

**Community Services Directorate****To:** Director-General

Tracking No.: CSD-23/004423

**Date:** 30 September 2023**CC:** Deputy Director-General**From:** Senior Director, OBOW Implementation team**Subject:** Culturally responsive support for CSD's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff**Critical Date:** 25 October 2024**Critical Reason:** CSD staff need support. This was confirmed at the CSD On Country sessions held in November 2023 and the staff feedback shared as part of the report.

- EBM Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs 30/9/2024
- EGM Children, Youth and Families 15/10/2024
- EGM Corporate Services 29/10/2024

**Purpose/reason**

To provide you with options for the development and delivery of a culturally responsive support program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at CSD.

**Recommendations**

That you:

1. Agree to the proposed program of culturally responsive support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff:
  - a. On Country gatherings offered to all staff twice a year to gather, heal, recover and re-energise.
  - b. Six monthly meetings/morning teas with senior Executives to discuss staff wellbeing – what is working and what needs improving.
  - c. One on one and group session to receive cultural de-briefing, supervision and mentoring.

**Agreed / Not agreed / Please discuss**

2. Agree to pilot the program for 12 months to determine take up and composition of support before going out to market to support an ongoing program.

**Agreed / Not agreed / Please discuss**

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3. Agree to commit \$121,000 to the 12 month pilot.

**Agreed / Not agreed / Please discuss**

4. Note that, while direct support for staff has been prioritised for the program, staff also identified the need for capability development for non-Indigenous supervisors of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

**Noted / Please discuss**

5. Agree that a program for non-Indigenous supervisors be developed and costed for your future consideration.

**Agreed / Not agreed / Please discuss**

Catherine Rule...../...../.....

Director-General's comments

### Background

1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at CSD are often placed under significant cultural load and stress due to the sensitive and complex issues facing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community they work with and live in.
2. This was exacerbated by events such as the unsuccessful referendum to establish the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice and the Working Together For Our Booris symposium in October 2023.
3. An On Country experience was held for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff on 10 November 2023 at Mulligan's Flat with a follow up 2-day healing and feedback session at the Yarramundi Cultural Centre.
  - a. Recognising the impact on staff, this was led by OATSIA and the Our Booris Our Way Implementation Team.
4. The event at Mulligan's Flat involved an On Country experience led by Richie Allan Junior, followed by a trauma and healing session facilitated by Rosie McGrady and her team from the [Culturally Informed Practices Institute](#).

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5. The Culturally Informed Practices Institute team facilitated the follow up 2-day healing and feedback session at the Yarramundi Cultural Centre from 27-28 November 2023. A report ([see Attachment A](#)) was developed by the team to capture the feedback and input contributed by staff during the session ([see Attachment B](#)).
6. These events were an opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to come together with experienced, culturally appropriate facilitators to discuss challenges in the workplace, serving the community and as a consequence of the referendum and Working Together For Our Booris symposium, their impacts and identify opportunities for CSD to develop and deliver culturally safe support services and processes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.
7. Further to this, the Senior Director OBOW Implementation and EBM OATSIA commenced scoping for 'cultural supervision' in November 2023 based on formal models that could be used to support staff as trauma and issues such as discrimination and unconscious bias were arising, rather than waiting until these issues reached crisis point.

**Issues**

8. Managing cultural load is an ongoing challenge for CSD. As staffing numbers increase, (5.92% (68 people) in Q4 of 22/23 to 7.1% (87 people) in Q4 of 23/24)<sup>1</sup> a combination of support and feedback mechanisms are needed to support current and future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.
9. On 16 April 2024, the EBM for People, Capability and Culture (PCC) distributed a Cultural Load matrix which was developed by the Cultural Transformation Branch in CMTEDD ([Attachment C](#)).
  - a. It is noted that some business areas including OATSIA and the Cultural Support Team in CYPs operate almost exclusively in the 'high' category, which recognises the serious impact on Workplace Health and Safety.
10. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and senior leaders have continued to raise serious concerns about the cultural load impact and the lack of responses to deal with this. This includes raising issues formally with managers and PCC. However, at this stage CSD has no response mechanisms to support staff with this.
11. The focus on cultural safety is continuing to increase, you responded to questions in Budget Estimates this year citing the need to understand the impact of cultural load and ensure there are frameworks in place to support staff.

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<sup>1</sup> Numbers provided to the 5 August 2024 Our Booris Our Way Committee meeting.

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12. There is concern that a greater number of our staff could be carrying extremely high levels of cultural load and support arrangements need to be put in place urgently. Many of these issues place CSD at significant risk in terms of Workplace Health and Safety issues (as identified in the matrix).
  - a. A likely symptom of the lack of supports available is the extremely low participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in the diversity networks.

**Culturally Informed Practices Institute report**

13. The report (see Attachment A) from the Culturally Informed Practices Institute was circulated on 27 June 2024 to the staff who had participated in the sessions and staff were invited to provide their feedback on the report by Friday 20 July 2024.
14. Key findings from the report and staff feedback (See Attachment B) included staff reporting that they felt unsafe, exhausted, broken and blamed by community for decisions they have had no part in making. Staff expressed feeling isolated from their non-indigenous colleagues and each other and felt that they are often consulted about what is needed but have no collective voice in decision making as their solutions often fall on deaf ears.
15. Further anecdotal feedback is that at times Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff feel undermined, undervalued, and dealing with culturally unsafe behaviours.
16. The report made the following five recommendations:
  - a. Current decision-makers meet with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to develop a prioritised action plan with issues to be addressed, time frames and accountability mechanisms.
  - b. Develop mechanisms that include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in decision-making on policies and procedures, cultural support and supervision processes that are designed to meet the cultural load uniquely experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.
  - c. That the DDG and the DG regularly meet with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to hear their concerns, be accountable for their decision-making and further build on their understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culture.
  - d. Address the isolation and disconnection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff by providing them more opportunities to sit and work together and having more opportunities for non-Indigenous staff to spend time with

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff on Country to increase their cultural awareness, cultural competency and cultural care.

- e. Provision of a designated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander space at 220 London Circuit where cultural business like but not limited to celebrations, sorry business, communications can be attended to.

