementation that provides an anchoring to Country and ensures that program outcomes are rooted in context, deep listening, participatory engagement, exploratory design, and ambitious vision.

Earth Country – Truth
Deep listening enables unearthing and uncovers the project truths, the roots. The deeper the roots, the deeper and longer lasting the impact.

Water Country – Knowledge
Cultural flows and intercultural sharing of principles, values, and knowledge grounded in context, community, and culture. Water is cyclical, always moving and changing form. Both informed by the landscape it moves through and simultaneously changes it.

Fire Country – Transformation

Working together enables collaborative conversations, to apply understandings to shape a path forward. As a catalyst for change, through fire comes new growth and regeneration.

Sky Country – Vision

Creating connection between the past, present and future. The sky is where stories, vision and dreams come together in a world of innovation and possibility.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The broad objectives of Index 2025 are to:

- Elevate First Nations voices on the journey to true employment parity;
- Increase non-First Nations-led employers' capability and accountability for change; and
- Identify outcomes-based practices for First Nations employment.

PROJECT GOVERNANCE

From its inception, Index 2025 has been guided by an Advisory Panel. This panel, with majority First Nations representation, constitutes a range of senior executives, academics, and First Nations employment specialists committed to creating positive change. Their valuable contributions have shaped the Index's conceptual framework, methodology and governance.

SAMPLE AND SAMPLE DESIGN

Approximately 80 employers were identified as potential participants using the following selection criteria, of which 34 agreed to participate:

- Large size, e.g., over 5,000 employees (exceptions were made for targeted industries or sectors);

- Sector and industry especially with job growth potential;

- National footprint, e.g., metropolitan, regional and remote;

- Industries with large First Nations workforces;

- Current commitments, e.g., an active Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP); and

- Government funding, e.g., the Employment Parity Initiative.

While we were unable to conduct a random sample of employers, we attempted to survey a representative sample of Australian employers that varied according to several criteria. Variance included, but was not limited to, the size of the employer, the sector or industry, and the geographical location.

The sample results were obtained from a non-probability selection process, with organisation's willingness to participate in the research being the key selection criteria. The

34 participating employers currently employ 927,686 people in Australia, including nearly 30,000 First Nations Peoples (around 3%).

RESEARCH TOOLS AND METHODOLOGY

The research employed a mixed-methods approach, incorporating interviews, yarning circles and employer-level surveys.

RECRUITMENT OF EMPLOYERS

Participating employers were identified and engaged by the First Nations Employment Index team, who brokered the relationships with employers. Recruitment was undertaken through a structured engagement process. Employers were recruited through pre-identification of workforce size, across Australia's largest private, not-for-profit and public sector organisations.

Contact details of employers who verbally expressed their interest were provided by the First Nations Employment team to Murawin and the SRC. The SRC invited the employer to participate and gain formal consent from the organisation. The remainder of the engagement with employers to complete the quantitative research was administered by the SRC, including the signing of the consent form.

Qualitative Interviews and Yarns

Once the organisational consent form was completed, Murawin contacted employers to seek representation from three cohorts: First Nations employees, line managers and executives. These cohorts participated in an online interview or yarning circle.

Quantitative Survey

The employer survey was programmed into the survey software Unicom Intelligence. A separate survey link was created for each of the six questionnaire modules, allowing employees with the relevant knowledge to complete each module.

An email link to the survey portal was sent to a nominated individual from each of the 34 employers who had agreed to participate. The survey portal provided employers access to resources, such as consent forms, a user guide and a questionnaire. The portal enabled organisations to register for Index 2025, nominate a key contact person, arrange employer consent, nominate employees for participation, and track progress via a dashboard.

All nominated employees were sent an email with a unique link to access the module they had been nominated for, information about participating and provision of consent.

Regular update emails relating to module completion and overall survey progress were sent to the key contact person at each participating organisation throughout fieldwork.

Testing and Validation

Murawin and the SRC tested the survey software to ensure confidence in the survey platform and identify any issues.

Quantitative

The 2022 employer survey was the foundation of the 2024 quantitative employer survey. The SRC worked collaboratively with Murawin to incorporate their learnings and knowledge of Index 2022. The following changes were incorporated to strengthen Index 2025:

- Best practice questionnaire design (remove jargon, add definitions, reword double-barrelled questions, create consistency of terms);
- Using the term First Nations Peoples rather than Indigenous throughout the survey to reflect recent changes to Australian vocabulary and broader acceptance of this term;
- Survey flow reviewed to match modules for completion for the participant, rather than ordering by domains of Index; and
- Additional questions derived from the 2022 qualitative research to build on the Theory of Change and investigate what is driving better outcomes.

A rigorous quality assurance procedure was undertaken by the project team. This included stepping through the entire survey process, simulating a real-world environment, from registration to survey completion. This allowed the SRC to identify any issues, ensure survey effectiveness, and improve participant experience and data quality.

Ethics and Consent

First Nations Peoples' data sovereignty is embedded through the collection, access, analysis, interpretation, management and storage of Index 2025 data. This includes ensuring that First Nations Peoples' data genuinely reflects their priorities, values, cultures, worldviews and diversity. This is a process of decolonisation, ensuring First Nations Peoples have agency over their data.

The ethical aspects of this research project were approved by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) Research Ethics Committee: REC-0225. The research also complied with the guidance of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct (NHMRC) in Human Research, the Australian Code for Responsible Conduct of Research, and the AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Research.

In recognising sacred stories, traditional knowledge and other cultural information, First Nations participants should give informed consent about the use of this information. For Index 2025, informed consent was gained from a representative of the employer (approved on the executive level), and by all employees who participated in the quantitative or qualitative research. As part of the informed consent process, employers and participants were provided with project information sheets. For example, the sheets described what was involved in participating, the data being collected and what would be done with it, potential benefits and risks, how to raise a complaint, and contact information for key project personnel.

Employers and participants were advised their involvement was completely voluntary, that they could withdraw at any time, and that this would not change their relationship with the researchers or anyone else. Participants were also assured that they could let researchers know if they did not want to answer a question, or if they would like to have some or all their information removed.

All aspects of the research project reflect the principles of free and informed consent, mutual understanding and respect.

All data is stored securely, and considerable care has been taken to maintain the security of personal data, transcripts and recordings, and to maintain the anonymity of participants in the presentation of findings. All data collection was undertaken in accordance with the AMSRS Code of Practice, ISO 20252 Standards, and the Australian Privacy Principles.

Cultural Safety and Distress

We acknowledge the possibility that employees may have felt obliged to participate and/or constrained to answer openly for fear of backlash from their employer. Communication with employees around their participation highlighted both the voluntary and confidential nature of their participation. Cultural and emotional safety were central to the research approach, supported by the skills and expertise of First Nations employees from Murawin, whose researchers hold specific expertise in the facilitation of voice and storytelling. This was drawn on to ensure participants were comfortable with their level of participation.

The research team recognised that the subject matter – which asks participants to reflect on their experiences with employment – could result in a participant feeling distressed. As such, a distress protocol (see section: Distress and Disclosure Protocol) was developed and interviewers were guided on its use. This protocol endeavoured to both minimise the potential impacts for participants and facilitators, and ensure the appropriate support mechanisms were in place, should they be required.

Qualitative Analysis and Thematic Analysis

Murawin conducted the qualitative analysis using primary data from semi-structured interviews and yarning circles, following AIATSIS ethics approval (REC-0225). Thematic analysis commenced during data collection and continued throughout the review of all interview transcripts. These transcripts were manually edited from automated transcripts of the recordings, ensuring sensitive or identifiable information was replaced with generic identifiers.

Two Murawin researchers, who conducted most of the qualitative interviews, identified broad themes and established an initial code tree. They independently refined the codes and worked collaboratively to ensure consistency in interpretation. Discrepancies in coding were addressed through discussions, minimising subjective bias. The coding process was iterative, using both deductive and inductive approaches to identify patterns and sentiments related to the research domains.

As subthemes and new themes emerged, the supporting data – including de-identified quotes – was verified and used to enhance the findings. These themes were refined further, and supporting quotes were categorised by the following stakeholder groups: First Nations employees, line managers and executives. At the final stage of thematic analysis, Murawin ensured that each deep dive theme had adequate supporting data, using both qualitative and quantitative insights.

Murawin then integrated the findings, producing key insights, deep dives, personas and recommendations. The final analysis was reviewed and contextualised by First Nations

researchers and received input from the project Advisory Panel to ensure the cultural relevance and robustness of the research.

Interviews and Focus Groups

A total of 143 people participated in interviews and focus groups. This included 75 executives and line managers of First Nations employees. Sixty-eight employees who identify as First Nations Peoples participated, providing insights on the implementation and impact of practices. The First Nations voices both challenged and validated the employer survey findings and authentically represented lived experience.

Qualitative Sample

Stakeholder type	Persons
First Nations employees	68
Line managers	42
Executives	33
Total number consulted	143

Use of Terms in Qualitative Narratives

When the qualitative data was analysed, researchers identified the most significant themes. Thematic analysis was supported with evidence – often in the form of quotes – to illustrate the findings. Throughout Index 2025, the terms 'most', 'many', 'some' and 'a few' are used, which correspond to the approximate proportions of respondents (n=143) interviewed by Murawin staff as follows:

- Most: Over 85% of respondents;
- Many: Between 60-85% of respondents;
- Some: 35-50% of respondents; and
- A few: Less than 35% of respondents.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The SRC was commissioned to support the analysis of First Nations Peoples workplace representation, practices and employee experiences through the research. Derived from employer responses to the comprehensive 2022 survey, Index 2025 enables employers to be assessed and compared across the five domains (see below).

Thirty-four participating employers responded to a detailed quantitative survey on their First Nations employment strategies, policies and practices. These included three not-for-profit employers, five public sector employers, and 26 private sector employers (including ASX-listed and private companies).

Data Preparation

In addition to the 2024 survey dataset, survey responses were also available for 23 of the 42 employers that participated in Index 2022.

To ensure consistency across both datasets, they needed to be pre-processed. Researchers identified and shared new items and standardised the response categories to ensure they matched across both 2022 and 2024. Some items from the 2022 survey were excluded, as they did not match the 2024 survey due to differences in question meaning or response scale.

The full set of prepared items[i] included in the quantitative assessment is provided separately. In total, the final combined dataset included 197 items across the five domains:

Domain 1: Attraction and Recruitment (30 items);

Domain 2: Retention, Professional Development and Leadership (33 items);

Domain 3: Workplace Culture and Inclusion (72 items);

Domain 4: Commitment and Accountability (29 items); and

Domain 5: First Nations Community Engagement (33 items).

Index Construction

Index 2022 scores for each domain were derived through principal components analysis (PCA) of responses to domain items. This is a useful way to summarise many items into a handful of domain scores. To enable direct comparisons between 2022 and 2024, the statistical parameters[ii] from the 2022 PCA could be applied to the 2024 data. The key assumption of this approach is that the 2024 items were identical to the 2022 items in every way – the exact same domains measured by the exact same set of items with the exact same response categories. This was not the case, as the questionnaire changes for 2024 were extensive.

An alternative would have been to restrict the analysis to just the unchanged items between 2022 and 2024. This was considered not viable, since it would have ignored all the new items. The derived scores would have provided only a limited picture of employer engagement and thus would have been of little utility to data users.

One technique that is well-suited to dealing with changes in respondents and items over time is the Rasch measurement model[iii]. This is a tool for constructing measures from rating scale responses, evaluating how well questionnaire items contribute to an underlying trait (or construct), and how consistently respondents answer the items.[iv] Since the model may be less well known than principal components analysis, some details about it and the outputs it generates are provided below. Statistical information and references are also included as an appendix.

The model assumes that there exists an underlying quantitative trait for which employers can experience something to a small or a large degree. A set of questionnaire items is developed and administered to measure each employer's position on the construct.

The model uses observed patterns of response to estimate the probability that an employer at a given position on the construct will select a particular category for an item. This probability is directly related to the difference between an employer's position on the construct and the item's position. An employer's position can be most accurately pinpointed when there is a mix of items – items that are relatively easy for them to endorse[v], and those that are harder for

them to endorse. An item's position is measured most accurately when it attracts a range of responses (for example, if some employers always endorse the position, and others do not at all).

A good measurement instrument contains some items that are easier to endorse, some items that are harder to endorse, and a predictable progression in between. The Rasch model provides several statistics summarising how well items and employers meet this progression. Some items and employers may deviate significantly from our expectations. Both of these are undesirable and degrade the quality of derived measures.

Several statistical outputs from the Rasch model that are of particular use for assessing items and scales are summarised in **Error! Reference source not found.** and **Error! Reference source not found.**. Results for individual items are provided separately, and most of the fit statistics (infit and outfit) are in the acceptable range (0.6–1.4). The correlations are all positive (except for one item), and most of the discrimination values are also in the acceptable range (0.5–2)[vi] .

The method for deriving employers' scores is described in more detail below.

Assignment of Index Maturity Levels

Following the approach of Index 2022, the Rasch scores were classified into categories representing the different levels of employer maturity in the five domains. The level of maturity reflects the extent and outcomes of employer's First Nations employment practices. The levels are: foundational, growth, integration and advocacy.

To maintain consistency with the Index 2022 levels, the thresholds for each level and domain were calculated from the average Rasch scores for the 23 employers who agreed to share their 2022 data. The thresholds were found as the mid-point between the average Index 2022 Rasch scores for employers in each of the levels.

The agreement between Index 2022 maturity levels for the two methods are broadly similar, but do not match exactly. This is because principal components analysis and the Rasch model are very different methods, and only some Index 2022 data was available. A strength of the Rasch model is that the scores will be comparable over time, even when items change, and can be directly compared from survey to survey.

In future, it may be desirable to undertake a qualitative exercise in which the essential characteristics of employers that are considered to be at the top (or bottom) of a maturity level are identified. These characteristics can then be matched with questionnaire items to derive an "archetypal" response pattern for each level. The Rasch model can be used to estimate the scores corresponding to the archetypes, and the level thresholds will immediately follow.

Rasch Model

Selected Rasch Model Outputs for Item Assessment

Metric	Meaning	Value
Infit mean square (infit MSE)	This is the mean of the squared residuals[vii], giving relatively more weight to the performances of respondents closer to the item value.	The ideal range is 0.6-1.4 with an expected value of 1. Low values (i.e. < 0.6) indicate the responses to an item can be easily predicted from the other items – i.e., the item may be redundant and may not measure any aspects of the construct not already measured by the other items. High values (i.e. > 1.4) indicate that the responses to an item cannot be predicted from the other items, suggesting that the item may measure a different construct and may not belong in the scale.
Outfit mean square (outfit MSE)	This is the mean of the squared residuals, across all items.	
Point-measure correlation (PTMA)	This is the correlation between the Rasch measures and the responses for an item.	The ideal value is > 0. Values close to 0 suggest the item measures a different construct to the other scale items and may not belong in the scale. Values close to 1 indicate the item may be redundant and may not measure any aspects of the construct not already measured by the other items. Negative values indicate the item is worded in the opposite direction to other items or has been miscoded.
Item discrimination (Discrim)	This relates to how well an item discriminates between high and low scoring respondents.	The ideal range is 0.5 to 2. Values > 2 indicate that an item discriminates between respondents better than expected and may be redundant. Values < 0.5 indicate an item that discriminates between respondents less well than expected and may degrade measurement if retained in the scale.

Selected Rasch Model Outputs for Scale Assessment

Metric	Meaning	Value
Respondent separation index	This indicates how well the set of items is able to distinguish between the respondents measured.	Prefer values ≥ 2, where higher is better. Values < 2 indicate that the scale may not be sensitive enough to distinguish between respondents who differ on the construct of interest.
Item separation index	This indicates how well the sample of respondents enables the item locations to be determined.	Prefer values ≥3, where higher is better. Values < 3 indicate that the respondent sample is not large enough to confirm the hierarchy of the items, suggesting that the scale needs to be tested with a larger sample of respondents.

Selected Scale Statistics for Combined 2022 and 2024 Datasets

Domain	# items	# respondents	Respondent separation	Item separation
Domain 1: Attraction and Recruitment	30	57	3.02	2.61
Domain 2: Engagement, Retention and Development	33	57	1.60	2.47
Domain 3: Workplace Culture and Leadership	72	57	2.90	3.09
Domain 4: Commitment and Accountability	29	56	3.04	3.83
Domain 5: First Nations Community Engagement	33	57	2.21	3.79
Overall	197	57	5.83	3.33

Ideal ranges: Respondent separation > 2, Item separation > 3.

Derivation of Employer Scores

Item responses were analysed using the Rasch measurement model. Rasch analysis is a method for obtaining objective, fundamental, linear measures from stochastic observations of ordered category responses[viii]. It calculates measures that are directly comparable across different administrations of a questionnaire, and seamlessly accommodates missing data. In the process of deriving measures, the Rasch model provides a large range of diagnostics about the quality of the measures and of the items used in their construction. These diagnostics enable the direct assessment of how well the measure "holds together", and whether or not the individual items contribute usefully to the construction of scores.

In mathematical notation, the Rasch model may be represented by the following equation:

$$\log_e\left(\frac{P_{nik}}{P_{ni(k-1)}}\right) = \beta_n - \delta_i - \tau_k$$

where P_{nik} is the probability of the employer n selecting category k for item i, $P_{ni(k-1)}$ is the probability that the response would be in category $k-1$. β_n is the employer's measure, δ_i is the item's measure, and τ_k is the measure of threshold k. This equation is solved iteratively to yield estimates and standard errors for each of these parameters (one for each employer, item and threshold).

An attractive and intuitive feature of the Rasch model is that an employer's likelihood[ix] of endorsing a particular item is a linear function of the employer's measure and the item and category measures.

Measures (β_n in the above equation) were calculated for each employer who answered one or more of the items, one measure for each domain. The usual scale for Rasch measures is log odds (logits), and these were transformed to a scale of 0-100, representing the theoretical minimum and maximum scores for this set of items.

The analysis reported here was conducted using the Winsteps software[x], which applies Joint Maximum Likelihood Estimation[xi] to solve the above equation.

Driver Analysis

To understand what drives better outcomes, a driver analysis was conducted using the Random Forest model. Random Forest builds multiple decision trees by splitting data based on various attributes, but it does not imply causality. The importance values for each attribute indicate how strongly they are associated with the outcome, and the higher the importance, the stronger the influence on the model's prediction. The accuracy of these models is measured by the squared correlation coefficient (R^2), with values above 10% generally considered useful, depending on the field. Higher values indicate stronger model performance.

Data Integration

Quantitative research generates "what" answers, whereas qualitative generates "why" answers. In cases where indicators were captured across both quantitative and qualitative research methods, the design ensured that each quantitative finding was enriched by qualitative insights – for example, qualitative insights were often used to contextualise and explain quantitative findings.

For these indicators, quantitative data were used as an entry point to the deeper findings explored in qualitative research. As findings emerged, qualitative and quantitative data sets were integrated using the following approaches:

- Verifying findings – building on quantitative findings using qualitative insights to deepen understanding of pertinent issues;

- Comparing findings – allowing the findings to be validated by comparing qualitative findings and quantitative data sources, through a side-by-side comparison;

- Quantifying data – translating insights from interviews into quantitative data (where possible); and

- Cross-tabulating data – identifying correlations, impacts or relationships, by cross-tabulating different indicators.

Limitations and Considerations

Research limitations pertain to inconsistencies and shortcomings across employer recruitment, sample size, employee recruitment, industry representation, and variation in reporting across employers.

Lack of Consistency in Employer Reporting

Consistency in employer reporting could not be ensured. Where possible, clear definitions were provided. However, the practices some employers undertake to record or classify employees may vary.

Surveys May Not be Completed Fully or Accurately

Surveys are anonymous, and not legislated or mandatory, so they may not be completed fully or accurately. Several employers reported employee demographic information to enable a profile of First Nations employees for Index 2025. While interpreting these results, it should be taken into consideration that there is a lot of missing employer information. Profile data – such as level in the organisation, tenure and qualifications – are important outcome variables used in the Rasch modelling as well as the driver analysis. As a result, the sample used to investigate this relationship reduces to less than all participating employers, based on data availability of each outcome variable.

Interview and Focus Group Recruitment Varies Across Employers

Many employers nominated their employees to participate in interviews and focus groups. Murawin provided each employer with a draft email template to distribute to First Nations employees, line managers of First Nations employees, and senior leaders. The email invited relevant employees to self-nominate for an interview or focus group directly with Murawin.

This approach was used to maintain confidentiality and ensure their participation was voluntary. All efforts were made to encourage employers to allow employees to self-nominate, and employers were advised that self-nomination was both preferred and a requirement of AIATSIS ethics approval.

Index table and summary statistics

Org	Commitment and Accountability	Workplace Culture and Inclusion	Attraction and Recruitment	Engagement, Retention, and Development	First Nations community engagement	Index score	Index maturity level
1	Growth	Growth	Growth	Growth	Growth	52	Growth
2	Growth	Growth	Integration	Growth	Growth	52	Growth
3	Growth	Growth	Growth	Growth	Foundational	50	Growth
4	Foundational	Foundational	Foundational	Foundational	Foundational	41	Foundational
5	Foundational	Foundational	Foundational	Growth	Foundational	40	Foundational
6	Foundational	Foundational	Foundational	Foundational	Foundational	37	Foundational
7	Integration	Integration	Integration	Advocacy	Advocacy	63	Advocacy
8	Growth	Growth	Integration	Advocacy	Integration	57	Integration
9	Growth	Growth	Foundational	Integration	Growth	53	Growth
10	Growth	Growth	Growth	Growth	Growth	50	Growth
11	Growth	Growth	Integration	Integration	Integration	56	Integration
12	Integration	Growth	Growth	Integration	Growth	55	Integration
13	Growth	Growth	Growth	Foundational	Growth	52	Growth
14	Foundational	Growth	Foundational	Growth	Growth	47	Growth
15	Growth	Growth	Growth	Growth	Growth	49	Growth
16	Integration	Growth	Foundational	Growth	Growth	52	Growth
17	Growth	Growth	Integration	Growth	Growth	52	Growth
18	Growth	Growth	Integration	Growth	Growth	50	Growth
19	Growth	Growth	Growth	Growth	Integration	54	Integration
20	Integration	Advocacy	Advocacy	Advocacy	Integration	64	Advocacy
21	Foundational	Growth	Foundational	Foundational	Foundational	42	Foundational
22	Integration	Growth	Integration	Advocacy	Integration	60	Integration
23	Integration	Growth	Integration	Integration	Growth	59	Integration
24	Foundational	Growth	Foundational	Foundational	Growth	41	Foundational
25	Growth	Growth	Integration	Integration	Growth	55	Integration
26	Foundational	Foundational	Growth	Foundational	Foundational	44	Foundational
27	Growth	Growth	Integration	Integration	Growth	51	Growth
28	Integration	Growth	Integration	Integration	Integration	57	Integration
29	Integration	Growth	Integration	Integration	Growth	60	Integration
30	Growth	Growth	Foundational	Foundational	Growth	48	Growth
31	Growth	Growth	Growth	Growth	Foundational	49	Growth
32	Growth	Growth	Growth	Foundational	Growth	48	Growth
33	Integration	Growth	Integration	Integration	Growth	56	Integration
34	Foundational	Foundational	Foundational	Foundational	Growth	44	Foundational

Summary domain statistics

Organisation	No. of domains at Advocacy	No. of domains at Integration	No. of domains at Growth	No. of domains at Foundational	FN employees as % of all employees
1	0	0	5	0	1.5%
2	0	1	4	0	2.1%
3	0	0	4	1	0.6%
4	0	0	0	6	1.0%
5	0	0	1	5	0.6%
6	0	0	0	6	0.5%
7	2	3	0	0	2.1%
8	1	2	2	0	7.4%
9	0	1	3	1	4.3%
10	0	0	5	0	1.3%
11	0	3	2	0	3.0%
12	0	2	3	0	2.9%
13	0	0	4	1	2.6%
14	0	0	3	2	0.4%
15	0	0	5	0	4.1%
16	0	1	3	1	1.3%
17	0	1	4	0	1.5%
18	0	1	4	0	0.2%
19	0	1	4	0	1.3%
20	3	2	0	0	3.6%
21	0	0	1	5	0.8%
22	1	3	1	0	11.8%
23	0	3	2	0	1.5%
24	0	0	2	4	1.0%
25	0	2	3	0	0.8%
26	0	0	1	5	0.7%
27	0	2	3	0	6.3%
28	0	4	1	0	0.9%
29	0	3	2	0	3.0%
30	0	0	3	2	0.2%
31	0	0	4	1	2.7%
32	0	0	4	1	2.7%
33	0	3	2	0	3.8%
34	0	0	1	5	0.6%

Progress since 2022

The construction of the Index has been done differently in 2024 (Rasch Model see Appendix 5.1) to the principal components analysis (PCA) used for Index 2022. The Rasch Model is a better fit where the number of employers participating is small and there are missing data points. In order to make comparisons between the two years, the 2022 is reconstructed using the RASCH model. This recasting of the Index 2022 is done for the 23 employers who have participated again in Index 2025 and provided their consent to access their 2022 data.

The comparison of Index 2022 to index 2025 is provided in

for the 23 employers who have repeated the quantitative employer survey in both years. There are seven employers that have progressed forward one Index maturity level between 2022 and 2024 using the RASCH constructed Index. All other employers have stayed at the same maturity level.

It should be noted that when recasting the Index for 2022 using the RASCH model there were three employers that changed their Index maturity level to one higher than what they scored using the PCA, and one employer whose 2022 level went down one Index maturity level. The reason why the Index maturity levels are different using the same data for the 23 employers is due to the different statistical technique used, and the increased number of variables used in the RASCH model to distinguish between levels. Nonetheless, for those 16 employers maintaining their Index maturity level, we also see movement in terms of the Index score using the RASCH Model within maturity levels by an average of 2 points which indicates positive change is occurring slowly.

Comparison of 2022 and 2025 (n=23)

	Overall Index Maturity level 2024-2025 using RASH Model	Overall Index Maturity level 2022 using RASH Model	Overall Index Maturity level 2022 using Principle Components Analysis
Foundation	22%	22%	28%
Growth	44%	57%	55%
Integration	29%	17%	12%
Advocacy	6%	4%	5%

A comparison of the 23 employers Index 2022 maturity levels and all of the 2024 employers would be limited by way of comparing changes in the sample composition of employers rather than change over time.

Employer survey questions

DOMAIN 1 ITEMS

Sub-domain: Policies and strategies

Does your organisation have a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy?

Has your organisation published its Diversity and Inclusion Strategy?

Is your organisation currently developing a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy?

How does your organisation manage diversity and inclusion without a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy?

Is First Nations employment a key strategic priority within your organisations' Diversity and Inclusion Strategy?

What level of priority is First Nations employment in the overall Diversity and Inclusion Strategy?

What are the reasons why First Nations employment is the highest priority / a medium priority / the lowest priority within the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy?

What are the reasons why First Nations employment is not a key strategic priority in your Diversity and Inclusion Strategy?

Does your organisation have a current Diversity and Inclusion Policy?

Has your organisation published its Diversity and Inclusion Policy?

Is your organisation currently developing a Diversity and Inclusion Policy?

How does your organisation manage diversity and inclusion without a Diversity and Inclusion Policy?

Does your organisation have a First Nations employment strategy or plan?

Has your organisation published its First Nations employment strategy or plan?

Is your organisation currently developing a First Nations employment strategy or plan?

How is your organisation addressing First Nations employment without a First Nations employment strategy or plan?

How long has your organisation had a First Nations employment strategy or plan?

How often does your organisation review its First Nations employment strategy or plan?

How effective is your organisation's First Nations employment strategy or plan to achieving its objectives?

What are the reasons why your organisation's First Nations employment strategy or plan is <very effective/somewhat effective/not effective>?

What are the key drivers of success for your First Nations employment strategy or plan achieving its objectives?

What are the key challenges for your First Nations employment strategy or plan achieving its objectives?

Is your organisation's First Nations employment strategy or plan led by First Nations employee/s?

At what level is the First Nations employee leading the First Nations employment strategy or plan?

Does your organisation have a sponsor for your First Nations employment strategy or plan?

Does your organisation have a Reconciliation Action Plan?

What level is your organisation's current Reconciliation Action Plan?

Is your organisation currently developing a Reconciliation Action Plan?

How is your organisation addressing reconciliation without a Reconciliation Action Plan?

In what ways is your organisation working towards reconciliation? Or do you have a reconciliation strategy?

How long has your organisation had a Reconciliation Action Plan?

How often does your organisation review the progress of your Reconciliation Action Plan?

How effective is your Reconciliation Action Plan in regards to achieving First Nations employment outcomes?

In what ways has the Reconciliation Action Plan been <very effective/somewhat effective/not effective>?

What are the key drivers of success for your Reconciliation Action Plan to achieve First Nations employment outcomes?

What are the key challenges for your Reconciliation Action Plan to achieve First Nations employment outcomes?

When undertaking procurement activities, how often does your organisation include the following in the selection criteria?

Does your organisation receive external funding for First Nations employment activities?

How effective is this external funding in achieving First Nations employment outcomes?

Why is the external funding <very effective/somewhat effective/not effective> in achieving First Nations employment outcomes?

What are the key drivers of success?

What are the key challenges?

Sub-domain: Targets and Accountability
Does your organisation have First Nations employment targets?
Has your organisation published its First Nations employment targets?
Is your organisation considering developing First Nations employment targets?
How does your organisation achieve First Nations employment without First Nations employment targets?
Does your organisation report on progress towards First Nations employment targets?
Has your organisation published its progress towards First Nations employment targets?
Is your organisation considering reporting on your progress towards First Nations employment targets?
How does your organisation achieve First Nations employment targets without reporting on progress towards targets?
How often does your organisation report the progress towards First Nations employment targets?
Is First Nations employment data reported to your organisation's Executive Leadership team?
How often is First Nations employment data reported to your organisation's Executive Leadership team?
Is First Nations employment data reported to your organisation's Board?
How often is First Nations employment data reported to your organisation's Board?
Do leaders in your organisation have key performance indicators for First Nations employment?
Which leaders have key performance indicators for First Nations employment?
How regularly does your organisation review progress against the key performance indicators for First Nations employment?

Domain 2 items

Sub-domain: Authentic organisational leadership

Which of the following does your organisation use to make a formal commitment to reconciliation?

Does your Executive leadership team communicate your organisation's commitment to reconciliation?

How does your Executive leadership team communicate your organisation's commitment to reconciliation?

Who leads your Reconciliation Action Plan or Reconciliation Strategy?

Do you have a working group driving your Reconciliation Action Plan or Reconciliation Strategy?

Who is in your working group for your Reconciliation Action Plan or Reconciliation Strategy?

Sub-domain: Cultural Safety

Does your organisation have any of the following policies and procedures?

Are First Nations perspectives and considerations embedded into these policies and procedures?

Are the people responsible for handling employee complaints trained to ensure cultural safety?

Does your organisation provide training for all managers on race-based harassment and discrimination prevention with reference to First Nations Peoples?

How often does your organisation train managers on race-based harassment and discrimination prevention with reference to First Nations Peoples?

Does your organisation include any of the following in its operations?

How do you consult with First Nations People to inform [operation]?

When consulting with First Nations employees is consideration given to their cultural load?

What are the successful strategies for balancing cultural load at your organisation?

What are the key challenges to balancing cultural load at your organisation?

Do you provide monetary payment for advice when you consult external First Nations peoples?

When you consult internal First Nations employees, do you provide additional monetary payment for their advice?

Does your organisation have an Employee Assistance Program (EAP)?

Does your organisation have an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) with specific services for your First Nations employees?

Are these specific services for your First Nations employees culturally appropriate/responsive?

Has your organisation sought advice or feedback from First Nations employees when choosing EAP services?

Has your organisation developed culturally informed communications to promote EAP services to First Nations employees?

What are the successful strategies to ensure First Nations staff feel comfortable accessing the EAP services?

What are the key challenges to ensuring First Nations staff feel comfortable accessing the EAP services?

What are the other ways First Nations staff can seek support in your organisation?

Sub-domain: Cultural Safety

Does your organisation have any of the following First Nations employee peer support opportunities?

Does your organisation fund this First Nations employee peer support?

Does your organisation support this First Nations employee peer support in any way other than direct funding?

Does your organisation have feedback mechanisms for capturing the engagement or satisfaction levels of employees?

How is the feedback on engagement or satisfaction levels collected?

Are the engagement and satisfaction levels more positive or negative for First Nations employees than other employees?

Who do you share the insights of First Nations employees' engagement or satisfaction levels with?

How often do the executive leaders and senior leaders in your organisation do the following?

Sub-domain: First Nations Cultural Awareness and Capability

Has your organisation conducted a First Nations cultural learning needs analysis or developed a First Nations cultural learning needs framework?

Is your organisation considering conducting a First Nations cultural learning needs analysis or developing a First Nations cultural learning needs framework?

How does your organisation increase First Nations cultural awareness without conducting a First Nations cultural learning needs analysis or developing a First Nations cultural learning needs framework?

Does your organisation provide employees with opportunities to learn about First Nations Cultures?

Which of the following opportunities does your organisation provide employees to assist them to learn about First Nations Cultures?

Which employees does your organisation provide cultural immersion / online learning / facilitated learning / other learning to?

Is this required or optional for all Australian based employees?

Does your organisation track completion of this First Nations cultural learning activity?

What percentage of Australian-based employees have completed First Nations cultural learning?

How often does your organisation report on completion of First Nations cultural learning activities?

Is there an evaluation process for the First Nations cultural learning activities that your organisation provides?

How effective are the cultural learning activities offered by your organisation at addressing the learning needs?

Why are the cultural learning activities <very effective/somewhat effective/not effective> at addressing the learning needs?

What are the key drivers of success for cultural learning activities offered by your organisation to address the learning needs?

What are the key challenges for cultural learning activities offered by your organisation to address the learning needs?

Sub-domain: First Nations Cultural Awareness and Capability

Does your organisation commemorate National Reconciliation Week in any of the following ways?

Does your organisation celebrate NAIDOC Week in any of the following ways?

What other First Nations cultural events does your organisation observe throughout the year?

Do you evaluate your organisation's participation in First Nations cultural events?

How is the evaluation undertaken, and what measures does your organisation use to determine the impact or how it supports the reconciliation process?

What best describes the level of employee engagement in First Nations cultural events?

How effective is the participation in First Nations cultural events at improving respect for First Nations Cultures in the workplace?

Why is participation in First Nations cultural events <very effective/somewhat effective/not effective> at improving respect for First Nations Cultures in the workplace?

What are the key drivers of success in improving respect for First Nations cultures in the workplace?

What are the key challenges in improving respect for First Nations Cultures in the workplace?

How often does your organisation have a Welcome to Country at internal events?

How often does your organisation have a Welcome to Country at external events?

How often do employees acknowledge Country at internal events?

How often do employees acknowledge Country at external events?

Domain 3 items

Sub domain: First Nations Recruitment Processes and Support

Does your organisation have a First Nations attraction and recruitment strategy/plan?

Does your organisation have a targeted First Nations Employee Value Proposition (EVP)?

Which of the following practices does your organisation adopt for First Nations recruitment?

Do you use your general recruitment/talent acquisition team for First Nations attraction and recruitment?

Do you have a dedicated employee or team for First Nations attraction and recruitment?

Do you use an external provider for First Nations attraction and recruitment?

Are any of the external providers a First Nations business?

Which is the most effective in achieving First Nations attraction and recruitment?

What are the successful strategies for First Nations attraction and recruitment?

What are the key challenges for First Nations attraction and recruitment?

Sub-domain: Roles Availability

Does your organisation have positions that are targeted for First Nations candidates only?

Please give some examples of these targeted positions and explain why they have been targeted for First Nations candidates only?

Does your organisation have positions that are identified for First Nations candidates only?

Please give some examples of these identified positions and explain why they have been identified for First Nations candidates only?

Sub-domain: Developing a Pipeline and Pre-Employment Support

What community engagement does your organisation have with potential First Nations employees?

At which levels are recruitment agencies used to attract First Nations candidates?

Does your organisation provide any of the following support to First Nations applicants?

Domain 4 items

Sub-domain: Career pathways and promotion

Do you currently have internal leadership development programs offered at your organisation?

Do you have participation targets for First Nations employees in your internal leadership development programs?

Are your internal leadership development programs specifically developed for First Nations employees?

Are First Nations perspectives, content or speakers incorporated into existing leadership development programs for all employees?

Which of the following First Nations leadership development opportunities do you offer First Nations employees?

Do you include First Nations representation in conducting talent reviews of First Nations employees?

Do you include First Nations representation in your promotion process of First Nations employees?

Approximately what share of your First Nations workforce have been promoted to the following leadership positions?