**Cultural Support program development**

17. The development of a three-part program is proposed that would consist of:
  - a. An On Country event for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to be held twice per year to offer Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at CSD the opportunity to come together in a safe space to undertake cultural healing activities and provide ongoing culturally based support.
  - b. Six-monthly meetings for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff with CSD executives to discuss issues or concerns about staff wellbeing.
  - c. One-on-one and group sessions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to receive cultural de-briefing, supervision or mentoring from independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers.
18. Based on feedback from staff, the one-on-one and groups sessions must provide options for both male and female service providers to allow for men's and women's business to be discussed appropriately, as well as the choice of either a local or interstate provider.
19. The sessions also need to be flexible to consider the different needs staff may have based on the nature of their role, as frontline care and protection and youth justice staff have different needs to staff working in policy and program, corporate or facilities management areas.
20. We would propose hosting an On Country event before the end of 2024 to update our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues on this proposal and continue to seek their support and advice to tailor it to meet their needs. At this event we would seek to identify a group of key advisors to continue to develop this program with ongoing support from non-Indigenous staff.
21. In proposing a cultural support program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff there also needs to be a complementary training and support program for non-indigenous staff. As our Aboriginal staff manage cultural load and lateral violence we need their colleagues and supervisors to know how to respond. As non-indigenous colleagues we need to know what these terms mean, how to avoid adding or creating

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situations where its increased, and when it's present, how to provide the flexibility and accommodations to support staff. A separate brief will be provided outlining what this process could look like and its associated costs.

**Current support provided**

22. CSD have developed an [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Attraction, Retention and Development Plan](#) which reflects CSD's commitment to making a difference for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through increasing opportunities for employment, development and progression and retaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff through inclusive and culturally safe work environments.
- a. CSD promotes its efforts to increase the number and proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, but there is increasing feedback that due to the cultural load and lack of support many are considering their tenure and the value within CSD.
23. This three-part program supports the objectives of the Plan as it strongly contributes to increasing cultural safety and supporting the career experiences and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at CSD.

**Employee Assistance Program – Converge International**

24. The existing Employee Assistance Program provided by Converge International can be accessed 24 hours a day, seven days a week and offers short term, solution focussed counselling and wellbeing support for staff and their immediate families coping with challenges in their personal or work lives.
25. Converge offers culturally respectful and sensitive services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people via their dedicated First Nations Helpline on 1300 287 432. Staff and their immediate family can access specialist practitioners from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds on request, as well as specialist practitioners who have had comprehensive and current training in cross-cultural awareness.
26. Feedback from staff suggests that the current Employee Assistance Program does not fully meet the needs identified by staff for a culturally responsive de-briefing, supervision or mentoring program.

**Financial Implications**

27. The anticipated costs of this three-part program:

On Country days	Approx. costs \$8000 (facilitator, catering, room hire, equipment) x 2	\$16,000 p.a
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Executive morning tea	Approx \$500 for 20-30 staff x 2	\$1,000 p.a
One-on-one/group sessions	Approx \$200-350 an hour for one on one session (assumptions that 40 people (out of 87) access an average of 6 sessions over a 12 month period – 40x6x\$350)  Approx \$5000 for a Group session (4 a year)	\$84,000 p.a.  \$20,000 p.a.
Total		\$121,000 p.a.

28. A list of service providers able to provide one-on-one and/or group sessions are listed at Attachment D. A key factor to any support of this kind will be ensuring that the providers are introduced face-to-face to staff at an On Country event. Without this warm, culturally-informed referral process staff may be unlikely to trust and take up the option.
29. It is recommended that a pilot program be developed and delivered to allow CSD to evaluate the impact and benefits for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff prior to funding an ongoing program.

### Consultation

#### Internal

30. This proposal has been discussed with Office of the Director-General, Office of the Deputy-Director- General, Corporate and Children, Youth and Families.
31. Two e-mails have gone out to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff across CSD on 27 June and 23 August. Firstly, asking the group for feedback on the report and nominating four participants to present the reports finding to Executives. Secondly sharing this proposal and asking for feedback by 6 September.
32. There was no formal feedback provided on the report or objections raised to the proposal.
33. CYF staff requested inclusion of the Towards Reconciliation Program as part of their deliberations about supporting staff and working jointly towards reconciliation through the project proposed.

#### Cross Directorate

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34. Natalee George, EBM of Cultural Transformation Branch in CMTEEDD has been consulted about this proposal. She has confirmed that this proposal aligns with the current thinking in the Cultural Transformation Branch as to the gap her Branch sees across the service. Further to this, Natalee George has stated that this proposal would see CSD taking the lead in providing culturally appropriate support for staff.

External

35. Discussions were held with Rosie McGrady from the Culturally Informed Practices Institute around the development of the staff feedback report from the sessions held at the Yarramundi Cultural Centre.
36. Discussions have also been held with potential providers (see Attachment D) to explore what types of support are available and the potential costs.

**Work Health and Safety**

37. Staff wellbeing is a CSD priority and providing our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues a culturally safe way to heal and be supported is important now and into the future.
38. The development and delivery of a culturally responsive support program will support CSD in its commitment to improving the cultural safety, career experiences and opportunities for CSD's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

**Benefits/Sensitivities**

39. The CSD Strategic Plan commits to providing stronger outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and ensuring that all staff have a role to play in delivering this.
40. In addition to CSD's commitments under internal strategies, the development and delivery of these cultural supports also aligns with the ACT Government's commitments under the [ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028](#) and the [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#).
41. CSD values the important knowledge and experience that its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff bring to the directorate. While there has been significant work across the directorate to increase recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, there has also been an increasing number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff leaving CSD.
42. Improving the quality of cultural supports available for staff to access is crucial to ensuring staff feel safe and supported in their roles and will increase the likelihood that staff will stay and develop their careers at CSD.

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**Communications, media and engagement implications**

43. If the program proceeds promoting it internally to staff will be essential.

44. Other Directorates will also be interested to understand the impact of the proposal and its benefits.

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Phone: Sched 2.2 (a)(ii) FOI Act 2016

Action Officer: Nova Inkpen

Phone: MSTeams

<b>Attachment</b>	<b>Title</b>
Attachment A	CSD Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff – Report and recommendation – Rosie Lang
Attachment B	Group contributions – On Country session
Attachment C	What is Cultural Load and the Cultural Load Matrix
Attachment D	Organisations available to provide cultural supervision and support

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**REPORT: Healing Consultation.**

Office Of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs- Community Services.  
ACT Government.

**Healing Consultation Introduction**

Culturally Informed Practices Institute (CIPI) was contracted to provide healing and support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at the Community Services Directorate (CSD). Staff were invited to participate in a series of gatherings designed to support them professionally and culturally.

The first session was held on Country on Friday 10 November, at Mulligans Flat, the team at CIPI facilitating a trauma and healing session in the morning and Ritchie Allan from TOAC facilitating an On Country experience in the afternoon.

The second gathering was held on 27 and 28 November at the Yarramundi Cultural Centre.

Culturally Informed Practices Institute led the conversation with a focus on how the Directorate can provide more opportunities to support our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to meet their personal and professional needs.

The facilitators used circle work to create a safe cultural space to share information, to bring everyone together to connect and to build trust. They talked with staff about the issues affecting them and their colleagues and how they all want to be supported.

The gatherings have been organised to acknowledge that First nations staff carry an increasingly heavy 'cultural' load, and that shared trauma comes with that along with healing that needs to follow. There was a lot of positive feedback from those who participated in the first gathering. It was decided to add a second day to the second gathering in recognition of the complex issues that arose on the first day.

It was decided to hold one day as a group offering support for collective healing through relationship building and connection and the sharing of common stories. The second day was offered for individual people to join sessions where individuals could heal deep seated intergenerational trauma.

**Summary of Issues Revealed during the Two Gatherings**

- Staff feel unsafe and uncomfortable at work.
- Staff feel exhausted and broken.
- Staff are unsure that there is a solution to this.
- Staff need things to be done in cultural ways.
- Staff do not feel they are believed when they say they know what they need.
- Staff are consulted about what they need but are not part of the design of what they are provided with.
- Indigenous staff experience isolation from their non-Indigenous colleagues and from each other
- Staff cannot participate in self-reflection and healing.
- Staff feel blamed by community for decision they have had no part in making.
- Staff feel like the collective had no voice in decision making.
- Staff feel like they were labelled as aggressive if they resisted.
- Staff feel like healing circles and yarning are set up to save face rather than prevent problems.
- Staff feel like when something has happened, and the issue is raw they are expected to calm down and come up with solutions.
- Staff felt like the solutions they come up with fall on deaf ears.
- Staff are reprimanded when they go outside the processes laid down for them to express their concerns or make a complaint.

## Details of the Process and Issues Raised on the Day (Gathering 2)

Before the day got started, the collective sat down and were prompted with the question, "What do you feel the purpose of this time is?" This was followed by some time of silence as they all sat and wrote on the provided notepads their thoughts and responses.

As the moment came to an end, the prompting question was answered.

"To connect together to find a way forward."

"To find a way to create a safe space and be provided with the tools necessary to help the collective."

It became clear that the collective felt unsafe and uncomfortable in the environment that they are forced to be in every time they go into work. All stated that they feel exhausted and are "unsure" what else can be done. They said they have been in this space before, had talks and sent in direct things that they need. They said they feel like it is all "promises that never happen". They said, "If we say we need this, or if we say this is the way it is or this is the way it needs to be then we need to be believed and they need to understand that we know the right way."

The discussions opened further as more it was clear that the collective was at their wits end with what's next. "Lack of communication and the unwillingness to sit with us and listen!" one exclaimed followed by a collective moan of agreement. "They send us to these meetings and workshops with facilitators, get the feedback and then have their own meeting without us and decide to do their own thing for us instead of with us".

The collective in complete agreeance continued the exercise with one noting, "We are broken, dealing with the type of work we do, dealing with our own lives outside work and not receiving the support we need through culture. The lack of understanding and the lack of interest to understand us is demeaning, disheartening and a spit in the face".

"We are isolated from each other and from our non-indigenous colleagues. They need to heal us to heal the workspace. They need to take accountability for the actions or lack thereof. It is breaking us. We are broken".

The call of the collective was clear and concise. They need promises that are followed by actions. They need support through culture, through inclusivity and through understanding. They need the executives to be present and listen to them through these meetings instead of always saying, "We have got something else on and having excuses." "They say that this is a priority but don't take the time out to sit here with us and listen." "They hear us, but they need to listen."

Following this they broke for the smoking ceremony and welcome to country which allowed the collective to release the tensions and cleanse negative emotions before walking back into the space. This was followed by morning tea.

Once concluded the collective were split into two groups. They were each prompted with the same question of, "What do you do for some self-reflection and healing?"

Many found this task difficult saying "We're in a constant state of survival, we're exhausted." The discussions opened again as the groups went around, allowing themselves to reflect on what they do to help ease the day. They said things like, "It's like releasing a pressure valve, slowly overtime." One stated, "I can't do it all at once because I don't have the support at work to take some of that pressure and stress away from me." The collective agreed that they don't have the level of support that they need. They said things like, "We need to feel equal." "We are just expected to conform and accept that we need to just shut up and listen".

It was clear that the collective has a "lack of positions of power" and any means of, "real growth within the workspace that allows us to be in a position to make any decisions." As the conversation furthered, the issue of cultural supervision and protection came up. This led to the question of, "Do you get any cultural supervision in your workplace?". This was followed by a resounding "No!"

It was clear that there was no safe space nor were there any policies or procedures in place to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees access cultural support or supervision. This has led many to have to “Pay for it outside.” When the collective was asked whether they had asked for it, one person stated, “We ask for it and it ends up as “not value for money” from the people making decisions. We get nothing.” This final statement was met with a clear agreement across the room. The team then broke for lunch.

When the collective returned to the tables, the brief for the day called for a discussion of family/community and how we heal using these outlets. A presentation was presented on the importance of family and community and how we deal with western society. In discussions the collective talked about society having caused a fracture, “within the soul, within the person. “The identity of the person that has been fractured by society. A system has been created that is designed to fracture and destroy the spirit of the people and culture they keep breaking.” The discussion was well received initially. It quickly turned to “Why are you here?” the question directed at the team that was asked to facilitate the workshop. This followed with a flood of questions directly asking for “help”. “Is this just the same story and another way to tick a box? To say that they’ve done something for us?”