Approximately what share of your total Australian workforce have been promoted to the following leadership positions?

Sub-domain: Participation

Does your organisation identify First Nations status for individual employee records?

At what stage are First Nations employees first identified and then recorded as being First Nations?

How does your organisation determine First Nations status?

How true are the following for your organisation?

What are the successful strategies for respectfully maintaining records of First Nations status for employees?

What are the key challenges for respectfully maintaining records of First Nations status for employees?

Approximately, what share of your First Nations workforce and total Australian workforce are in the following employment types?

Approximately, what is the average tenure of your total First Nations workforce?

Approximately, what is the average tenure of your total Australian workforce?

Approximately what share of your First Nations workforce and total Australian workforce are in the following age groups?

Approximately what share of your First Nations workforce and total Australian workforce identify as each gender?

Approximately what share of your First Nations workforce are employed at the following levels

Sub-domain: Retention and employee engagement

Does your organisation conduct any of the following when employees leave the organisation?

Does your organisation analyse the responses of First Nations employees compared to non-First Nations employees?

Does your organisation take action on the results to improve the experience for First Nations employees?

What are the successful strategies for improving the experience for First Nations employees?

What are the key challenges for improving the experience for First Nations employees?

Who manages your First Nations employee engagement?

What is the number of First Nations new hires and the total number of employee new hires in the past two calendar years?

How does First Nations employee retention compare to your overall workforce?

Has your First Nations workforce increased or decreased as a proportion of your overall workforce over the last 12 months?

Why has your First Nations workforce increased as a proportion of your overall workforce over the last 12 months?

Why has your First Nations workforce decreased as a proportion of your overall workforce over the last 12 months?

Is there a process in place to report on retention of First Nations employees during an organisational restructure?

What is the number of First Nations new trainees, apprentices, cadetships, or interns that have been brought on in the past two calendar years?

What is the total number of new trainees, apprentices, cadetships, or interns that have been brought on in the past two calendar years?

Approximately what percentage of your First Nations trainees/apprentices or interns transition into ongoing employment with your company?

Which of the following HR Policies are in place for First Nations employees?

Sub-domain: Participation

of your organisation?

Approximately what share of your total Australian workforce are employed at the following levels of your organisation?

Approximately what share of your First Nations workforce and total Australian workforce are employed in the following locations?

How many First Nations and other board members does your organisation have?

Domain 5 items

Sub-domain: First Nations Voices

How often does your organisation incorporate First Nations perspectives into the following?
Do you have a First Nations strategy that informs your internal marketing and communication?
Do you have a First Nations strategy that informs your external marketing and communication?

Sub-domain: Strategy and Partnership

Does your organisation have a First Nations Community Engagement Strategy?

Has your organisation published its First Nations Community Engagement Strategy?

How effective is your organisation's First Nations Community Engagement Strategy?

Why do you say your organisation's First Nations Community Engagement Strategy is <very effective/somewhat effective/not effective>?

What are the key drivers of success?

What are the key challenges?

Is your organisation involved in any of the following First Nations education related programs or partnerships to attract and retain First Nations employees?

Does your organisation partner with any of the following educational stakeholders?

Does your organisation have a supply chain target spend with First Nations businesses?

Does your organisation set First Nations employee targets with businesses in your supply chain?

Qualitative Discussion Guides

ATTRACTION & RECRUITMENT:

What are the best practices, policies or mechanisms that achieve commitment & accountability for First Nations employment outcomes?

First Nation Employees	Line Managers	Executives
- How was your recruitment experience? - What attracted you to this job? - How would you describe your workplace to others? - Would you recommend this organisation as a place to work - What would make other First Nations people want to work here?	- Tell us how you are supported to attract and increase your First Nations staff. - Are there any recruitment practices that work well? What are the challenges? - What do you think First Nations communities are saying about your organisation? - What is your understanding of the issues faced by First Nations people? - How can make your organisation an "employer of choice" for First Nations people.	- Does your organisation have targets to employ First Nations employees? If so, how are you tracking? - Are there any recruitment practices that work well? What are the challenges? - What is your understanding of the issues faced by First Nations people? - How do you ensure the outward facing appearance of your organisation is attractive to them? Is this working? - How do you become an employer of choice for First Nations people?

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, RETENTION AND LEADERSHIP:

What practices and initiatives allow First Nations employees to become leaders withing their organisations?

First Nation Employees	Line Managers	Executives
- Do you have opportunities or activities for professional development? - Do you feel "job satisfaction" working here? Explain to me why you feel like this? - What makes you stay here? - Are First Nations people progressing up the ladder? - What types of things do you bring to the workplace that others can't?	- Tell me about what processes and tools are in place for you to build First Nations leaders in the workplace. Are they working? - What would you like to see done differently? - What is the retention rate like for First Nations employees? - Are there any areas within your organisation that retain more staff? What are they doing differently? - How do you develop First Nations staff to see them move into leadership roles?	- Does your organisation set expectations for how leaders should best manage First Nations staff? - What supports, policies and processes do you have in place for Managers of First Nations employees? - Tell us about the retention rate of your First Nations employees? How do you retain First Nations staff? - Does your organisation have any First Nations Leaders? What are the common factors to build First Nations leaders? - What opportunities are there for career progression for First Nations employees?

WORKPLACE CULTURE & INCLUSION:

Define workplace practices and culture that allow First Nations employees to thrive, stay, grow and flourish

First Nation Employees	Line Managers	Executives
- Is your employer culturally responsive to your family and cultural responsibilities? - Are males and females treated differently? How so? - What types of initiatives make this a culturally safe place to work? - Is racism/discrimination addressed quickly and with influence? - Tell me how this organisation educates non-First Nation Staff on First Nations culture. Is it making a difference, how so?	- How are skills and cultural knowledge of First Nations people used to strengthened and support staff? - How do you embed these skills into your everyday leadership? How do you measure this? - Do you have different approaches or management styles for male vs females? What works? - Are your staff provided with meaningful work and cultural inclusion? Describe to me what this looks like? - Do you think the workplace has any form of racism? What are the challenges in shifting attitudes? - Do you think staff feel safe in raising racism issues? Can you explain how?	- Would you say your organisation is culturally safe? How would you measure this? - How are cultural responsibilities managed? How do you address gender differences? - Are First Nation employees given the opportunity to influence organisational planning? - Do you think the workplace has any form of racism? What are the challenges to shifting attitudes from historical norms? - How do you ensure "unconscious bias" is not prevalent within your organisation? - Do you think staff feel safe in raising racism issues? Can you explain how?

COMMITMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY:

What are the best practices, policies or mechanisms that achieve commitment and accountability for First Nations employment outcomes?

First Nation Employees	Line Managers	Executives
• Does your organisation have a RAP or other methods that work towards Reconciliation and a culturally safe workplace? Does it work? • If not the RAP, what other ways (strategies) might be more effective? • How does this work for you? Does a RAP mean better employment outcomes? • Who should lead this piece of work? • Do you know how the RAP is measured, would you know if it is on track or what the targets are?	• Tell me about your RAP or other policies/engagement plans that work towards reconciliation? • Does the RAP achieve positive outcomes? If not what other mechanism/strategy might be more effective? • Is the RAP or other policies important to First Nation people and their employment? • What targets apply to you? • Are they meaningful and do they make any difference?	• Does your organisation have a RAP or other policies that work towards reconciliation and a culturally safe workplace? • How effective are these tools? Have you seen better employment outcomes? Who should design and lead these employment practices? • Do you know how the RAP is measured, who is accountable for the targets and if it is on track? • If not the RAP, what other ways (strategies) might be more effective?

PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY:

What do effective & genuine partnerships with the community look like and how can existing partnerships be strengthened?

First Nation Employees	Line Managers	Executives
• Tell us how your workplace is making positive change for First Nations people. • Are you consulted with about building and maintain those relationships? • Do you think your organisation embeds cultural practices and learning throughout the workplace? • What changes have you seen from partnerships that your organisation has made?	• Tell us about any partnerships you have with FN organisations and communities. • What has worked well, or what have you changed to make it work? • How do you ensure it is a genuine partnership? • What governance do you have for this? • What could your organisation do better to improve partnerships and the growth of a community?	• How do you consult and engage with First Nation partners or communities? • Is there an Indigenous stakeholder engagement strategy? Describe the benefits and challenges? • How do you ensure your relationship with First Nation partners is healthy? • How are you growing your First Nation networks to increase the number of organisations you can work with?

Distress and Disclosure Protocol: First Nations Australia Employment Index

INTRODUCTION

Murawin, The Social Research and First Nations Employment Index team, are collaborating on a research project that will look at the current experiences of First Nations employees and the steps being taken by their organisations to close the employment gap to establish a baseline and identify best practice approaches. Data collection for this project will include qualitative interviews with senior executives, line managers to First Nations employees and First Nations employees. It will also include focus groups with groups of First Nations employees who self-nominate to participate. The project will include a significant number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants.

PROJECT CONTEXT

Generation One has identified a gap in quality data to support informed decision making on achieving First Nations employment parity. Currently data on First Nations employment trends is captured by ABS Census, annual ABS Labour Force Survey, Closing the Gap and AIHW reporting at population level only. There is an absence of employment trend data at organisational level, nor is data on employment practices collected and aggregated at the individual employer level. This existing data gap means it is difficult to ascertain which organisations, sectors or geographic locations are making progress (or otherwise) on First Nations employment, and the organisational practices that either underpin or undermine progress.

Generation One plans to start a national dialogue within industry to close the employment gap and requires the development of an Index of First Nations Employment that will highlight both the state of First Nations employment and employment practices at Australia's top 50 largest workplaces.

- The Index will be informed by a set of key indicators and will produce a unique dataset. The aim of the project is to create the data baseline with the goal of strengthening employer performance across the Index domains and be used in the context of wider implications in the areas of informing policy change and directing advocacy initiatives.

Specifically, the research results will be used to:

- empower large employers to efficiently improve First Nations employment outcomes within their organisation and industry;

- inform any future advocacy initiatives to government regarding closing the First Nations employment gap;

- educate general industry and employers on the strategies to improve First Nations employment.

RISKS OF DISTRESS

The interviews will collect and analyse data to deliver significant new insights to help build a clearer picture of First Nations employment and greater understanding of "what works" to recruit and retain First Nations people; however, there is some risk that these discussions will trigger distress for employees if a participant has had negative experiences in their workplace, of the support or training they have received at work. Given that interviews are focussing on workplace culture, it is possible that non-First Nations line managers or executives may also experience distress. The interviews will also cover whether First Nations participants have experienced racism or bias at work, whether they feel their employment is genuine or "tick-a-box" and the cultural load they carry in the workplace – i.e. the extra work that First Nations people do to educate employees about First Nations culture, to work on RAPs etc., and this may also raise potentially distressing topics or memories. We also acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may find being involved in research, or speaking to researchers, to be uncomfortable or intimidating due to past poor research practices undertaken with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The interviews will seek to focus on workplace culture, experience as a First Nations employee, and leadership and embedding of reconciliation within the organisation, but there is a potential risk that a participant may disclose experiences of racism or discrimination in the workplace.

DISTRESS PROTOCOLS

This document outlines the procedure for Murawin researchers who are part of the research team to follow if a participant becomes distressed while participating in an interview.

During recruitment, the consent process, and at the commencement of the interview, participants will be reminded of the voluntary nature of their participation, including their right not to answer any questions that they do not want to answer, and their right to withdraw consent at any stage prior to, during, or up to one month after the interview.

The participant information sheet, and the beginning of the interview, will give participants an outline of the types of questions that will be asked. For example:

- *"Today we'd like to talk with you about what important First Nations cultural events your organisation commemorates, and what has been your experience of them?"*

During the interview, participants will be reminded that they can take a break at any stage. For example:

- *"Please let me know if you would like to take a break".*

- *"Remember that we can take a break at any stage – just let me know".*

- During the interview, researchers will monitor participants for signs of distress (as relevant or noticeable in in-person, video or telephone interviews). For example:

- Voice (e.g. quieter sound);

- Facial complexion (e.g. draining of colour);

- Body tension (e.g. shaking hands);

- Extended pauses.

- Breathing.

- Body language (e.g. shielded/closed):

- Crying

- Eye contact (e.g. looking down or looking away).

If a participant exhibits signs of distress, the researcher will employ a range of techniques as required. For example:

- Acknowledge the challenges of talking about difficult issues: *"it can be really hard to talk about these things"*.

- Offer to take a break: *"would you like to take a short break?"*

- Pause the interview: *"let's take a little break. I'll stop the recorder"*.

- Practice and model grounding: "*when I'm upset, I find it helpful to focus on taking some slow breaths and focusing on my breathing. Do you want to try that for a moment"*.

- Offering encouraging comments: *"thanks for sharing your experiences with us. It can be hard to talk about these things, but it is important for us to hear about [insert relevant topic of conversation]. We appreciate your contribution to this research"*.

- Shift the interview to a less distressing topic, if appropriate: "*perhaps you could tell me a bit more about [insert relevant topic of conversation]"*

- When the moment passes, the researcher can reflect back on their understanding to give the participant an opportunity to reframe their contribution. The interviewer can also recheck consent and provide relevant referrals. For example:

  o Provide a summary of the participant's contribution and check the researcher's understanding. "*Please correct me if I have not interpreted you correctly, but what I've been hearing is that [insert relevant topic of conversation]"*

  o Check consent: *"Remember that we can take a break or finish the interview at any time if things are becoming a bit too much for you, and you can skip any questions that you don't want to answer"*.

  o Ask the participant if they would like to continue*: "would you like to continue with the interview or finish up here?"*

  o Guide participant towards relevant support: "*do you have someone you can talk to about these things after we finish here today?"*

  o Offer an opportunity to debrief with a researcher after the interview.

- o Provide referrals to appropriate support services (see below for more information on referrals)

If the participant's levels of distress are such that they raise concern or require immediate assistance, the interviewer will pause the interview. If this occurs the researcher will recheck consent for the use of the data collected so far and follow the appropriate procedure. For example:

- Cease the interview: *"I'm going to stop the interview here. We can continue another time if you would like. It's your choice about whether what we've talked about so far is included in the research project or not."*

- Thank the participant for their contribution regardless of whether they have consented to use of the data.

- Provide referrals and check immediate support (as above).

If the researcher has concerns about a participant, they will advise their project manager at Murawin and the project manager will determine the appropriate course of action. This may include checking in with a participant later in the day or the next day.

If there are concerns about the safety of the participant or another person, the project manager may consult with the Managing Director of Murawin and will pass on information to the appropriate person in the organisation. Interview participants will be made aware prior to the interview that if there are concerns for their safety, the researcher may be required to breach confidentiality. If this is required, the researcher would discuss this with the participant after the interview.

REFERRALS

A list of national support services is below. The interviewer can use this list to suggest a possible service (or services) to participants. In addition, we will consult with the Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) of organisations involved in this project to determine local options for relevant and culturally safe services to refer participants to in case of distress.

Name	Description	Contact Details
13 YARN	13Yarn is a national crisis support line for mob who are feeling overwhelmed or having difficulty coping. They offer a confidential on-on-one opportunity with a Lifeline-trained Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Crisis Supporter who provide crisis support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.	13YARN on 13 92 76 13YARN
1800 RESPECT	A national sexual assault, family and domestic violence counselling line for anyone who has experienced, or is at risk of, physical or sexual violence. This service is designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities, First Nations Australians, young people and individuals from culturally and	1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732) 1800 RESPECT (link is external)https://www.1800respect.org.au/

	linguistically diverse backgrounds.		https://www.1800respect.org.au/
Blue Knot Helpline	Staffed by trained trauma-informed counsellors, this support line offers information, support and referral to adult survivors of childhood trauma and abuse, and partners, family and friends of survivors.	No	1300 657 380
Bravehearts Information and Support Line	Open to anyone wanting information, advice, referrals and support regarding child sexual assault.	No	1800 272 831 Mon–Fri: 8:30am – 4:30pm (AEST) (Hours vary on public holidays) Bravehearts Information and Support Line (link is external)
Counselling Online	A free online and SMS/text-based service for Australian residents concerned about or affected by alcohol and other drugs.	Yes	Counselling Online (link is external) Use the website to sign up for SMS support. See the website to sign-up for SMS support
DrugInfo (Alcohol & Drug Foundation)	A telephone and online service for anyone who needs relevant, up-to-date information about alcohol and other drugs.	Yes	1300 858 584 DrugInfo (link is external)
eheadspace	A free and confidential telephone and online service for young people aged 12–25. Qualified youth mental health professionals provide support to young people worried about their mental health or experiencing issues such as depression, bullying and isolation. Support is also available to concerned parents or carers.	No	1800 650 890 Mon–Sun: 9am – 1am (AEST) eheadspace(link is external)
Family Drug Support Australia	A telephone support service for users, families and carers in crisis due to alcohol and other drug use.	Yes	1300 368 186 Family Drug Support Australia(link is external)

Service	Description		Contact
Family Relationship Advice Line	Provides information on family relationship issues and advice on parenting arrangements after separation. It is for anyone – including step-parents, young people and friends – affected by family relationship issues or separation issues. Referrals to local services are also offered	No	1800 050 321 Mon–Fri: 8am – 8pm Sat: 10am – 4pm (AEST) (excluding national public holidays) [Family Relationship Advice Line](#)
GriefLine	Provides support to people experiencing loss and grief, at any stage in life. Online counselling is also available.	No	(03) 9935 7400 (National) 1300 845 745 (National landline only) Mon–Sun: 12pm–3am (AEST) [GriefLine](#) (link is external)
Kids Helpline	Provides confidential telephone and online counselling services to young people aged 5–25 years old for any reason.	Yes	1800 551 800 [Kids Helpline](#)(link is external)
Lifeline	A generalist and crisis telephone counselling, information and referral service, provided by trained volunteers who are supported by professional staff.	Yes	13 11 14 [Lifeline](#)(link is external)
MensLine Australia	A telephone and online support service for men with family and relationship concerns. MensLine is staffed by professional counsellors who are experienced in men's issues.	Yes	1300 789 978 [MensLine Australia](#)(link is external)
Men's Referral Service	Offers a confidential telephone service provided for men by men. For men who want to stop their violent or abusive behaviour towards their family members. Women can also seek information and help for their male partner, husband, relative or friend. * Service is available 24 hours in Tasmania and New South Wales.	No*	1300 766 491 Mon–Fri: 8am – 9pm Sat–Sun: 9am – 5pm (AEST) [No to Violence – Men's Referral Service](#) (link is external)