Some even stating that, “We are on the front lines; we are the ones getting blamed by mob and the community for the decisions that we have no control over. There is no support from people higher up.” They were clear that they are treated as martyrs stating that, “there is nothing, there is no support, no accountability, no protection.” It was clear that they have called for “Indigenous people higher up making the decisions for our people rather than non-indigenous people.” “We are forced to put kids in foster care instead of putting them with family. Let us put these kids with family!” When this is brought up, they are “seen as the aggressive member of the group instead of the voice of reason.” The call for action was clear. They need a leader or panel “at the top, making the decisions on Indigenous people, someone who truly understands the landscape but there are no opportunities for indigenous people to make it higher than we already are.”

The collective clearly require support on their terms. The terms set by upper management do not consider the impact on the Indigenous staff. The lack and unwillingness to understand the indigenous staff is apparent. “Support for cultural load is non-existent.” Furthermore, “Accountability is unseen and unheard of” from the decision makers. Policies and procedures need to be put in place, that allow Indigenous workers to make the decisions regarding Indigenous peoples and community which, they can make. The clear call and need for representation at the higher level that allows them to make decisions including but not limited to; cultural policies, decisions for Indigenous community and for Indigenous staff. The decision makers are quick to set up healing circles/yarn circles or any cultural workshop after a massive event has caused them to do something to, “save face” instead of “listening to us and preventing anything like what happened from happening ever again.” “We are asked to solve this while the issue is raw, and we are still hurt. We are expected to just calm down, relax and come up with solutions. Solutions that end up falling on deaf ears anyways.”

The following morning things picked up as they were left off, with everyone having time to reflect on the previous days’ discussion. The facilitating team had decided to allow the collective to express all their feelings and open a space to allow them to take the reins on what they needed. This led to the prompt question of, “What solutions/changes would you like to see?” The collective jumped at the chance to finally get their say without any interruptions, and without any outside input, to be free to make their decisions saying things like, “This is freeing” and “just hope they follow up on their promises.”

The policy is left to interpretation by the same management that deny all requests made for cultural support. A directly worded strategic plan must be made, a written agenda must be created and when policies and procedures are created, they are created with the ATSI and directly worded to not allow for any interpretation on the matter.

Not all solutions are present in this document as discussions are still being held by ATSI staff in relation to what they need.

## Recommendations

1. Current decision-makers meet with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to develop a prioritised action plan with clearly identified issues to be addressed, time frames and accountability mechanisms to achieve the recommendations of the CDS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.
2. In collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff develop mechanisms that include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in decision-making on policies and procedures, cultural support and supervision processes that are designed to meet the 'cultural' load uniquely experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and address the need for cultural business to have a place in the workplace and in the work. An example might be a representative group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff that will increase transparency and inclusivity in any decisions made about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and community.
3. That the DDG and the DG regularly meet with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to hear their concerns, to be accountable for their decision-making as well as have the opportunity to learn that we are a loving and giving culture and be open minded and understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and cultures like we are forced to understand non-Indigenous ways.
4. Address the isolation and disconnection of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff from each other and from non-Indigenous people by providing more opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to sit together and work together, especially when 'things' have happened and especially around new staff who need our ways of support to learning about and assimilate into the workspace and have more opportunities for non-Indigenous staff to spend time with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff on Country understanding the experiences of staff through story and in regular training and development that increases cultural awareness, cultural competency and cultural care and develop a mechanism whereby all staff are held to account for any and all cultural incompetence and racism.
5. Provision of a designated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander space at 220 where cultural business like but not limited to celebrations, sorry business, communications can be attended to.

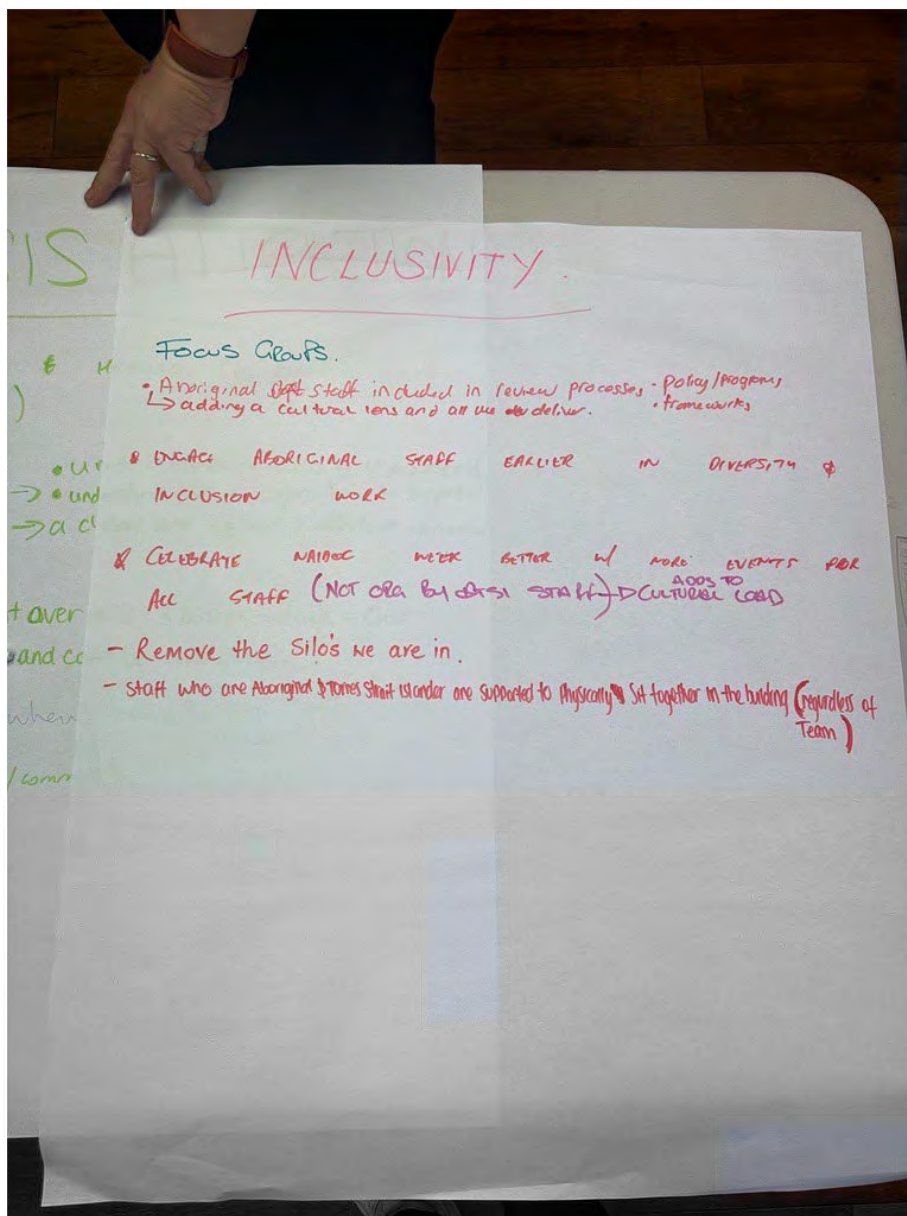
## Conclusion

This is just the start of work that can provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff with cultural safety and care in their workplace. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff have noted that they feel a lack of equity in the workplace largely because there is a lack of attention to their cultural safety and 'cultural' load needs and a perceived lack of willingness to help protect and cater for the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. Staff have noted that decisions impacting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and community are made without the collaborative efforts and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This has taken a significant toll on both the mental health of CSD Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff as well as the greater community that they are recruited to help.