Mind Australia Carer Helpline	Provides free, confidential information, support and referral for family, carers and friends of people with a mental illness.	No	1300 554 660 Mon–Fri: 9am – 5pm (AEST) Mind Australia (link is external)
National Alcohol and Other Drug Hotline	Provides confidential advice about alcohol and other drugs to individuals, family and friends, general practitioners, health professionals, and business and community groups. The hotline will automatically redirect you to the Alcohol and Other Drug Information Service operating in your state or territory.	Yes	1800 250 015 National Alcohol and Other Drug hotline
QLife	Provides early intervention, peer-supported telephone counselling and referral services for people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and/or intersex (LGBTI).	No	1800 184 527 Mon–Sun: 3pm – 12am (AEST) QLife (link is external)
Samaritans	Provides anonymous crisis support, for issues such as relationship or family problems, loss and bereavement, financial or job-related worries, illness, addiction and suicide.	Yes	135 427 Samaritans (link is external)
SANE Australia	Provides information, guidance and referrals to people who are affected by or need support to manage mental health concerns.	No	1800 187 263 Mon–Fri: 9am – 5pm (AEST) SANE Australia (link is external)
Suicide Call Back Service	Provides telephone, video and online counselling to people 15 years and older who are affected by suicide, which can include feeling suicidal, being worried about someone, caring for someone suicidal, being bereaved by suicide and health professionals supporting people affected by suicide.	Yes	1300 659 467 Suicide Call Back Service (link is external)

Wellways Helpline	A peer-led, volunteer support and referral service that provides information to people experiencing mental health issues, as well as their families and friends.	No	1300 111 400 Mon–Fri: 9am – 9pm (AEST) Wellways Helpline (link is external)
Youth Beyond Blue	Provides information and confidential telephone and online counselling for young people aged 12–25 years old, who may be experiencing anxiety, depression or suicidal ideation.	Yes*	1300 224 636 * Online counselling available Mon–Sun: 3pm – 12am (AEST) Youth Beyond Blue
Dardi Munwurro / Brother to Brother hotline	Specialist Aboriginal family violence service and Brother to Brother hotline - 24-hour crisis line for Aboriginal Men	Yes	1800 435 799 (crisis line) (03) 8456 3044 (Dardi Munwurro)
Kurbingui	Aboriginal community organization providing social and emotional wellbeing and youth services in Brisbane.	Yes	(07) 3235 9999 (child safety after hours) Kurbingui
Sydney Aboriginal Family Support Service	Aboriginal owned counselling and support service in Sydney.	No	0410 539 905 Sydney Aboriginal Family Support Service
Gallang Place	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporation providing counselling, advocacy and support services in Brisbane.	No	07 3899 5041 Gallang Place

Index in detail

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

HOW TO INTERPRET THE RESULTS

There are a number of employers who record First Nations status along with other demographic characteristics to enable a profile of First Nations employees included in the Index. However, not all employers are recording First Nations status and not all employers collected all of the demographic information. While interpreting these results it should be taken into consideration that there is a lot of missing employers' information. Nonetheless it gives us an interesting profile of who is working for the employers in the Index.

Missing data – number of organisations

	First Nations Workforce	Total Australian Workforce
Employment type		
Permanent full-time	4	8
Permanent part-time	4	8
Fixed-term contract	4	8
Casual	4	8
Age		
15-17 years	8	13
18-24 years	9	14
25-34 years	9	14
35-44 years	9	14
45-54 years	9	14
55-64 years	9	14
65+ years	9	13
Gender		
Male	5	7
Female	5	7
Non-binary	6	8
Role level		
Executive leaders	10	12
Senior leaders	11	13
Team leaders	11	13
All other positions above entry level	11	13
Entry level positions	11	13
Location		
Major Cities of Australia	16	20
Inner Regional Australia	17	21
Outer Regional Australia	17	21

Remote Australia	17	21
Very Remote Australia	17	21

PROFILE OF FIRST NATIONS EMPLOYEES

Of the employers who recorded the employment type and First Nations status (26), the proportion of permanent full-time First Nations employees was 3%, permanent part-time (3%), Fixed-term contract (2%) and casual (2%) of the same categories in the total Australian workforce. Over half of the First Nations employees in the Index 2025 were permanent full-time (57%) while 20% were permanent part-time, 12% were fixed-term contract, and 12 % were casual. The proportion of permanent staff for First Nations employees was higher at 57% than the proportion of total Australian workforce at 49%. The employers at Advocacy (80%) and Integration (65%) are more likely to have permanent full-time staff as a higher proportion of their workforce than Foundational (48%) and Growth (28%).

Of the employers who recorded the age and First Nations status (20), the proportion of 15–17-year-old First Nations employee was 12% of the same categories in the total Australian workforce, which was significantly more than other age groups which ranged between 2-4%. The overall spread across age groups for First Nations employees was skewed slightly towards younger cohorts, compared to the overall spread of age groups for the total Australian workforce. Advocacy employers have a higher proportion of young people 15–17-year-old First Nations employees (24%) than the total Australian workforce (<1%).

Of the employers who recorded the gender and First Nations status (26), the proportion of male First Nations employees was 3%, females (3%), and those who do not identify with male or female were 2% of the same categories in the total Australian Workforce. There were slightly more males than females in the total Australian workforce than the First Nations workforce but overall similar proportions. As the Index maturity level increased the proportions of the female workforce increased for First Nations compared to the total Australian workforce (Advocacy 63%, Integration 60%).

First Nations executive leaders (1%) and First Nations senior leaders (1%) as a proportion of the total workforce were less than the proportions at lower level roles at 3%. There were only half (1%) in executive leader or senior leaders as a proportion of the total First Nations workforce, whereas there was 2% in the total Australian workforce. Other level of the total Australian workforce was similar to the First Nations workforce. Only the Integration Index maturity level employers had similar proportions of First Nations executive leaders (2%) and senior leaders (2%) as the total Australian workforce proportions.

It should be noted that a large proportion of employers were not able to indicate the location of their employees by First Nations status (21 missing). Of those that could, First Nations employees are proportionally higher than the total Australian workforce in Inner Regional Australia (25% vs 6%), Outer Regional Australia (10% vs 5%), Remote Australia (3% vs 1%) and Very Remote Australia (12% vs 4%). There are less First Nations employees proportionally than total Australian workforce in major cities (50% vs 75%). Employers at Advocacy level have more First Nations employees in Remote Australia (42%) or Very Remote Australia (21%) than at the lower levels of Index maturity. Overall, First Nations employees are a higher proportion of total Australian workforce in Inner Regional Australia

(6%), Outer Regional Australia (8%), Remote Australia (13%), Very Remote Australia (12%) than Major Cities of Australia (3%).

	First Nations Workforce	First Nations % of First Nations Workforce	Total Australian Workforce	Total Australian as a % of Total Australian Workforce	First Nations as % of Total Australian Workforce
Employment type					
Permanent full-time	16,578	57%	492,098	49%	3%
Permanent part-time	5,704	20%	207,948	21%	3%
Fixed-term contract	3,415	12%	141,947	14%	2%
Casual	3,427	12%	155,283	16%	2%
Age					
15-17 years	424	1%	3,463	0%	12%
18-24 years	4,370	15%	106,341	12%	4%
25-34 years	8,056	27%	214,655	24%	4%
35-44 years	6,588	22%	221,779	24%	3%
45-54 years	5,769	20%	186,736	21%	3%
55-64 years	3,527	12%	136,751	15%	3%
65+ years	745	3%	38,223	4%	2%
Gender					
Male	12,008	40%	384,954	42%	3%
Female	17,663	59%	529,172	58%	3%
Non-binary	78	0%	3,737	0%	2%
Role level					
Executive leaders	91	1%	6,638	2%	1%
Senior leaders	94	1%	8,956	2%	1%
Team leaders	1,176	10%	44,252	11%	3%
All other positions above entry level	3,988	35%	135,597	33%	3%
Entry level positions	5,970	53%	219,045	53%	3%
Location					
Major Cities of Australia	11,494	50%	456,942	75%	3%

	First Nations Workforce, Maturity level									
	Total Australian Workforce	Total Australian as a % of Total Australian Workforce	Foundational (n)	Foundational (% of First Nations Workforce)	Growth (n)	Growth (% of First Nations Workforce)	Integration (n)	Integration (% of First Nations Workforce)	Advocacy (n)	Advocacy (% of First Nations Workforce)
Employment type										
Permanent full-time	492,098	49%	57	48%	1,714	28%	14,383	65%	424	80%
Permanent part-time	207,948	21%	21	18%	2,448	40%	3,193	14%	42	8%
Fixed-term contract	141,947	14%	0	0%	79	1%	3,335	15%	1	0%
Casual	155,283	16%	42	35%	1,956	32%	1,365	6%	64	12%
Age										
15-17 years	3,463	0%	0	0%	42	1%	255	1%	127	24%
18-24 years	106,341	12%	13	11%	2,325	38%	1,929	8%	103	19%
25-34 years	214,655	24%	27	23%	1,579	26%	6,341	28%	109	21%
35-44 years	221,779	24%	44	38%	985	16%	5,455	24%	104	20%
45-54 years	186,736	21%	21	18%	769	13%	4,930	22%	49	9%
55-64 years	136,751	15%	10	9%	380	6%	3,100	14%	37	7%
65+ years	38,223	4%	1	1%	56	1%	686	3%	2	0%
Gender										
Male	384,954	42%	47	39%	2,593	42%	9,172	40%	196	37%
Female	529,172	58%	63	53%	3,548	57%	13,717	60%	335	63%
Non-binary	3,737	0%	9	8%	45	1%	23	0%	1	0%
Role level										
Executive leaders	6,638	2%	0	0%	1	0%	90	2%	0	0%
Senior leaders	8,956	2%	2	5%	12	0%	75	2%	5	1%
Team leaders	44,252	11%	1	2%	581	9%	547	12%	47	9%
All other positions above entry level	135,597	33%	8	19%	702	11%	3,169	70%	109	21%
Entry level positions	219,045	53%	32	74%	4,891	79%	677	15%	370	70%
Location										
Major Cities of Australia	456,942	75%	33	69%	375	41%	10,891	51%	195	37%
Inner Regional Australia	96,994	16%	11	23%	245	27%	5,416	25%	2	0%
Outer Regional Australia	27,849	5%	0	0%	182	20%	2,125	10%	2	0%
Remote Australia	5,874	1%	2	4%	72	8%	456	2%	223	42%
Very Remote Australia	23,997	4%	2	4%	37	4%	2,628	12%	110	21%

Domain 1 - Commitment and Accountability

Half of employers were in the Index maturity level of Growth, while no employer was at Advocacy for Domain 1. Domain 1 which focuses on commitment and accountability was the only domain of the five to not have any employer achieve Advocacy level. Many employers are faced with a number of barriers internally with filling knowledge gaps and gaining commitment at all levels of the organisation, this is compounded by external challenges in the current competitive market conditions to attract First Nations Talent.

Domain 1	Foundational	Growth	Integration	Advocacy
%	24%	50%	26%	0%
n	8	17	9	0

EMPLOYMENT STRATEGIES AND PLANS

Majority of the employers who completed the survey have a Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Strategy (97%). Of those with a D & I Strategy 30% were published externally and 85% published it internally. The one organisation who did not have a D & I Strategy was in the process of developing one at the time of the survey. Other employers were leveraging people and culture frameworks or principles, or social impact strategies, rather than a specific D & I Strategy. The D & I Strategies included First Nations employment as a key strategic priority in most plans (91%) with three quarters (74%) stating it was the highest priority. Global influences were impacts to prioritisation of First Nations employees.

> *Our DEI strategy focuses on 3 x underrepresented groups - Women globally, Black and Latinx in the US. First Nations employment is part of our RAP commitments and moving forward may be integrated into our DEI strategy. FOUNDATIONAL*

There were 85% of employers who stated they had a current D & I Policy, with 38% published externally and 90% published internally. Of those without a D & I Policy less than half (40%) were developing one.

Just over half (56%) of employers surveyed had a First Nations employment strategy or plan, with 21% externally published and 74% internally published. Of those without a First Nations employment strategy or plan 80% stated that they were currently developing one.

The length of time that most employers had these plans in place was over 3 years with a quarter (26%) having plans in place for over 10 years.

D1_Q3_1. How long has your organisation had a First Nations employment strategy or plan?

	%	n
Not sure	0%	0
Less than 12 months	16%	3
1-2 years	5%	1
3-5 years	37%	7
6-9 years	16%	3
10+ years	26%	5
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 19; total n = 34; 15 missing		

These plans are reviewed every 1-2 years or less often for most employers.

D1_Q3_1_1. How often does your organisation review its First Nations employment strategy or plan?

	%	n
Not sure	0%	0
Every 12 months	27%	4
1-2 years	53%	8
3-5 years	20%	3
Less often	0%	0
Never been reviewed	0%	0
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 15; total n = 34; 19 missing		

Views were positive on whether or not the First Nations employment strategy or plan was achieving the objectives with 89% stating it was somewhat or very effective.

D1_Q3_1_2. How effective is your organisation's First Nations employment strategy or plan to achieving its objectives?

	%	n
Not sure	11%	2
Very effective	42%	8
Somewhat effective	47%	9
Very effective + Somewhat effective	89%	17
Not effective	0%	0
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 19; total n = 34; 15 missing		

Employers felt that the reason their First Nations plan or strategy was effective was because it set out clear goals, objectives, and made the organisation accountable. In addition, it enabled dedicated funding and staffing to focus on collaboration and engagement with First

Nations Peoples and focus on increased representation of First Nations Peoples in the workforce. The expression of training and employment programs to support recruitment, retainment, and development of First Nations employees in a dedicated First Nations employment plan attributed to mobilising the organisation towards their commitment.

> *Increasing First Nations diversity in leadership roles is a priority for us, in ensuring the leaders we have are influencing the culture and decision making in their teams. This focus moves beyond the targeting of entry level roles and early career pathways. The focus is strengthened by a foundation of successful and sustained programs that <employer> has continually invested in and supported. INTEGRATION*

Employers felt that First Nations employment plans or strategies were successful when there was a commitment from senior leadership or the board to training and employment programs which supported recruitment, retainment, and development of First Nations employees. Other successful factors included engagement with local communities, focus on cultural learning including cultural sensitivity training and creating safe workplaces. Plans and strategies were best improved when there was a mechanism for monitoring and evaluation and/or the setting of targets.

> *Continuous learning and improvement are integral to our First Nations Engagement strategy. We understand that there is always room for improvement, and we actively seek feedback from First Nations stakeholders. Through surveys, focus groups, and our First Nations Working Group, we gather valuable insights that help us make necessary adjustments and improvements. We are committed to creating an environment where everyone's voices are heard and valued. ADVOCACY*

Challenges faced by employers were around the knowledge gap in the business about the importance of the commitment to First Nations activities, resourcing or capacity to deliver, or the ability to embed consistent practices across large or geographically dispersed businesses. The best plans can be challenged when there is limited availability of First Nations talent or there are competitive market conditions. Significant challenges exist for some employers to create a culturally safe environment and retain of First Nations employees.

> *We have seen the cultural responsiveness baseline for employees at <employer> increase since having the strategy and we have seen greater numbers of First Nations people recruited and retained due to the initiatives outlined in the strategy, but we have not been able to deliver everything on the plan, nor fully meet our year on year employment targets. GROWTH*

Three quarters (74%) of First Nations employment strategies or plans were led by First Nations employees. Most were executive (13%) or senior leaders (35%) or other chairs (22%) or advisors (13%). Most employers had a sponsor at executive level (68%), while some had the CEO (10%) or other senior leaders (10%).

D1_Q3_2_1. At what level is the First Nations employee leading the First Nations employment strategy or plan?

	%	n
A senior leader	35%	8
An employee (not an executive or senior leader) who chairs an advisory committee or working group	22%	5

An employee (not an executive or senior leader) who is an advisor in addition to their primary employment role	13%	3
An executive leader	13%	3
The CEO	0%	0
Other (Please specify)	17%	4
Not sure	0%	0
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 23; total n = 34; 11 missing		

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLANS

There were 82% of employers in the survey who had a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and 85% stating the RAP was used to make a formal commitment to reconciliation. Most had an Innovative (39%) or Stretch (43%) level RAP.

D1_Q4_1_2. How effective is your Reconciliation Action Plan in regard to achieving First Nations employment outcomes?		
	%	n
Very effective	29%	8
Somewhat effective	57%	16
Very effective + Somewhat effective	86%	24
Not effective	0%	0
Not sure	14%	4
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 28; total n = 34; 6 missing		

When considering how effective their RAP was, most employers (86%) felt it was somewhat or very effective stating that it allowed for clear goals to be communicated with mechanisms for accountability and reporting. Employers felt that RAPs could drive organisational change, raise awareness and help build partnerships and collaborations to increase employment opportunities for First Nations Peoples. In addition, the RAP helped to shape other internal strategies or policies related to First Nations employment.

The drivers of creating a successful RAP were:
- Clear action plans with achievable targets
- Dedicated roles to drive progress and increased governance of RAP initiatives
- Commitment from leadership team
- Creating a culturally safe workplace
- Ongoing monitoring and reporting
- Collaboration and partnerships – amplifying First Nations voices
- Financial investment/backing

The RAP has provided us a structure and plan to develop strategies that will enable successful First Nation employment outcomes. The RAP also articulates an organisational commitment to reconciliation and First Nations inclusion internally and externally. It also provides mechanisms for regular reporting to Executive teams. It has only been somewhat effective as we are still executing our commitments. FOUNDATIONAL

Employers acknowledged the challenges of achieving RAP outcomes was gaining commitment needed to drive engagement across all levels of the business and a sense of resistance to change. Other challenges were operational in that there were limited resources and support. either financial or capacity to deliver RAP outcomes. External issues such as the availability of First Nations talent in competitive market conditions or the business model with global initiatives made it less of a priority.

> While it's a valuable tool for leaders and teams to acknowledge this commitment, we recognise that there are instances where First Nations employment may not receive the prioritisation it deserves. This can be attributed to the complex landscape of competing priorities across our Group, which sometimes leads to the unintentional de-prioritisation of First Nations employment. GROWTH

Employers were challenged with procurement and retention issues, cultural competency, building ongoing career pathways and unfortunately facing racism within the organisation.

> Overcoming resistance and fostering a culture of inclusivity and reconciliation requires ongoing education, communication, and leadership commitment. ADVOCACY

Of those without a RAP a third were in the process of developing one. Employers without a RAP or one in development were using other policies such as a commitment statement, inclusion strategy, or First Nations Strategy. The following questions are part of Domain 2 but have been included here for discussion on RAPs.