Report Written and prepared by Rosie Lang  
CIPI CEO/Founder

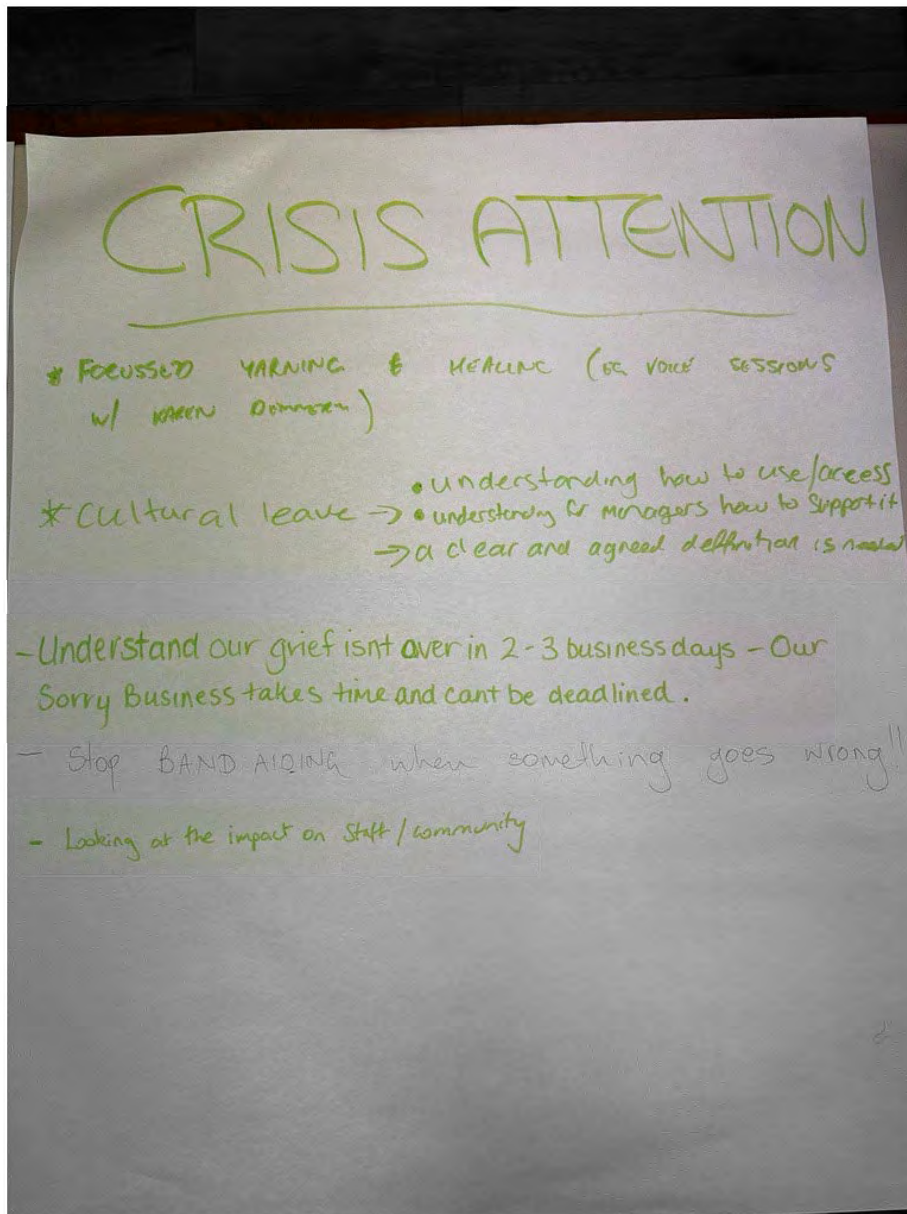
## Attachment A: Group contributions



### INCLUSIVITY

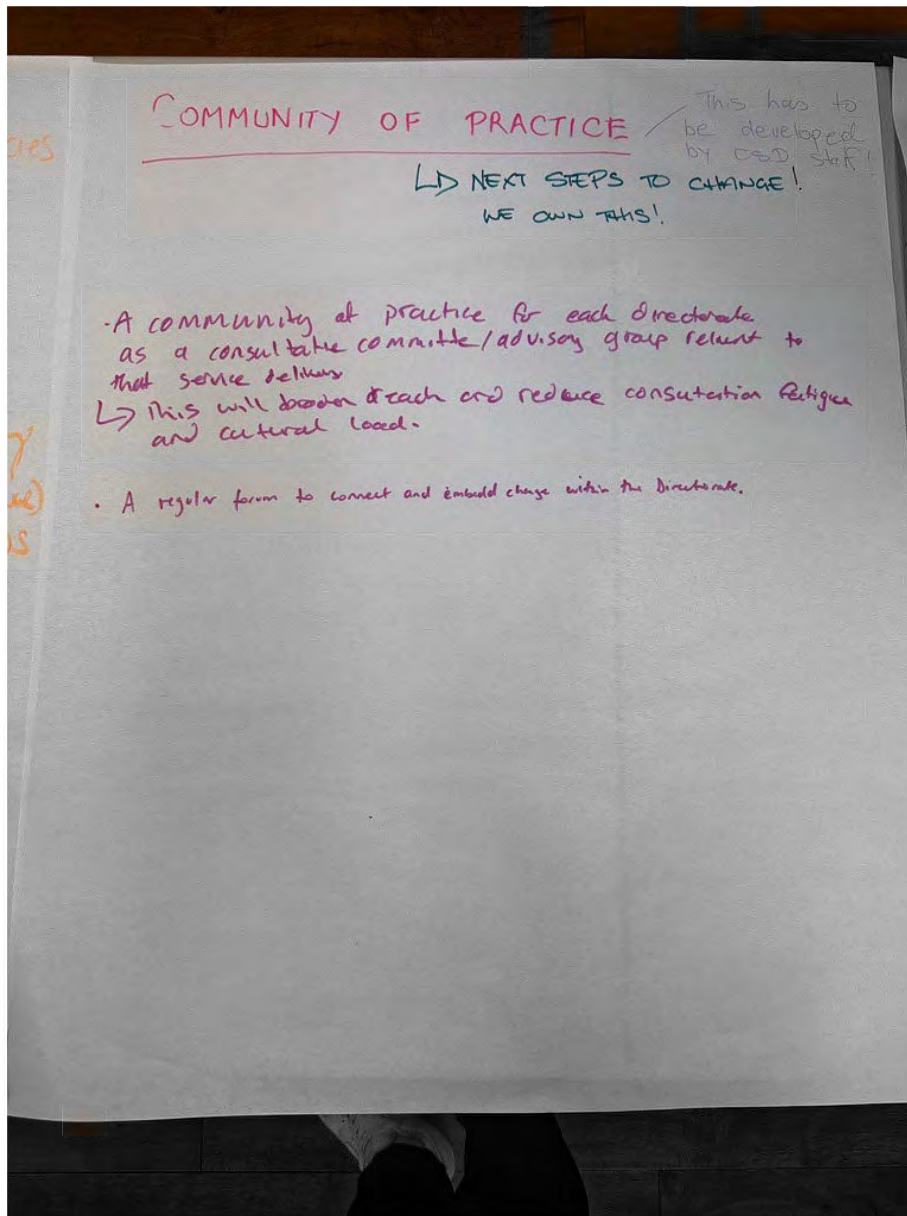
#### Focus Groups

- Aboriginal staff included in recent processes – policy/programs, frameworks
  - Adding a cultural lens and all we deliver
- Engage Aboriginal staff earlier in diversity and inclusion work
- Celebrate NAIDOC week better with more events for all staff (not organised by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff – adds to cultural load)
- Remove the silos we are in
- Staff who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander are supported to physically sit together in the building (regardless of team)



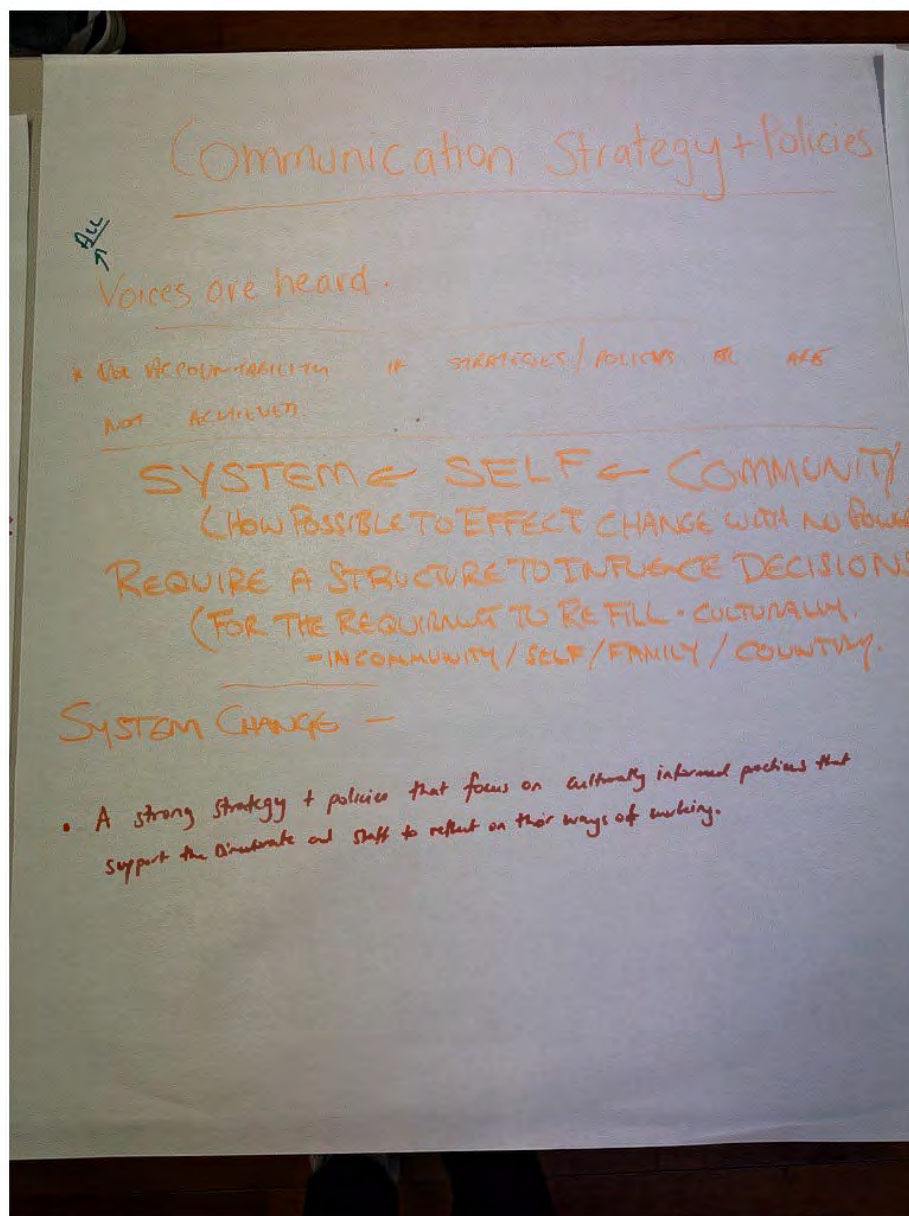
### CRISIS ATTENTION

- Focused yarning and healing (eg voice sessions w/ Karen Demsey)
- Cultural leave
  - Understanding how to use/access
  - Understanding for managers how to support it
  - A clear and agreed definition is needed
- Understand our grief isn't over in 2-3 business days – Our sorry business takes time and can't be deadlined.
- Stop band-aiding when something goes wrong
- Looking at the impact on staff/community



## COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

- Next steps to change! We own this! (this has to be developed by CSD staff)
- A community of practice for each directorate as a consultative committee/advisory group relevant to that service delivery.
  - This will reduce consultation fatigue and cultural load.
- A regular forum to connect and embed change within the directorate.



## COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AND POLICIES

All voices are heard

Accountability if strategies/policies are not achieved

SYSTEM < SELF < COMMUNITY

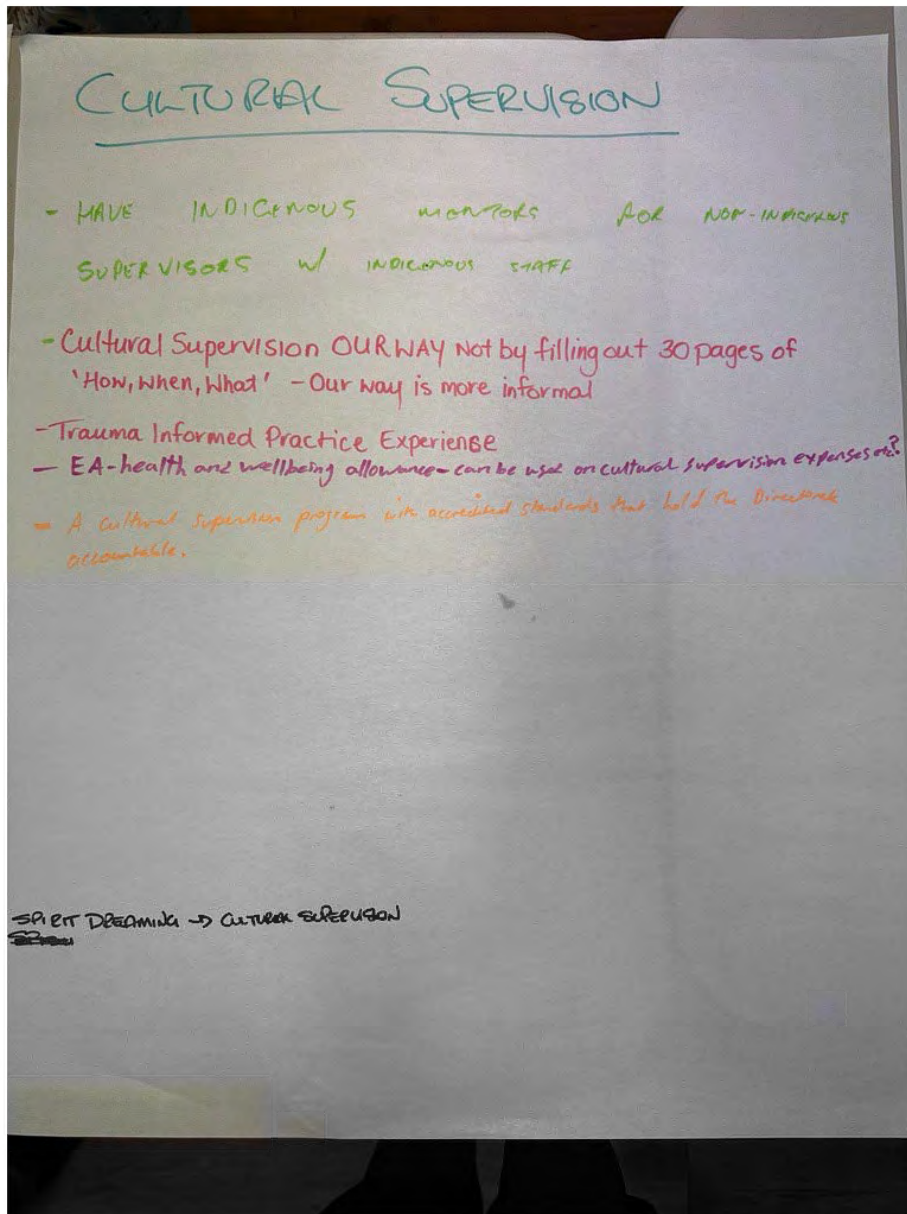
(How is it possible to effect change with no power)

Require a structure to influence decisions

(For the requirement to re-fill – culturally/in community/self/family/country)