All employers stated that their executive leadership communicated their commitment to reconciliation through internal communications (100%) and most (69%) at external events. Most RAPs are led by non-First Nations executive leaders (82%) or non-First Nations senior managers (54%) with a third being led by First Nations executive leaders (32%). Only half had representation of First Nations senior managers (50%) or employees (50%)

D2_Q18. Who leads your Reconciliation Action Plan or Reconciliation Strategy?		
	%	n
Non-First Nations executive leaders	82%	23
Non-First Nations senior managers	54%	15
First Nations senior managers	50%	14
Other First Nations employee	50%	14
Other Non-First Nations employee	43%	12
CEO	39%	11
First Nations executive leaders	32%	9
Other (Please specify)	11%	3
Not sure	0%	0
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 28; total n = 34; 6 missing		

Almost all employers with a RAP had a working group (96%) of which all included a First Nations employee (100%) and First Nations senior managers (74%) or First Nations executive leaders (26%).

D2_Q19_1. Who is in your working group for your Reconciliation Action Plan or Reconciliation Strategy?

	%	n
Other First Nations employee	100%	27
Other Non-First Nations employee	96%	26
Non-First Nations senior managers	89%	24
Non-First Nations executive leaders	85%	23
First Nations senior managers	74%	20
First Nations executive leaders	26%	7
CEO	15%	4
Other (Please specify)	4%	1
Not sure	0%	0

Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 27; total n = 34; 7 missing

In terms of progression through the various RAP levels over time, there were four employers who were an innovate RAP after 10 years or more, while eight were at Stretch level and two at Elevate.

D1_Q4_1 by Type of RAP

Column % n	Reflect	Innovate	Stretch	Elevate	Not sure
Less than 12 months	50%	9%	0%	0%	0%
	1	1	0	0	0
1-2 years	50%	0%	8%	0%	0%
	1	0	1	0	0
3-5 years	0%	36%	8%	0%	0%
	0	4	1	0	0
6-9 years	0%	18%	17%	0%	0%
	0	2	2	0	0
10+ years	0%	36%	67%	100%	100%
	0	4	8	2	1
Not sure	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	0	0	0	0	0

Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 28; total n = 34; 6 missing

Most employers were meeting monthly (42%) or quarterly (38%) to review their RAP progress.

D1_Q4_1_1. How often does your organisation review the progress of your Reconciliation Action Plan?		
	%	n
More often than monthly	4%	1
Monthly	42%	11
Quarterly	38%	10
Half yearly	12%	3
Annually	0%	0
Less often than annually	0%	0
Not sure	0%	0
Other (Please specify)	4%	1
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 26; total n = 34; 8 missing		

EMPLOYMENT TARGETS

Most employers (82%) had First Nations employment targets in place of which (96%) were internally and externally published, with slightly less reporting progress internally and externally (77%).

D1_Q9. Does your organisation have First Nations employment targets?		
	%	n
Yes	82%	28
No	18%	6
Not sure	0%	0
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 34		

Most employers were reporting progress to their executive leadership team (82%) and their board (71%). When it comes to having leaders with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for First Nations employment just over a third had targets (38%). Of those leaders with KPIs set, all of the executive leaders (100%) had targets, whereas two thirds of senior leaders (69%) and only half regional/departmental directors (54%) or mid-level managers (54%).

We would set goals in line with our DEI goals. It is possible to activate and concentrate on First Nations employment with a strategy and goals rather than targets which can be tokenistic. FOUNDATIONAL

Employers felt that the focus should be on representation of First Nations employees based on averages for locations and roles, or the focus should be on achieving the strategy and goals instead of specific targets. Others felt that having specific targeted roles would encourage First Nations people to apply or to work with First Nations recruiters.

Currently, we encourage First Nations peoples to apply for roles at our organisation and have targeted a handful of roles. Work has also begun in identifying First Nations recruitment agencies to work with as part of our Innovate RAP. FOUNDATIONAL

EXTERNAL FUNDING

Three out of 10 employers (29%) stated that they received external funding for First Nations employment activities. Of those receiving funding, 80% said it was effective as it provided the extra resources needed, enabled additional recruitment or retention programs to be supported or increased opportunities for collaboration. The main drivers for external funding being effective were the ability to actively engage with First Nations communities, opportunities for collaboration and partnerships, to enable long-term sustainability of programs and to support ongoing monitoring and evaluation of activities.

The challenges in making external funding effective were:
- the limited scope or duration of funding,
- requirements and restrictions from the funding body may limit flexibility,
- participation and engagement with funded programs,
- accessing subsidies and
- ensuring consistent service delivery.

1. Limited Funding: External funding for First Nations employment initiatives may be limited in scope or duration, making it challenging to address the complex and long-standing employment barriers faced by these communities. Limited funding can restrict the ability to

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implement comprehensive programs or sustain initiatives over the long term.

2. Lack of Flexibility: Funding requirements and restrictions may limit the flexibility to design and implement programs that are tailored to the specific needs and aspirations of First Nations communities. This can hinder the effectiveness of initiatives as they may not fully address the unique challenges and cultural context of these communities. ADVOCACY

PROCUREMENT ACTIVITIES

Most employers used selection criteria when undertaking procurement activities such as releasing tenders, subcontracting or engaging suppliers such as:

- Bidders' diversity and inclusion strategy (76%)
- First Nations employment strategy or plan (68%)
- First Nations owned (88%).

D1_Q5_. When undertaking procurement activities such as releasing tenders, subcontracting or engaging suppliers, how often does your organisation include the following in the selection criteria?

	%	n
Bidders' diversity and inclusion strategies - NET All, Most, Some of the time	76%	26
Bidders' diversity and inclusion strategies - All of the time	29%	10
Bidders' diversity and inclusion strategies - Most of the time	21%	7
Bidders' diversity and inclusion strategies - Some of the time	26%	9
Bidders' diversity and inclusion strategies - Never	12%	4
Bidders' diversity and inclusion strategies - Not sure	12%	4
Bidders' First Nations employment strategy or plan - NET All, Most, Some of the time	68%	23
Bidders' First Nations employment strategy or plan - All of the time	18%	6
Bidders' First Nations employment strategy or plan - Most of the time	18%	6
Bidders' First Nations employment strategy or plan - Some of the time	32%	11
Bidders' First Nations employment strategy or plan - Never	21%	7
Bidders' First Nations employment strategy or plan - Not sure	12%	4
Whether the bidder is First Nations owned - NET All, Most, Some of the time	88%	30
Whether the bidder is First Nations owned - All of the time	41%	14
Whether the bidder is First Nations owned - Most of the time	29%	10
Whether the bidder is First Nations owned - Some of the time	18%	6
Whether the bidder is First Nations owned - Never	6%	2
Whether the bidder is First Nations owned - Not sure	6%	2
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 34		

Domain 2 – Workplace Culture and Inclusion

Eight out of 10 (79%) employers were at the Growth maturity level, one employer was at Integration and one at Advocacy, with the remaining at Foundational (15%) for Domain 2. Domain 2 explores the workplace culture and inclusion practices in the organisation.

Domain 2	Foundational	Growth	Integration	Advocacy
%	15%	79%	3%	3%
n	5	27	1	1

CULTURAL LEARNING

All employers (100%) provided employees opportunities to learn about First Nations cultures. It appeared that over half (56%) of the employers surveyed are developing or are considering a cultural learning needs analysis or framework, but none have successfully implemented one.

D2_Q1_1. Is your organisation considering conducting a First Nations cultural learning needs analysis or developing a First Nations cultural learning needs framework?		
	%	n
Yes, currently under development	13%	2
Yes, but not yet commenced	44%	7
Yes, currently under development + Yes, but not yet commenced	56%	9
No	25%	4
Not sure	19%	3
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 16; total n = 34; 18 missing		

Only 32% of employers required all employees to learn about First Nations cultures and 29% made it optional. Most learning opportunities for employees were provided by employers as online learning (88%) or facilitated learning (82%) or cultural immersion (68%). In terms of who can access these different learning opportunities, the cultural immersions are offered to executive leaders (48%) senior leaders (35%) leaders of First Nations employees (35%) or line managers working with First Nations employees (22%). Facilitated learning experiences are offered to all employers by just over half the employers (57%) and online learning was offered to all employees by most employers (87%). Eight out of 10 (79%) employers tracked the completion of cultural learning activities. Over a third (37%) of employers had tracked more than 75% of their employees completing cultural learning.

D2_Q2_2. Which employees does your organisation provide cultural immersion / online learning / facilitated learning / other learning to? (flattened)

	%	n
Cultural immersion: All employees	30%	7
Cultural immersion: New hires	4%	1
Cultural immersion: Employees who work with First Nations customers/clients/communities	35%	8
Cultural immersion: Leaders who work with First Nations employees	35%	8
Cultural immersion: Line managers (people managers/team leaders)	22%	5
Cultural immersion: Senior leaders	35%	8
Cultural immersion: Executive leaders	48%	11
Cultural immersion: Board members	30%	7
Cultural immersion: Other (Please specify)	26%	6
Cultural immersion: Not sure	9%	2
Online learning: All employees	87%	26
Online learning: New hires	7%	2
Online learning: Employees who work with First Nations customers/clients/communities	3%	1
Online learning: Leaders who work with First Nations employees	3%	1
Online learning: Line managers (people managers/team leaders)	3%	1
Online learning: Senior leaders	3%	1
Online learning: Executive leaders	3%	1
Online learning: Board members	3%	1
Online learning: Other (Please specify)	3%	1
Online learning: Not sure	3%	1
Facilitated learning: All employees	57%	16
Facilitated learning: New hires	4%	1
Facilitated learning: Employees who work with First Nations customers/clients/communities	18%	5
Facilitated learning: Leaders who work with First Nations employees	18%	5
Facilitated learning: Line managers (people managers/team leaders)	18%	5
Facilitated learning: Senior leaders	21%	6
Facilitated learning: Executive leaders	11%	3
Facilitated learning: Board members	4%	1
Facilitated learning: Other (Please specify)	18%	5
Facilitated learning: Not sure	4%	1
Other: All employees	100%	3

	%	n
Other: New hires	0%	0
Other: Employees who work with First Nations customers/clients/communities	0%	0
Other: Leaders who work with First Nations employees	0%	0
Other: Line managers (people managers/team leaders)	0%	0
Other: Senior leaders	33%	1
Other: Executive leaders	33%	1
Other: Board members	0%	0
Other: Other (Please specify)	33%	1
Other: Not sure	0%	0
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = from 3 to 30; total n = 34; 31 missing		

Cultural learning occurs regularly in some employers who report monthly (15%) or quarterly (26%) activities where other employers it occurs annually (21%) or less often (3%) or when required or requested (12%).

D2_Q4_1. How often does your organisation report on completion of First Nations cultural learning activities?

	%	n
More often than monthly	0%	0
Monthly	15%	5
Quarterly	26%	9
Half yearly	6%	2
Annually	21%	7
Less often than annually	3%	1
Other (Please specify)	12%	4
Not sure	18%	6
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 34		

Only 62% of employers evaluate the process of cultural learning, of those that do 76% feel they are very or somewhat effective. A quarter of employers (24%) said cultural learning is very effective when there is:
- Increased engagement of employees
- Community involvement
- Created deeper understanding of First Nations history and culture
- Options for learning (practical vs theory, online vs in person)
- Bespoke or tailored training to meet business needs

Cultural learning activities have created a deeper understanding of First Nations people's history and their connection to Country. This has helped all our employees connect and engage more with First Nations peoples and communities as they have developed a deeper knowledge and understanding. ADVOCACY

Having skilled facilitators conduct training, engaging the First Nations community in the design and delivery of the learning activities, allowing for ongoing feedback, evaluation and improvement are drivers of success for cultural learning effectiveness.

Flexible to meet learning needs of the learner where they are at in their reconciliation journey, delivered by a First Nations or highly culturally competent facilitator, learning being authentic not tokenistic, provision of culturally safe environment in which to learn, with flexible delivery times to enable greater participation. GROWTH

Over half (53%) of employers who said their cultural learning was somewhat effective because:
- Cultural learning does not provide guidance on how to implement knowledge
- Online cultural learning is mandatory for all staff
- Targets around completion rates for cultural learning
- Training needs to be co-designed to address specific learning needs within organisation
- Challenges reaching remote workforce
- Ongoing training shown to be more effective than one off point in time
- No reporting/tracking of learning program effectiveness

What contributes to the effectiveness of cultural learning experiences are offering online and in person, interactive and immersive options, providing flexible delivery times, having a mandatory cultural learning program and articulating the 'why' of cultural learning through management support and modelling by senior staff. Targeted and localised cultural learning is important to building cultural competency and cultural safety in the workforce.

When cultural learning is not effective it is due to:
- Outdated learning module/s
- Timing of cultural learning – only at recruitment, no refresher option
- No facilitated learning

Our online module was developed approximately 7 years ago and is sorely in need of a refresh. However, new hires are only given this module at the commencement of employment and there is no refresher option after a certain period of time. There is also no facilitated learning option that is structured. There is some ad hoc training that occurs where a need is identified. GROWTH

Challenges faced by employers were adequate funding, access and availability (resource allocation, timing issues, unwired, remote workers, systems issues), competing business priorities and required learning (i.e. regulatory requirements/training), offering only point in time training with no focus on refresher courses. Employers also found balancing cultural sensitivity and appropriateness, and the different levels of knowledge among employees another challenge particularly the lack of understanding unconscious bias or not understanding importance of training. A few employers said finding authentic and accurate content and ensuring training is culturally sensitive and respectful of diverse perspectives difficult.

CELEBRATING AND RESPECTING CULTURE

Most employers were actively communicating internally the National Reconciliation Week (94%), and NAIDOC week (94%) and celebrating with a range of internal and external events. Less employers (41%) were communicating externally about these celebrations.

D2_Q6_1. Does your organisation commemorate National Reconciliation Week in any of the following ways?

	%	n
Internal communication campaign	94%	32
Host internal events	85%	29
Staff attend external events	85%	29
External communication campaign	41%	14
Sponsorship	24%	8
Host external events	21%	7
Do not observe Reconciliation Week	3%	1
Other (Please specify)	9%	3
Not sure	0%	0
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 34		

D2_Q6_2. Does your organisation celebrate NAIDOC Week in any of the following ways?

	%	n
Internal communication campaign	94%	32
Staff attend external events	91%	31
Host internal events	88%	30
External communication campaign	41%	14
Sponsorship	35%	12
Host external events	26%	9
Do not observe NAIDOC Week	0%	0
Other (Please specify)	18%	6
Not sure	0%	0
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 34		

There was a mix of employers who observed other cultural events with the most common being Harmony Day (76%) and recognising the 26th of January as a day of mourning, Survival day or Invasion day (62%) with just over half acknowledging Sorry Day (56%).

D2_Q7. What other First Nations cultural events does your organisation observe throughout the year?

	%	n
21 March - Harmony Day	76%	26
26 January - Survival Day, Day of Mourning, Invasion Day	62%	21
26 May - National Sorry Day	56%	19
Local community events	50%	17
3 June - Mabo Day	38%	13
13 February - Anniversary of National Apology 2008	35%	12
17 March - National Close the Gap Day	32%	11
9 August - International Day of the World's Indigenous People	32%	11
4 August - National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day	24%	8
1 July - Coming of the Light	18%	6
Other (Please specify)	18%	6
None of these	6%	2
Not sure	0%	0
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 34		

Some employers (38%) were evaluating participation in First Nations cultural events. Of these employers most said that there was genuine engagement by most employees (92%) while one employer described poor engagement by most employees. All employers who evaluated employee participation in cultural events felt that it improved respect First Nations Cultures in the workplace.

D2_Q9_2. How effective is the participation in First Nations cultural events at improving respect for First Nations Cultures in the workplace?

	%	n
Very effective	38%	5
Somewhat effective	62%	8
Very effective + Somewhat effective	100%	13
Not effective	0%	0
Not sure	0%	0
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 13; total n = 34; 21 missing		

Employers who evaluated the participation in cultural events said that they used consultation and engagement with First Nations Peoples and collected feedback or ran surveys to report and identify areas for improvement. The measures they used to determine impact included:
- Participation rates/Attendance numbers
- NET promoter score

- Positive feedback
- Internal framework created
- KPI's

The reasons employers felt the cultural events were very effective in supporting the reconciliation process were because they:
- Increased cultural awareness and competency
- Provided opportunities for partnerships with First Nations communities and services
- Gave the employer a baseline of their employeess knowledge and understanding of First Nations culture
- Supported the inclusiveness for First Nations employees
- Supported creating a culturally safe workplace.

Participating in First Nations cultural events exposes individuals in the workplace to the practices, and values of First Nations cultures. This firsthand experience fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation of the diversity and richness of these cultures, leading to increased cultural awareness. This first-hand experience can develop a… understanding of First Nations cultures, removing misconceptions and promoting respect. ADVOCACY

A few employers said that there is not enough knowledge about First Nations Cultures, and there needs to be a practical application not tokenistic. This can be difficult when workplace operations limit access to events (too large, remote, unwired etc.) or when events are not mandatory.

The key drivers of success in improving respect for First Nations cultures in the workplace were:
- Providing access to information and education
- Commitment from leadership
- Inclusive policies and practices
- Ongoing improvement/feedback

Key drivers of success in improving respect for First Nations cultures in the workplace include education, engagement, and inclusive policies and practices. Education initiatives such as cultural learning activities and training programs help raise awareness and understanding of First Nations cultures among team members. Engagement in cultural events and initiatives promotes active participation and fosters connections with First Nations communities. Furthermore, implementing inclusive policies and practices that prioritise diversity, equity, and inclusion creates a supportive and respectful work environment where First Nations cultures are valued and celebrated. GROWTH

The key challenges in improving respect for First Nations cultures in the workplace are a lack of awareness and understanding including the need to overcome racism, bias, stereotypes which were mentioned frequently. The barriers to overcoming these challenges are a lack of inclusive policies and practices, service delivery or operational needs prioritised, lack of resources, time and support and often the cultural load placed on First Nations employees.

The scale of our operations and workforce means we are not able to reach all employees with cultural events and learning. INTEGRATON

More employers were following cultural protocols for Acknowledgement and Welcome to Country externally than internally, although it did not happen on all occasions.

D2_Q8_1. How often do employees …?

	Acknowledge Country at internal events		Acknowledge Country at external events		Welcome to Country at internal events		Welcome to Country at external events	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Always	29%	10	38%	13	9%	3	15%	5
Usually	56%	19	44%	15	26%	9	41%	14
Sometimes	12%	4	9%	3	59%	20	41%	14
Not at all	3%	1	0%	0	6%	2	0%	0
Not sure	0%	0	9%	3	0%	0	3%	1
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 34								

Most employers (88%) indicated they are working with First Nations Communities or customers or providing products or services to First Nations communities or customers (82%) or designing programs and policies for First Nations communities or customers (74%). Just over half the employers (56%) were operating on prescribed or designated Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander land or local council areas where most (89%) were engaging in a formal process of consultation.

D2_Q10_1. Does your organisation include any of the following in its operations?

	%	n
Working with First Nations Communities or customers	88%	30
Providing products or services to First Nations Communities or customers/clients	82%	28
Designing programs or policies for First Nations Communities or customers	74%	25
Operating on prescribed or designated Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Land or local council areas (as determined by a Land Act).	56%	19
Other (Please specify)	0%	0
None of these	3%	1
Not sure	0%	0
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 34		

CULTURAL LOAD

Less than half the employers (42%) always considered cultural load when consulting with First Nations employees, whilst there was usually (21%) and sometimes (29%) consideration, only four percent said they did not give any consideration.

D2_Q11_2. When consulting with First Nations employees is consideration given to their cultural load?

	%	n
Always	42%	10
Usually	21%	5
Sometimes	29%	7
Not at all	4%	1
Not sure	4%	1
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 24; total n = 34; 10 missing		

Recognising the importance of addressing cultural load, particularly in the lead-up to significant events like the referendum, our <team> partnered with 13YARN to develop resources tailored to this concept. These resources provide support mechanisms specifically designed to alleviate cultural load for our First Nations team members. In addition to these resources, we've implemented various strategies to maintain connection and support within our First Nations team community. For example, we have established a First Nations team chat, providing an online platform for continuous connection and support. Furthermore, our First Nations Team Network offers a culturally safe space for monthly gatherings exclusively for mob members, fostering a sense of community and providing opportunities for shared experiences and support. Our intention is to effectively balance cultural load and support the well-being of our First Nations team members, ensuring they feel valued, supported, and empowered within our organisation. GROWTH

Employers stated that successful strategies for balancing cultural load included:
- Identified roles (including in job descriptions, making time within workload)
- DEI policies and practices
- Provision of education, training and resources
- Mentorship and peer support programs
- Authentic and compassionate leadership
- Voluntary consultation with First Nations employees
- Working groups or reference groups for reconciliation activities

1. First Nations leaders across the organization providing guidance to the organization, including the understanding that Cultural Load is different for individual[s] and can only be determined by the individual and not be determined by others.
2. Encouraging First Nations staff [to] raise the effect of Cultural Loads that they may be under. GROWTH

The key challenges to balancing cultural load were lack of awareness and understanding of cultural load and ensuring responsibility sits with the organisation, not just with First Nations employees. This meant ensuring employees understood expectations and know what is needed of them, especially if there are only a few or small number of identified roles. Other challenges were resistance to change in the diversity and inclusion space, staffing issues and employee turnover or getting employees engagement and support.

We give non-Indigenous employees the knowledge to share cultural information so as to lessen the load for First Nations people. GROWTH

When seeking cultural advice most external First Nations Peoples are provided a monetary payment always (41%), usually (38%) or sometimes (10%). However, First Nations employees are only sometimes (8%) or never paid for their cultural advice.

D2_Q11_1. Do you provide monetary payment for advice when you				
	Consult external First Nations peoples		Consult internal First Nations employees	
	%	n	%	n
Always	41%	12	0%	0
Usually	38%	11	0%	0
Sometimes	10%	3	8%	2
Not at all	0%	0	92%	22
Not sure	10%	3	0%	0
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 29; total n = 34; 5 missing				

CULTURAL SUPPORT

All employers (100%) offer an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) but only 76% have specific services for First Nations employees. Of these specific services all employees state they are culturally appropriate and responsive. However, only a third of employers (35%) sought advice or feedback from First Nations employees when choosing their EAP services.

We have promoted 13YARN where practical as an alternative to EAP. FOUNDATIONAL

Many employees choose not to engage with generic EAPs and often discover that an EAP service can be too static or clinical. Our organisation offers a triage or trauma-informed support service for Indigenous employees. An Indigenous EAP is currently being engaged to complement the suite of culturally appropriate and responsive offerings available. INTEGRATION

Successful strategies need to have a holistic and culturally sensitive approach that involves:
1. Diverse EAP Providers: Offer a diverse range of EAP providers, including those who are Indigenous or have experience working with Indigenous communities, to ensure that staff can access culturally sensitive support.

2. Confidentiality and Trust: Emphasise the confidentiality of EAP services and build trust with First Nations staff by ensuring that their personal information and discussions remain private and secure.

3. Accessible Resources: Provide information about EAP services in a variety of formats, including internal, external communication platform, verbal and written communication to ensure that all staff can easily access and understand the available resources.

4. Feedback and Evaluation: Seek feedback from First Nations staff about their experiences with EAP services and use this feedback to continuously improve and tailor the services to meet their needs.

5. Promote Awareness: Raise awareness about the importance of mental health and well-being within the Indigenous community and encourage First Nations staff to seek support through EAP services without fear of stigma or discrimination.

6. Ensuring the EAP Service incorporates a culturally safe and competent way of working with First Nations employees - following protocols etc. ADVOCACY

Successful strategies to ensure First Nations employees feel comfortable accessing the EAP services were stated by employers as:
- Seeking feedback from First Nations employees
- Promote/Communicate EAP to First Nations employees
- Offer a diverse range of EAP providers
- First Nations specific EAP
- Emphasise confidentiality of EAP
- Ensure ease of accessibility
-

The key challenges to ensuring First Nations employees feel comfortable accessing the EAP services were:
- Cultural factors
- Trust issues/Confidentiality concerns
- Stigma and shame
- Lack of education and awareness of services
- Workload issues/Lack of time
- Accessibility barriers
- Size of organisation

The most common peer support for First Nations employees was a First Nations Network (71%) followed by mentoring program (44%), Buddy system (32%) and social network (29%) offered by employers. Only one organisation offered an Elders Group. In most cases (64% or more employers) were funding these peer supports.

Training and Development: Providing training on cultural sensitivity, mental health, respectful behaviour, effective communication, and relationship-building skills that will help employees participating in the buddy system better support and understand their First Nations peers.

Mentoring Programs: Incorporating the buddy system into existing mentoring programs which provide additional support and guidance for First Nations employees. Evaluation and Continuous Improvement: Regularly evaluating the effectiveness of the buddy system, collecting feedback, and making adjustments based on the input received can help enhance the program's impact and relevance. ADVOCACY

D2_Q13. Does your organisation have any of the following First Nations employee peer support opportunities?		
	%	n
First Nations network	71%	24
Mentoring program	44%	15
Buddy system	32%	11
Social network	29%	10
Elders connection group	3%	1
Other (Please specify)	18%	6
None of these	18%	6
Not sure	0%	0
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 34		

D2_Q13_1. Does your organisation fund this First Nations employee peer support? (flattened)

	Yes		No		Unsure	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
First Nations network: Does your organisation fund this First Nations employee peer support? - Yes	71%	17	25%	6	4%	1
Buddy system: Does your organisation fund this First Nations employee peer support?	64%	7	36%	4	0%	0
Mentoring program: Does your organisation fund this First Nations employee peer support?	67%	10	33%	5	0%	0
Social network: Does your organisation fund this First Nations employee peer support?	70%	7	30%	3	0%	0
Elders connection group: Does your organisation fund this First Nations employee peer support?	100%	1	0%	0	0%	0
Other (Please specify): Does your organisation fund this First Nations employee peer support	83%	5	17%	1	0%	0

Total sample; Unweighted; base n = from 1 to 24; total n = 34; 33 missing

Other ways employers offer First Nations staff support are:
- Contacting HR/specialised First Nations internal employees or teams
- Mentorship and peer support programs
- Leadership/Management
- External support services (i.e. 13YARN)

Other ways offer peer supports are:
- Attend network meetings and yarning circles
- Promoting diversity and inclusion
- Providing resources to education and inform
- Support from leadership
- Offering training on cultural competency
- Regular requests for feedback
- Buddy system.

> Yes, yarning circles and connection opportunities are conducted during work hours and employees are released from their duties to attend these opportunities. Yearly One.Mob Summit which is an engagement opportunity supported by leaders. INTEGRATION

EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

All but one organization had feedback mechanisms for capturing the engagement or satisfaction levels of employees. Most employers (97%) used surveys or exit surveys (76%) whilst others collected this information during performance discussions (61%) or anecdotally (55%). A few used group formats in yarning circles (48%), committees (42%) or focus groups (42%).

D2_Q16_1. How is the feedback on engagement or satisfaction levels collected?

	%	n
Survey	97%	32
Exit interviews	76%	25
Performance discussions	61%	20
Anecdotally	55%	18
Yarning circles	48%	16
Consultative committee or group	42%	14
Focus groups	42%	14
Other (Please specify)	0%	0
Not sure	0%	0
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 33; total n = 34; 1 missing		

Whilst many employers (41%) were not able to analyse the difference between First Nations employees and other employees, those that were found that satisfaction was about the same (21%) or more negative (24%). Only 9% of employers said that First Nations employees were more positive than other employees.

D2_Q16_2. Are the engagement and satisfaction levels more positive or negative for First Nations employees than other employees?

	%	n
First Nations employees are more positive	9%	3
First Nations employees are the same	21%	7
First Nations employees are more negative	24%	8
Unable to analyse results by First Nations status	42%	14
Not sure	3%	1
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 33; total n = 34; 1 missing		

Executive leaders in all organisations were provided insights about their First Nations employee's engagement or satisfaction levels, but only half (53%) shared with team leaders and even less with the Board (42%). Some employers (37%) would share their results with First Nations Employees or reference groups/networks or steering committees.

D2_Q16_3. Who do you share the insights of First Nations employees' engagement or satisfaction level

	%	n
Executive leaders	100%	19
CEO	79%	15
Senior leaders	79%	15
Team leaders	53%	10
Board	42%	8
Other (Please specify)	37%	7
Not sure	0%	0

Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 19; total n = 34; 15 missing

Domain 3 – Attraction and Recruitment

Domain 3 focuses on First Nations attraction and recruitment processes and support. Slightly less than one-third of employers were at the Foundational (29%) and Growth (29%) maturity levels for Domain 3. Just over a third were at the Integration (38%) level and one employer was at Advocacy.

Domain 3	Foundational	Growth	Integration	Advocacy
%	29%	29%	38%	3%
n	10	10	13	1

EMPLOYEE VALUE PROPOSITION

Two-thirds (65%) of employers had a First Nations attraction and recruitment strategy/plan. Of employers with a First Nations strategy/plan, one in two (50%) had a targeted First Nations Employee Value Proposition (EVP).

D3_Q1. Does your organisation have a First Nations attraction and recruitment strategy/plan?

	%	n
Yes	65%	22
No	35%	12
Not sure	0%	0
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 34		

When asked about recruitment processes and support, most employers (94%) said they adopt specific practices for First Nations recruitment. The practices most frequently adopted were providing feedback to unsuccessful First Nations candidates (74%), conducting conversational or informal interviews (71%), undertaking pathway programs or partnerships with First Nations providers (65%), and having a First Nations employee present during the recruitment process (59%).

D3_Q2_6. Which of the following practices does your organisation adopt for First Nations recruitment?

	%	n
Providing feedback to unsuccessful First Nations candidates	74%	25
Conversational and informal interviews	71%	24
Undertake pathway programs and/or partnerships with First Nations providers	65%	22
First Nations employee/s present in the interview and/or across the recruitment process to mentor and coach	59%	20
Opportunities for those without the formal qualifications suggested for the role	53%	18
Localised recruitment methods such as community outreach	53%	18

programs (rather than Seek, LinkedIn, etc.)

	%	n
Changing the language of the job description or criteria	47%	16
An easy to navigate recruitment process	44%	15
Guaranteeing an interview to First Nations candidates who meet the job requirements	38%	13
Low wait times during recruitment process	26%	9
Other (Please specify)	12%	4
None of these	6%	2
Not sure	0%	0

Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 34

Nearly all (94%) employers said they used their general recruitment team for First Nations attraction and recruitment. One in two employers said they had a dedicated employee or team (53%) or used an external provider (50%) for First Nations recruitment. Of employers using an external provider, 82% reported using a First Nations business.

Employers using their general recruitment team, a dedicated employee or team, or external provider were asked which is most effective for First Nations attraction and recruitment. Two-fifths (41%) of employers said having a dedicated First Nations employee or team was the most effective, while just over a third (36%) said all processes were equally effective (36%).

D3_Q2_5. Which is the most effective in achieving First Nations attraction and recruitment?

	%	n
The dedicated First Nations employee or team	41%	9
They are equally effective	36%	8
The general recruitment/talent acquisition team	9%	2
External third-party provider	5%	1
First Nations external third-party provider	5%	1
Not sure	5%	1

Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 22; total n = 34; 12 missing

Successful strategies for First Nations attraction and recruitment included:
- A First Nations employee being involved in recruitment process
- Adaptation of recruitment processes (informal interview, removing jargon from adverts)
- Targeted outreach and community engagement efforts
- Ability to demonstrate cultural awareness and sensitivity
- Clearly defined career pathways
- Flexible work arrangements
- Identified roles/positions
- Ongoing training and development opportunities

Rewording adverts to remove some of the often overwhelming, corporate jargon. Having a First Nations person in the recruitment team that potential employees can talk with

throughout the process. Keeping interviews more informal and more like a yarn. Having a First Nations person from the business at the interview panel. GROWTH

Engagement, connections to community, nurturing and identifying talent and embedded Indigenous perspectives in our recruitment processes and practices. INTEGRATION

Employers said the demand for First Nations talent within the labour market and availability of skilled employees was a major challenge when it comes to First Nations attraction and recruitment. Other challenges mentioned by employers included geographical constraints, differences in cultural values and communication styles, building connections with First Nations communities and networks, creating culturally safe workplaces, and overcoming negative perceptions or biases about the organisation.

The market is competitive, as it seems as though many organisations are seeking to attract and engage First Nations talent. FOUNDATIONAL

Understanding what attracts Indigenous candidates in a competitive market and engaging in 'different ways of working' including stronger community engagement, career events and working with Indigenous providers with a lens on retaining our talent once recruited into the organisation. INTEGRATION

Differences in cultural values, traditions, and communication styles between First Nations communities and mainstream organisations can create challenges in the recruitment process. ADVOCACY

TARGETED RECRUITMENT

Over half of employers in the survey said they have positions that are targeted (68%) or identified (65%) for First Nations candidates only.

D3_Q5/D3_Q5_2 Does your organisation have positions that are targeted or identified for First Nations candidates only?				
	Targeted positions		Identified positions	
	%	n	%	n
Yes	68%	23	65%	22
No	29%	10	35%	12
Not sure	3%	1	0%	0
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 34				

The types of targeted positions mentioned by employers varied greatly, some examples are provided below:

- First Nations employment lead
- First Nations inclusion lead
- Security officers
- Indigenous Talent Acquisition and People Manager
- Indigenous Business Services Manager
- Aboriginal Programs Advisor
- First Nations Co-ordinator

Employers were also asked why the positions were targeted for First Nations candidates. Some reasons provided were to:
- Advocate and provide cultural support and advice to non-First Nations employees
- Provide support to First Nations employees
- Ensure guidance, advice and expertise is being sought from those with lived experience as First Nations Peoples for culturally appropriate outcomes

The First Nations Senior Talent Acquisition Specialist role was a targeted role as we required the skillset to help us in building our capability & cultural knowledge in First Nations recruitment, along with supporting building community connections and talent pooling for First Nations roles. GROWTH

Indigenous Engagement team members are target positions in the organisation. Deliberate early pathway programs co-designed with Indigenous service providers assist to increase sustainable opportunities for Indigenous talent looking to secure dynamic and various role types across the organisation. INTEGRATION

Similar types of positions were mentioned by employers when asked about identified roles for First Nations candidates. Some examples included:
- Aboriginal Programs Advisor
- Aboriginal Liaison Officer
- First Nations Participation team
- Indigenous Mentor
- Cultural Heritage Officers
- Manager, Indigenous Business Services
- First Nations Inclusion & Delivery
- Reconciliation Action Plan Manager
- Field Operations Trainees

Employers said they had identified roles for First Nations candidates for the following reasons:
- To help build trust and credibility with First Nations job seekers
- Organisations wanted First Nations knowledge/lived experience
- Specialty focus on outcomes for First Nations communities, customers and employees
- To lead and guide First Nations strategies and programs
- The role requires person to work directly with First Nations communities

Cultural Capability Leader (Indigenous/First Nations) to build the organisations cultural knowledge and capabilities. This is a learning focussed role.
Recruitment Manager (Indigenous/First Nations) to support the organisations ability to attract and recruit indigenous talent and to support recruitment strategy and processes.
First Nations Advisory Leader (Partner) to lead the organisations Indigenous engagement (government, community, infrastructure, policy), and support Indigenous owned and operated businesses and employment through partnerships and/or referrals. GROWTH

An identified role in the <organisation name> is one in which Aboriginality is a genuine occupational qualification and to which only Aboriginal people may apply. Typically, these roles work directly with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and are involved in developing and/or providing services and programs which have an impact on and promote the welfare of the Aboriginal community. Examples of an identified role Aboriginal Employment Manager or Aboriginal Engagement Manager. INTEGRATION

Most employers in the survey undertook community engagement with potential First Nations employees. The most common engagement activities were attending career/job fairs (74%), offering traineeships, cadetships, internships, apprenticeships (71%), engaging First Nations recruitment agencies (68%) and being involved in First Nations community programs (65%). Over half of employers also mentioned using general recruitment agencies (56%), pathway programs (56%) and social media sites (53%).

D3_Q6. What community engagement does your organisation have with potential First Nations employees?		
	%	n
Career/job fairs	74%	25
Traineeships, cadetships, internships, apprenticeships	71%	24
First Nations recruitment agencies	68%	23
Involvement in First Nations community programs	65%	22
General recruitment agencies	56%	19
Pathway programs with schools, TAFE, RTOs, University	56%	19
Social media sites	53%	18
Pathway programs with Community Development Program employment services or job seeker employment services	38%	13
Ambassador programs	15%	5
Other (Please specify)	12%	4
None of these	9%	3
Not sure	0%	0
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 34		

More than half of employers who said they engage First Nations or other recruitment agencies said they used recruitment agencies for senior leadership roles (58%) and team leader or management roles (54%), while half said they use agencies to recruit for traineeships (50%).

D3_Q6_1. At which levels are recruitment agencies used to attract First Nations candidates?		
	%	n
Senior leadership roles	58%	14
Team leader or management roles	54%	13
Traineeships	50%	12
Entry level (no formal qualifications)	46%	11
Qualified level (accredited qualifications such as a certificate, diploma or degree)	46%	11
Internships	29%	7
Other (Please specify)	17%	4
Not sure	4%	1
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 24; total n = 34; 10 missing		

Most employers said they are providing support to First Nations applicants during the recruitment process. The most mentioned supports were payment of National Police Clearance or Working with Children's Checks (59%) and having a First Nations employee/support person at interview (59%). Other mentions included interview coaching (38%), payment of medical assessments (38%) and support with CV's or resumes (35%).

D3_Q7. Does your organisation provide any of the following support to First Nations applicants?

	%	n
National Police Clearance or Working with Children's Checks are paid for	59%	20
First Nations employee or support person at the interview	59%	20
Interview coaching	38%	13
Medical assessments are paid for	38%	13
Support with CVs or resumes	35%	12
Travel costs are paid for	18%	6
Licences (e.g. drivers) are paid for	12%	4
Other (Please specify)	15%	5
None of these	21%	7
Not sure	0%	0

Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 34

Domain 4 – Engagement, Retention, and Development

There was a spread of employers in the survey across the Index maturity levels in Domain 4, with 4 employers at Advocacy level. Domain 4 examines the processes for engagement, retention and development.

Domain 4	Foundational	Growth	Integration	Advocacy
%	26%	35%	26%	12%
n	9	12	9	4

IDENTITY

Recording First Nations status in individual employee records was practiced in 91% of employers. Identification usually occurs early, at application (94%) or upon hiring (65%) at interviews (35%) or at offer (26%).

During informal conversations with First Nations employees who may not have previously identified and recorded. Records are then updated at this point with their consent. Additionally, sometimes First Nations employees identify at a local project induction and then are identified and recorded (with their consent) at a business level. GROWTH

D4_Q1_1. At what stage are First Nations employees first identified and then recorded as being First Nations

	%	n
At application	94%	29
At hire	65%	20
At interviews	35%	11
At offer	26%	8
At probation review	16%	5
Other (Please specify)	39%	12
Not sure	0%	0

Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 31; total n = 34; 3 missing

D4_Q1_3_. How true are the following for your organisation? (flattened)

	%	n
Not all First Nations employees are willing to have their First Nations identity recorded in their employment records - Completely true	55%	17
Not all First Nations employees are willing to have their First	23%	7

Nations identity recorded in their employment records - Mostly true		
Not all First Nations employees are willing to have their First Nations identity recorded in their employment records - Mostly untrue	19%	6
Not all First Nations employees are willing to have their First Nations identity recorded in their employment records - Completely untrue	0%	0
Not all First Nations employees are willing to have their First Nations identity recorded in their employment records - Not sure	3%	1
Our organisation respects that it is an employee's personal choice as to whether they wish to share their Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage with their colleagues - Completely true	100%	31
Our organisation respects that it is an employee's personal choice as to whether they wish to share their Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage with their colleagues - Mostly true	0%	0
Our organisation respects that it is an employee's personal choice as to whether they wish to share their Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage with their colleagues - Mostly untrue	0%	0
Our organisation respects that it is an employee's personal choice as to whether they wish to share their Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage with their colleagues - Not sure	0%	0
Our organisation respects that it is an employee's personal choice as to whether they wish to share their Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage with their colleagues - Completely untrue	0%	0
Our organisation recognises that there is diversity in the cultural identity and connection to culture journey for First Nations employees - Completely true	84%	26
Our organisation recognises that there is diversity in the cultural identity and connection to culture journey for First Nations employees - Mostly true	16%	5
Our organisation recognises that there is diversity in the cultural identity and connection to culture journey for First Nations employees - Mostly untrue	0%	0
Our organisation recognises that there is diversity in the cultural identity and connection to culture journey for First Nations employees - Completely untrue	0%	0
Our organisation recognises that there is diversity in the cultural identity and connection to culture journey for First Nations employees - Not sure	0%	0
Our organisation does not identify or stereotype First Nations	77%	24

Peoples by using an employee's address or appearance. - Completely true		
Our organisation does not identify or stereotype First Nations Peoples by using an employee's address or appearance. - Mostly true	16%	5
Our organisation does not identify or stereotype First Nations Peoples by using an employee's address or appearance. - Mostly untrue	3%	1
Our organisation does not identify or stereotype First Nations Peoples by using an employee's address or appearance. - Completely untrue	0%	0
Our organisation does not identify or stereotype First Nations Peoples by using an employee's address or appearance. - Not sure	3%	1
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 31; total n = 34; 3 missing		

Employers are identifying First Nations status through self-identification or formal documentation requested during recruitment process for targeted/identified positions. Employers' successful strategies for respectfully maintaining records of First Nations status for employees were:

- Limiting access to data relating to First Nations status
- Ensuring privacy and confidentiality
- Seeking consent to share identity with manager/team
- Use respectful and culturally appropriate language when collecting and documenting First Nations status information
- Providing options for voluntary self-identification
- Options for employees to de-identify

The key challenges for respectfully maintaining records of First Nations status for employees are:

- Changing perception that all First Nations should identify
- Maintaining privacy and confidentiality
- Ensuring cultural sensitivity
- Creating a space where employees feel safe self-identifying
- Using respectful language when asking employees to self-identify.

Challenges include:

1. Maintaining Privacy and Confidentiality: Ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of employees' First Nations status information while also meeting legal requirements for data protection can be challenging. We are required to report internally and externally to Govt etc about Indigenous employment outcomes, we de-identify names and details to ensure privacy.

2.Cultural Sensitivity: Being culturally sensitive to the differences in First Nations identity and status (eg different languages groups etc).

3.Self-Identification: Encouraging employees to self-identify their First Nations status can be challenging, as some individuals may feel uncomfortable or hesitant to disclose this information.

4. Data Security: Ensuring that records of employees' First Nations status are secured securely stored and protected from unauthorised access or misuse to prevent breaches of privacy. ADVOCACY

RETENTION

A third of employers (65%) have a dedicated First Nations employee or team, while just over half (56%) are directed by the HR or people teams, or a direct manager or leader manages the First Nations Employment strategy.

D4_Q13. D4_Q13. D4_Q13. Who manages your First Nations employee engagement?

	%	n
A dedicated First Nations employee or team	65%	22
Directly by the HR/People team	56%	19
Direct manager/leader	50%	17
Other (Please specify)	6%	2
None of the above	12%	4
Not sure	3%	1
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 34		

Retention for First Nations employees is about the same as the overall workforce for 29% of employers while the same number of employers said it was lower. Only 15% of employers said First Nations employee retention was higher than their overall workforce and a quarter (26%) did not know.

D4_Q17. How does First Nations employee retention compare to your overall workforce?

	%	n
Higher	15%	5
The same	29%	10
Lower	29%	10
Not sure	26%	9
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 34		

There were 29% of employers whose First Nations workforce increased as an overall proportion of the total workforce in the last 12 months, while 24% of employers were the same, and 35% said First Nations employees had decreased.

D4_Q18. Has your First Nations workforce increased or decreased as a proportion of your overall workforce over the last 12 months?

	%	n
Increased	29%	10
Stayed the same	24%	8
Decreased	35%	12
Not sure	12%	4
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 34		

Those employers whose First Nations workforce had increased as a proportion of the overall workforce in the last 12 months said it was due to new hires (90%) or transitional pathways (70%) and better retention (60%).

D4_Q18_1. Why has your First Nations workforce increased as a proportion of your overall workforce over the last 12 months?

	%	n
Increased new hires	90%	9
Transition pathways for trainees, apprenticeships, cadetships or interns	70%	7
Better retention of employees	60%	6
Other (Please specify)	30%	3
Not sure	10%	1
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 10; total n = 34; 24 missing		

Those employers whose First Nations workforce had decreased as a proportion of the overall workforce in the last 12 months said it was due to employees leaving to new employment (83%), redundancies (17%) and retirement (8%). Other reasons given were casual employees leaving, the project ending or no pipeline of work.

D4_Q18_2. Why has your First Nations workforce decreased as a proportion of your overall workforce over the last 12 months?

	%	n
Staff leaving for other employment	83%	10
Staff redundancies	17%	2
Staff retiring	8%	1
Other (Please specify)	33%	4
Not sure	0%	0
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 12; total n = 34; 22 missing		

Less than half (44%) of employers had a process in place to report on retention of First Nations employees during an organisational restructure.

D4_Q19. Is there a process in place to report on retention of First Nations employees during an organisational restructure?		
	%	n
Yes	44%	15
No	44%	15
Not sure	12%	4
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 34		

Exit surveys were the most common form of follow up when employees leave the organisation (76%) or a reason for leaving is recorded (74%) or an exit interview is administered (65%). Less than half (41%) of the organisations analyse the response of First Nations employees compared to non-First Nations employees and take action to improve the experience of First Nation employees. The successful strategies for improving the experience for First Nations employees include:

- Access to First Nations support services
- Cultural awareness training
- Diversity and Inclusion practices and policies
- Elevating the voices, perspectives and needs of First Nations people through feedback channels
- Providing time to connect (Networking events, reference groups, engagement groups, yarning circles)
- Observing cultural events
- Prioritise learning, listening and amplifying voices of First Nations Peoples
- First Nations attraction, recruitment, and retention strategies
- Career growth opportunities and support
- Championing cultural capability and safety

1. Cultural Awareness Training: Provide training to all employees to increase awareness and understanding of Indigenous cultures, histories, and perspectives. This help foster respect, empathy, and inclusivity in the workplace.

2. Diverse and inclusive recruitment practise: Implement inclusive hiring practices that prioritise diversity and actively seek to recruit and retain First Nations employees. This help create a more representative workforce and promote a sense of belonging.

3. Mentoring and Peer Support Programs: Offer mentoring opportunities and peer support programs supporting for First Nations employees to help them navigate the organisation, develop their skills, and advance in their careers.

4. Employee Resource Groups: Establish Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) - First Nations Working Group for First Nations employees to provide a platform for networking, sharing experiences, and advocating for inclusion and diversity within the organisation.

5. Leadership Development Opportunities: Provide leadership development programs and opportunities for First Nations employees to empower them to take on leadership roles, contribute their perspectives, and drive positive change within the organisation.

6. Community Partnerships: Establish and maintain partnerships with Indigenous communities, organisations, and community leaders to provide additional support,

resources, and cultural connections for First Nations employees.

7. Feedback and Engagement: Seek feedback from First Nations employees through surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one conversations to understand their needs, experiences, and suggestions for improvement. Actively involve them in decision-making processes and initiatives that affect them.

8. Recognition and Celebration: Recognise and celebrate the contributions, achievements, and cultural heritage of First Nations employees through internal communications, events, awards, and other forms of acknowledgement. ADVOCACY

The key challenges for improving the experience for First Nations employees
- Funding
- Cultural barriers
- Limited community connections
- Providing a culturally safe workplace
- Geographical challenges
- Limited access to education and training
- Racism/Stigmas
- Lack of engagement from leadership
- Lack of cultural competency

Key challenges for improving the experience for First Nations Team Members include obstacles in career growth and progression opportunities, which may stem from systemic barriers and limited access to professional development pathways. Additionally, the persistence of racism within the workplace poses significant challenges, impacting employee morale, sense of belonging, and overall well-being. Moreover, the need for stronger support from leaders in addressing these challenges and fostering a culture of inclusion remains essential for enhancing the experience of First Nations Team Members. GROWTH

HR POLICIES

There were 12% of employers with no specific HR policies in place for First Nations employees, while most employees had one or more policies, no one employer was consistent across all considerations.

D4_Q20. Which of the following HR Policies are in place for First Nations employees?	%	n
Leave policy includes sorry business and Cultural Leave	68%	23
Leave policy for days of cultural significance (e.g. National Sorry Day, NAIDOC week etc)	62%	21
Flexibility on Australia Day / King's Birthday, etc. to work and take leave another day	56%	19
Parental leave includes family structures such as kinship, guardianship and grandparents	35%	12
Flexibility policy includes working on Country	29%	10
Individual requests by employees are accommodated in employee contracts	29%	10

None of these policies in place	12%	4
Other (Please specify)	6%	2
Not sure	0%	0

Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 34

LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

Almost all employers (94%) had internal leadership programs but only 44% of employers had participation targets for First Nations employees into these programs. Only 22% of employers had internal leadership development programs specifically developed for First Nations employees.

D4_Q21. Do you currently have internal leadership development programs offered at your organisation?

	%	n
Yes	94%	32
No	6%	2
Not sure	0%	0
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 34		

In terms of incorporation of First Nations perspectives, content or speakers into existing leadership development programs for all employees only a fifth (22%) always did so while less said often (13%) and more employers said sometimes (31%).

D4_Q23. Are First Nations perspectives, content or speakers incorporated into existing leadership development programs for all employees?

	%	n
Always	22%	7
Often	13%	4
Sometimes	31%	10
Rarely	22%	7
Never	6%	2
Not sure	6%	2
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 32; total n = 34; 2 missing		

A range of leadership development opportunities are offered to First Nations employees. The most common is informal mentoring (59%), formal mentoring (50%), secondments (50%) or study leave (50%).

D4_Q22. Which of the following First Nations leadership development opportunities do you offer First Nations employees?

	%	n
Informal mentoring	59%	20
Formal mentoring	50%	17
Secondments	50%	17
Study leave	50%	17
Support for employees entering the workforce	41%	14
Additional external study funding	38%	13
First Nations only professional programs	29%	10
Executive leader sponsor	21%	7
Other (Please specify)	21%	7
None of these	9%	3
Not sure	3%	1
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 34		

TALENT

Over a third (35%) of employers do not include First Nations representation in conducting talent reviews of First Nations employees.

D4_Q24. Do you include First Nations representation in conducting talent reviews of First Nations employees?

	%	n
Always	3%	1
Often	15%	5
Sometimes	26%	9
Rarely	9%	3
Never	35%	12
Not sure	12%	4
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 34		

First Nations representation in the promotion process of First Nations employees never occurs for 24% of organisations or rarely for some employers (18%). There are some employers who sometimes have First Nations representation (24%) or often have representation (15%) and there is one employer who always has representation.

D4_Q25. Do you include First Nations representation in your promotion process of First Nations employees?		
	%	n
Always	3%	1
Often	15%	5
Sometimes	24%	8
Rarely	18%	6
Never	24%	8
Not sure	18%	6
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 34		

Domain 5 – First Nations Community engagement

More than half (59%) of employers in the survey are represented in the Growth maturity level for Domain 5, with a fifth of employers at Foundational (21%) and Integration (18%). Only one organisation was at the Advocacy level for Domain 5. Domain 5 explores First Nations community engagement, strategy and partnerships.

Domain 5	Foundational	Growth	Integration	Advocacy
%	21%	59%	18%	3%
n	7	20	6	1

STRATEGY AND PARTNERSHIP

Most employers (79%) said they have a formal or informal approach to a First Nations Community Engagement Strategy. Of those with a formal strategy, 87% published the strategy internally and externally.

D5_Q1. Does your organisation have a First Nations Community Engagement Strategy?		
	%	n
Yes, we have a formal strategy	44%	15
No, but we have an informal approach (e.g. respond to external requests)	35%	12
No, we do not have a strategy	21%	7
Not sure	0%	0
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 34		

Most employers (89%) felt their First Nations Community Engagement Strategy was very or somewhat effective. Employers said the strategy was effective as it facilitated meaningful relationships with First Nations communities, ensured First Nations voices are represented and valued, and helped demonstrate cultural awareness.

By listening to understand, being willing to learn from our mistakes and genuine partnering, we will deliver better long-term outcomes for everyone. It enhances our understanding and appreciation of the people and diverse cultures in the geographies where we work.
INTEGRATION

Our Long Term First Nations Community Engagement Strategy is very effective due to maintaining some key aspects including:

1. Meaningful Relationships: Building and maintaining meaningful relationships with First Nations communities, leaders, and organisations.

2. Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity: Demonstrating cultural awareness and sensitivity towards First Nations culture, traditions, and values help to foster trust and collaboration.

3. Collaboration and Partnership: Engaging in meaningful and trustworthy partnerships with First Nations communities help to co-create initiatives, programs, and services that meet First Nations needs and priorities.

4. Representation: Ensuring that First Nations voices are heard, valued, and represented in decision-making processes.

5. Impact and Outcomes: Measuring the impact and outcomes on regular basis to ensure we are making a positive difference in the lives of First Nations individuals and communities. ADVOCACY

The drivers of a successful First Nations Community Engagement Strategy were:
- Goodwill of First Nations employees
- Supportive and engaged leadership team
- Meaningful and open relationships with First Nations communities
- Alignment with RAP
- Developing cultural competency

The good will of individuals in the business to want to do the right thing by Community. We also have highly supportive senior leaders and very passionate First Nations employees to support (and often take on additional work outside their role to support this). GROWTH

Key drivers of success for First Nations Community Engagement Strategy are built on a foundation of respect, trust, and collaboration, with a focus on creating meaningful and sustainable relationships that benefit both the organisation and the communities we serve. This underpinned with the approach and principles of co-design with First Nations stakeholders and communities. ADVOCACY

Several challenges associated with their First Nations Community Strategy were acknowledged by employers, including:
- Lack of awareness of resources and information
- Time pressures/Capacity issues
- Lack of support and engagement from leadership
- Limited cultural awareness/competency
- Funding/Budget challenges
- Building relationships with community
- Gaining employee engagement

The most pressing challenge lies in the insufficient investment and lack of appetite among leaders to prioritise First Nations engagement and partnerships. Overcoming these challenges necessitates a concerted effort to enhance awareness, improve cultural sensitivity, and garner leadership support for meaningful and sustainable engagement with First Nations communities. GROWTH

Limited funding, staffing, and resources can hinder the implementation of effective

community engagement strategies and initiatives. ADVOCACY

Most employers (85%) were involved with First Nations education related programs or partnerships aimed at attracting and recruitment First Nations employees. More than half of employers said they have internships for university students (59%) or partner with schools/universities (53%) to help attract and recruit First Nations employees.

D5_Q2. Is your organisation involved in any of the following First Nations education related programs or partnerships to attract and retain First Nations employees?

	%	n
Internships for university students	59%	20
Partnership with schools/universities	53%	18
Support/funding for further education for current First Nations staff	50%	17
We work with/support providers/NGOs who partner with education institutions	50%	17
Work experience for First Nations students	44%	15
Funding for scholarships (secondary or tertiary)	41%	14
School-based traineeships	38%	13
Funding for a First Nations education/mentoring NGO	35%	12
Other (Please specify)	0%	0
Not involved in any of these	12%	4
Not sure	3%	1
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 34		

When asked about partnerships that impact and support First Nations Communities, all but one organisation said they partner with educational stakeholders. The most mentioned stakeholders were Supply Nation (85%), Reconciliation Australia (79%), and CareerTrackers (56%).

D5_Q3. Does your organisation partner with any of the following educational stakeholders?

	%	n
Supply Nation	85%	29
Reconciliation Australia	79%	27
CareerTrackers	56%	19
Clontarf Foundation	38%	13
Aboriginal Employment Strategy (AES)	35%	12
Business Council of Australia	26%	9
Jawun	15%	5
Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)	12%	4
National Centre of Indigenous Excellence (NCIE)	9%	3
Australian Indigenous Education Foundation (AIEF)	6%	2
Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre	6%	2

First Australians Capital	6%	2
The Aurora Project	6%	2
Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME)	3%	1
No	3%	1
Other (Please specify)	35%	12
Not sure	0%	0
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 34		

Most employers (76%) reported having a supply chain target spend with First Nations businesses, but fewer employers (38%) set First Nations employee targets with businesses in their supply chain.

Most organisations incorporated First Nations perspectives into their communications, with 94% doing this for internal communications and 76% for external communications. First Nations perspectives were included by most employers for external events that were First Nations related (91%) and internal events (88%). Fewer employers (24%) said they incorporated First Nations perspectives into external events that are not First Nations related. However, First Nations perspectives were not incorporated consistently, with far fewer employers stating they were doing it always.

D5_Q4_. How often does your organisation incorporate First Nations perspectives into the following?

	%	n
Internal events - NET Always, Usually, Sometimes	88%	30
Internal events - Always	24%	8
Internal events - Usually	26%	9
Internal events - Sometimes	38%	13
Internal events - Not at all	6%	2
Internal events - Not sure	6%	2
Internal communications - NET Always, Usually, Sometimes	94%	32
Internal communications - Always	18%	6
Internal communications - Usually	24%	8
Internal communications - Sometimes	53%	18
Internal communications - Not at all	6%	2
Internal communications - Not sure	0%	0
External events that are not First Nations related - NET Always, Usually, Sometimes	71%	24
External events that are not First Nations related - Always	6%	2
External events that are not First Nations related - Usually	24%	8
External events that are not First Nations related - Sometimes	41%	14
External events that are not First Nations related - Not at all	18%	6
External events that are not First Nations related - Not sure	12%	4
External events that are First Nations related - NET Always, Usually, Sometimes	91%	31
External events that are First Nations related - Always	59%	20
External events that are First Nations related - Usually	24%	8
External events that are First Nations related - Sometimes	9%	3
External events that are First Nations related - Not at all	3%	1
External events that are First Nations related - Not sure	6%	2
External communications - NET Always, Usually, Sometimes	76%	28
External communications - Always	18%	6
External communications - Usually	18%	6
External communications - Sometimes	47%	16
External communications - Not at all	15%	5
External communications - Not sure	3%	1
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 34		

97

Less than half of employers said they had a First Nations strategy that informs their internal (41%) or external (38%) marketing and communications.

D5_Q5_1. Do you have a First Nations strategy that informs your internal or external marketing and communication?				
	Internal		External	
	%	n	%	n
Yes	41%	14	38%	13
No	47%	16	53%	18
Not sure	12%	4	9%	3
Total sample; Unweighted; base n = 34				

Glossary

References for the glossary are contained below

Term	Definition
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	In Australia, there are two distinct First Nations cultural groups who have their own laws, lore, customs and ceremonies. They are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and they identify in numerous ways. Many identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and some identify with both. Others prefer to identify as the Nation or Clan group that they are descended from, for example, Wiradjuri, Gumbaynggirr, Bundjalung etc. Some Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people use the term First Nations or First Peoples. See 'First Nations'.
Acknowledgement of Country	An Acknowledgement of Country is an opportunity for anyone to show respect for Traditional Owners and the continuing connection of First Nations Peoples to Country. An Acknowledgement of Country can be offered by any person and is given at the beginning of a meeting, speech or event.
Champion / advocate	An employee in the workplace who champions or advocates for First Nations agency and opportunity.
Country	Country is integral to First Nations identity through recognition and practice of deep time connections to language and lore of the lands. Country is inherent to our identity. It sustains our lives in every aspect: physically, spiritually, emotionally, socially and culturally [1].
Colonisation	Establishment of a colony or colonies in a country or area. Colonisation dispossessed First Nations People of their traditional lands. In Australia, colonisation began with the First Fleet's arrival from Britain in 1788 and progressed over time with settlements in different states [2]. Colonisation continues to impact and remain in Australia.
Cultural awareness	Cultural awareness means being aware of, and developing sensitivity to, cultural difference and cultural diversity. It involves knowledge, attitudes and values that demonstrate an openness and respect for other people and other cultures, languages, religions, dress, communication styles and so on [3].
Cultural competence	Cultural competence is a set of congruent behaviours, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enable that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations [4].
Cultural immersion	Cultural immersion is actively integrating into an unfamiliar community, interacting with local people, and seeking to

	understand the way others live in that community by being there and engaging in daily life activities. Examples: On country or virtual secondments or Executive visits e.g. Jawun or Clontarf partnerships or direct community partnerships. Community Executives visits e.g., direct community partnerships. Regular and deep connections with a local community e.g., Clontarf partnerships or direct community partnerships. Annual deep connection with a local community e.g., direct community partnerships.
Cultural inclusion	Cultural inclusion promotes laws and policies that ensure cultural participation, access, and the right to express and interpret culture. From an urban policy perspective, cultural inclusion calls to mixing the best problem-solving, creative, innovative, and entrepreneurial practices [5].
Cultural leave	An organisational People/HR policy that refers to dedicated leave arrangements for Sorry Business, cultural requirements, significant days, etc.
Cultural load	The practice of expecting, implicating, and using First Nations People in the education of others about Indigeneity and culture or to undertake tasks that are First Nations related. Cultural load is the (often invisible) additional workload borne by First Nations Peoples in the workplace, where they are either the only First Nations person or one of a small number. This includes, extra First Nations-related work, expectations to educate non-First Nations colleagues about First Nations racism, and expectations to talk on behalf of all First Nations Peoples.
Culturally responsive	A culturally responsive employer will proactively recognise First Nations voices, perspectives and insights and ensure they are embedded throughout workplace policy and practice. It is seen as the next step after competency and safety. Workplaces who provide culturally safe environments for First Nations employees to practice their cultural identity without discrimination, ridicule, or denunciation.
Cultural safety	Workplaces who provide culturally safe environments for First Nations employees to practice their cultural identity without discrimination, ridicule, or denunciation. Culturally safe employers will have rigorous and robust reporting systems in place where experiences of racism, harassment and/or discrimination are acknowledged and appropriate support provided, and/or consequential action taken. Cultural safety is an environment which is safe for people, where there is no assault, challenge, or denial of their identity, or who they are and what they need [6] [7].
Cultural sensitivity	Respecting and being sensitive to the fact that people have differing characteristics that are of equal value, no matter the difference.

Community engagement	The formal, informal, mandated and/or ongoing agreements that alert employers to follow cultural protocols when engaging with First Nations communities; and can involve partnerships, pro bono work, yarning circles and other practices that inform the First Nations Engagement Strategy.
Diversity	Diversity refers to the mix of people in an organisation – in relation to their: Social identity for example, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background, age, caring responsibilities, cultural background, disability status, gender, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status, and socio-economic background. Professional identity for example, profession, education, work experiences, organisational level, functional area, division/ department, and location. *Source: Diversity Council of Australia*
Inclusion	Inclusion refers to people of diverse backgrounds and characteristics working together in an organisation to improve performance and well-being. Inclusion in a workplace is achieved when people of diverse backgrounds and characteristics feel they can contribute their perspectives and talents, have equal access to opportunities and resources, progress their career, and are respected and connected. Inclusion is achieved when a diversity of people feel that they are: Respected for who they are and able to be themselves; Connected to their colleagues and feel they belong; Contributing their perspectives and talents to the workplace; and Progressing in their career at work (such as having equal access to opportunities and resources). *Source: Diversity Council of Australia*
Employment Targets	An achievable, time-framed goal that an employer can set to focus its First Nations employment efforts. Targets are different from quotas in that they are set by an employer to suit their own results and timeframes. Quotas are set by an external body with the authority to impose them.
Executive Leadership Team (ELT)	The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) typically consists of the most senior leaders of a company, who report to the CEO. Leaders who report to the ELT include senior managers, division, or department managers. Middle level managers often report to the senior leaders. These are all considered leadership positions for the purpose of this survey.
Facilitated learning	Examples of Facilitated learning: 1-day face to face or virtual learning with self-assessment developed and facilitated internally or developed and delivered externally. Webinars or training sessions either face to face or virtual with a facilitator or trainer.
First Nations	We have chosen to use the term First Nations Peoples to refer to Australian First Nations Peoples, also known as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to reflect the

	national scale of this research. We respect and acknowledge the diversity of communities, identities, and clan groups for all Indigenous people of Australia. While we recognise First Nations Peoples have different preferences regarding the use of terms First Nations, Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and that many may prefer to be known by their specific group name or Country, as Traditional Owners, or First Nations Peoples, the terminology used in this project reflects a considered and deliberate approach. We have developed a research process that values First Nations Peoples' ways of knowing and being and is built on self-determination. We hope that you are comfortable with our approach to inclusive terminology.
First Nations business	A First Nations business is at least 51% owned by an Australian First Nations person(s).
First Nations employment strategy	A First Nations employment strategy or plan commits to increasing employment, career opportunities and professional development for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to reach their full potential.
First Nations Governance	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have always had their own governance. It is an ancient jurisdiction made up of a system of cultural geographies Country and culture-based laws, traditions, rules, values, processes and structures that has been effective for tens of thousands of years, and which nations, clans and families continue to adapt and use to collectively organise themselves to achieve the things that are important to them [8].
First Nations participants	First Nations participants is the collective term that refers to those that participated in the research but have been individually categorised as (First Nations) senior leader, line manager or employee. This includes focus group participants.
Identify	Government agencies and community organisations usually accept three 'working criteria' as confirmation of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage. These are: • Being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent. • Identifying as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person. • Being accepted as such by the community in which you live, or formerly lived.
Identity	First Nations peoples identify in numerous ways and have different preferences regarding the use of terms First Nations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. Many may prefer to be known by their specific group name or Country, as Traditional Owners, or Indigenous Peoples.
Identified position for First Nations candidates	An identified position for First Nations candidates is a role where organisations require First Nations knowledge to fulfil the role or duties.
Intercultural responsiveness	A deep understanding of First Nations Culture and how this contributes to competitive advantage. Embedded First Nations knowledge systems and reconciliation initiatives, with

	action plans to allow for continual learning and ongoing development. Utilising their sphere of influence to drive reconciliation, there is an understanding of the process for establishing and maintaining positive relationships inside and outside the employer. First Nations employees feel safe, respected, and empowered. Professionals are culturally capable across values, attitudes, knowledge, and skills.
Intergenerational trauma	In Australia, intergenerational trauma predominantly affects the children, grandchildren and future generations of the Stolen Generations. If Stolen Generations survivors don't have the opportunity to heal from trauma, they're likely to live in a state of distress, which can lead to a range of negative outcomes for themselves and their descendants. Their children may experience difficulties with attachment, disconnection from their extended families and culture and high levels of stress from family and community members who are dealing with the impacts of trauma. This can create developmental issues for children, who are particularly susceptible to distress at a young age. This creates a cycle of trauma, where the impact is passed from one generation to the next [9].
NAIDOC Week	NAIDOC Week events are held across Australia each July to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. A different theme is nominated each year by the National NAIDOC Committee. NAIDOC stands for National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee.
National Reconciliation Week	A dedicated time for all Australians to learn about our shared heritage, histories, cultures, and achievements, and to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia. The week is bookended by two significant dates, 27th May being the anniversary of the 1967 Referendum and 3rd June 1992 being the day the Mabo decision was handed down in the Australian High Court.
Not-for-profit employers	Not-for-profit employers are those that provide services to the community and do not operate primarily to make a profit for its members or shareholders, if applicable [10].
Online learning	Online learning is the use of the internet and other computer-based methods to deliver education. Examples: 90mins online learning with self-assessment developed internally or purchased externally. Training courses offered on digital platforms with self-paced modules that include reading content, watching videos, and interactive activities.
Organisational hierarchy	Definition of organisational hierarchy are CEO > Executive Leader (reports to the CEO) > Senior Leader (General Manager, Head of and above who reports to Executive Leader) > Team Leader (Supervisor, Manager).

Pathways	Specialised and/or dedicated programs and practices that consider the effects of colonisation on job readiness for First Nations people and reduce the barriers to employment for example, mentorships, scholarships, internships, partnerships.
Participating employee	Employees who participated in an interview or focus group from one of the participating employers across three cohorts: First Nations employee, line manager of First Nations employee and senior leader.
Participating employer	Australian employers, across public, private, and not-for-profit sectors that participated in qualitative and quantitative research.
Policies	Policies are the guidelines, rules and procedures developed by an employer to govern its actions (often in recurring situations). They define the limits (do's and don'ts) within which decisions must be made. They are widely communicated and available to all staff.
Private employers	Private employers are enterprises that are not controlled by the Commonwealth, state/territory or local governments [11].
Public Sector	The public sector includes financial and non-financial corporations controlled by government, government agencies and departments, national institutional units controlled by government, and public financial and non-financial corporations [12].
Racism (interpersonal and systematic)	Racism takes many forms and can happen in many places. It includes prejudice, discrimination or hatred directed at someone because of their colour, ethnicity or national origin [13]. It can be described as every interaction that makes a First Nations person question their value or their identity. Interpersonal racism refers to racism between individuals (such as when an individual is overtly or covertly racist towards another person). Examples include social exclusion (actively avoiding a person or ignoring requests to help or to participate), stereotypes (about competency or honesty, which can block career opportunities), harassment (name calling, jokes, or comments) and threats which is individuals' beliefs, attitudes, and actions that discriminate, exclude, or disadvantage people from racially marginalised groups [14]. Systemic racism refers to unfair (or even seemingly 'race-neutral') organisational policies, procedures, and practices that discriminate, exclude, or disadvantage racially marginalised people. It is subtle because it is built into organisations in ways, we often take for granted [15].
Reconciliation	Reconciliation is about strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-First Nations peoples, for the benefit of all Australians [16].

Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)	A key strategy of Reconciliation Australia [17] is to progress reconciliation. A formalised document that holds employers to account for strengthening relationships between First Nations peoples and non-First Nations peoples, for the benefit of all Australians. The RAP builds capacity for employers to continuously develop their reconciliation commitment to one of the four frameworks: Reflect, Innovate, Stretch, Elevate – each with specific expectations and processes.
Sector	Sector may be broken down by public, not-for-profit and private as defined in this Glossary.
Self-determination	The right of self-determination is that all peoples freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development. Without self-determination it is not possible for First Nations Australians to fully overcome the legacy of colonisation and dispossession [18].
Stolen Generations	Since colonisation, numerous government laws, policies and practices resulted in the forced removal of generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families and communities across Australia. Thousands of children were forcibly removed by governments, churches, and welfare bodies to be raised in institutions, fostered out or adopted by non-First Nations families, nationally and internationally. They are known as the Stolen Generations [19].
Strategy	A strategy is a plan of action designed to achieve one or more organisational objectives. Strategies fill the gap between "where we are" and "where we want to be," that is, "how are we going to get there?". They relate to how an employer allocates and uses materials and human resources and require an executive decision.
Target	A target is an achievable, time-framed goal that an organisation can set to focus its efforts. Targets are different from quotas in that they are set by an organisation to suit their own needs and timeframes. Quotas are set by an external body with the authority to impose them.
Targeted position for First Nations candidates	A position targeted for First Nations candidates are roles that the organisation seeks to fill to meet targets or quotas but does not specifically require First Nations knowledge to fulfil the role or duties.
Truth-telling	Truth-telling is an opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to record evidence about past actions and share their culture, heritage, and history with the broader community. Truth-telling is crucial to the ongoing process of healing and reconciliation in Australia. The history, tradition and culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their experiences of injustices following colonisation has been

	largely unknown. However, there is a growing momentum among Australians to develop a fuller understanding and awareness of our history [20].
Unconscious bias	Unconscious biases are social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness. Everyone holds unconscious beliefs about various social and identity groups, and these biases stem from one's tendency to organise social worlds by categorising.
Welcome to Country	A Welcome to Country is delivered by Traditional Owners, or First Nations Peoples who have been given permission from Traditional Owners to welcome visitors to their Country.

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End Notes

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[i] Without loss of generality, we will refer to these prepared items as items for the Rasch model to work with, rather than the original items in the 2022 or 2024 data.

[ii] Component loadings or coefficients.

[iii] Bond, T.G, and Fox, C.M. (2001). Applying the Rasch Model: Fundamental Measurement in the Human Sciences. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Assoc.

[iv] Summarised in Linacre (2017) as follows: 'Rasch analysis is a method for obtaining objective,

fundamental, additive measures (qualified by standard errors and quality-control fit statistics) from stochastic observations of ordered category responses. Georg Rasch, a Danish mathematician, formulated this approach in 1953 to analyse responses to a series of reading tests (Rasch G, Probabilistic Models for Some Intelligence and Attainment Tests, Chicago: MESA Press, 1992, with Foreword and Afterword by B.D. Wright).'

[v] Endorse here refers to the implementation of strategies, policies, and practices.

[vii] The residual values represent the differences between the Rasch model's theoretical expectation of item performance, and the performance actually encountered for the item. Following the usual statistical convention, residuals are squared to make the difference between actual and predicted values positive.

[viii] Linacre, J. M. (1994). Sample size and item calibration stability. Rasch Measurement Transactions, 7(4), p. 328. Available at http://www.rasch.org/rmt/rmt74m.htm.

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