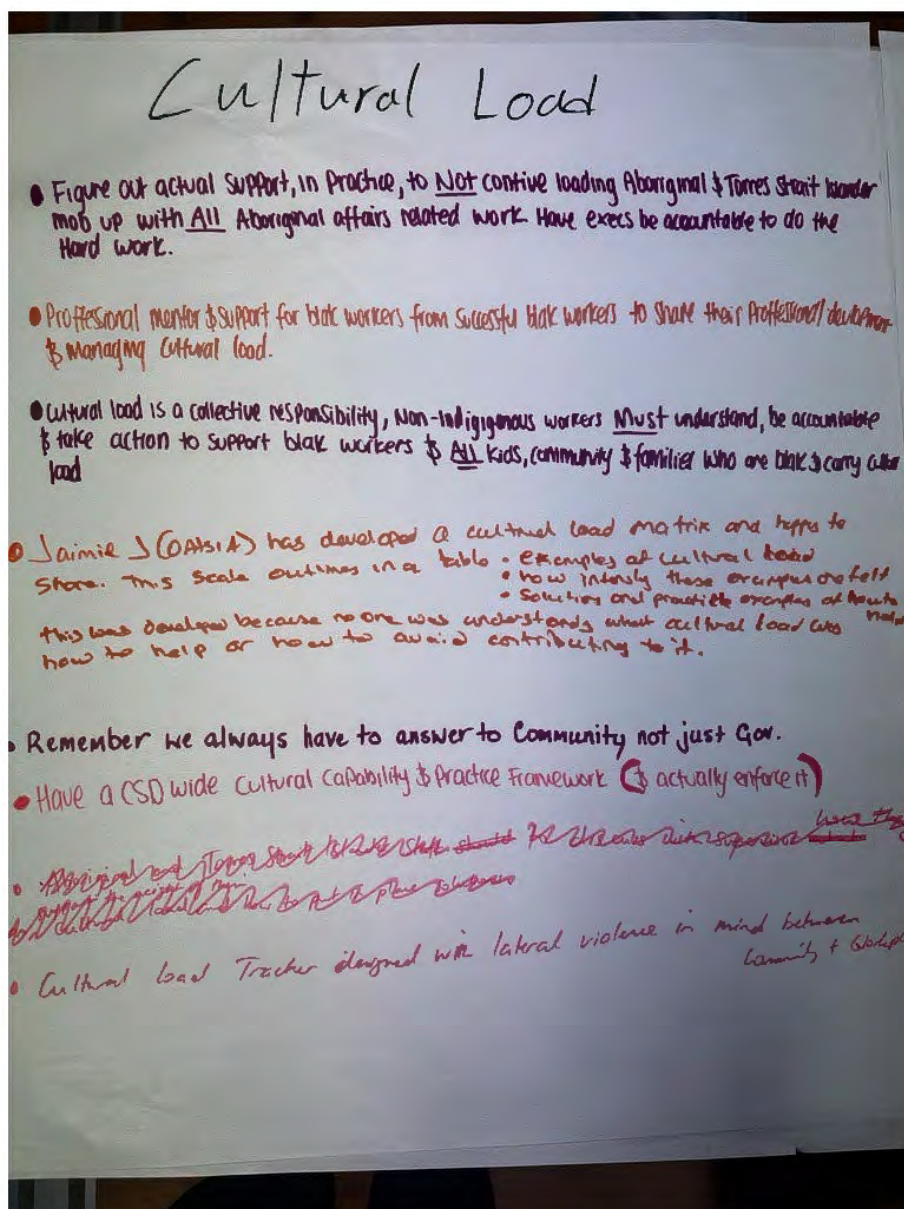
SYSTEM CHANGE

A strong strategy and policies that focus on culturally informed practices that support the directorate and staff to reflect on their ways of working.



## CULTURAL SUPERVISION

- Have indigenous mentors for non-indigenous supervisors with indigenous staff
- Cultural supervision OUR WAY not by filling out “how, when, what” - our way is more informal
- Trauma informed practice experience
- EA – Health wellbeing allowance – can be used on cultural supervision expenses?
- A cultural supervision program with accredited standards that hold the directorate accountable.
- Spirit Dreaming – Cultural Supervision

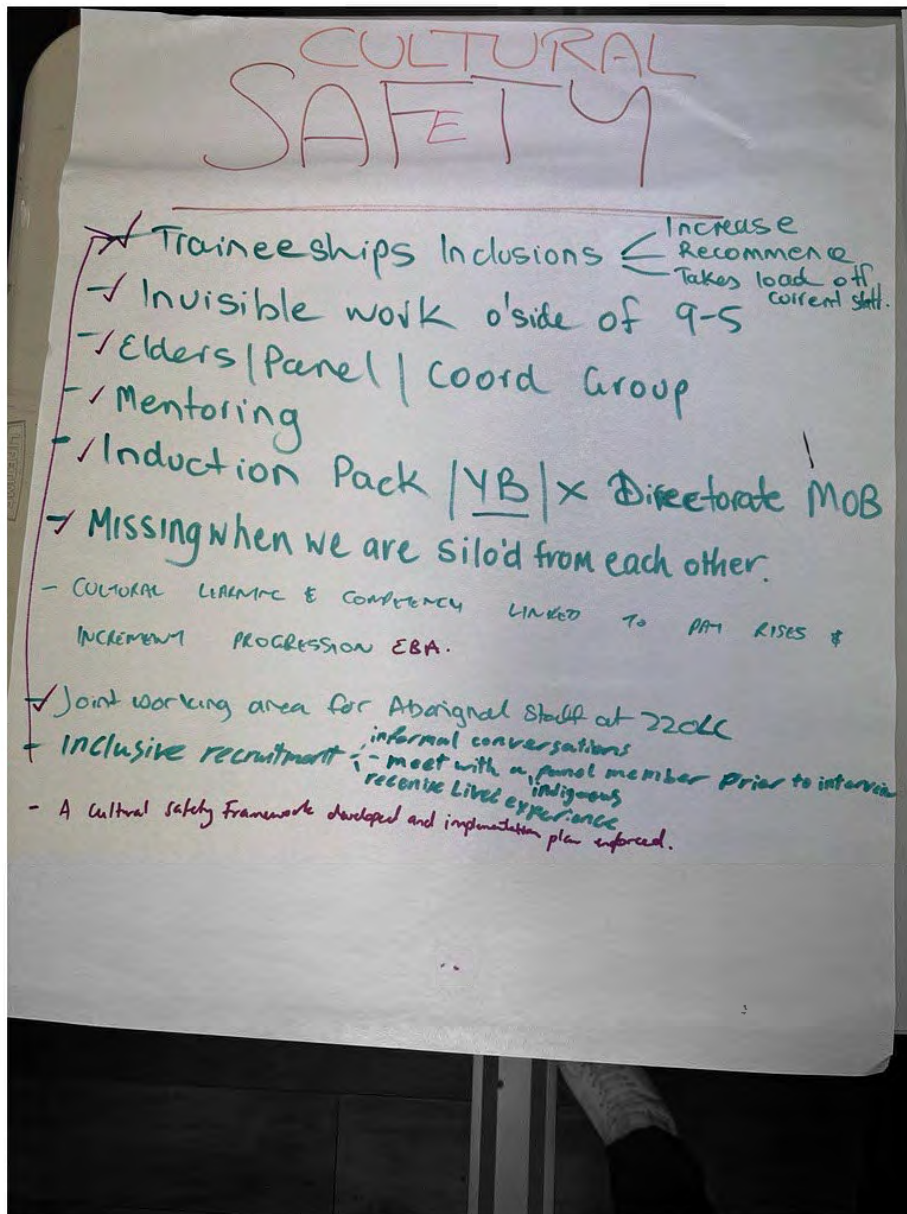


## CULTURAL LOAD

- Figure out actual support, in practice, to NOT continue loading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mob up with ALL Aboriginal affairs related work. Have Executives be accountable to do the hard work.
- Professional mentor and support for black workers from successful black workers to share their professional development and managing cultural load
- Cultural load is a collective responsibility, non-indigenous workers MUST understand, be accountable and take action to support black workers and ALL kids, community and families who are black and carry cultural load.
- Jaimie J (OATSIA) has developed a cultural load matrix and hopes to share. This scale outlines in a table:
  - Examples of cultural load
  - How intensely these examples are felt
  - Solutions and possible examples???

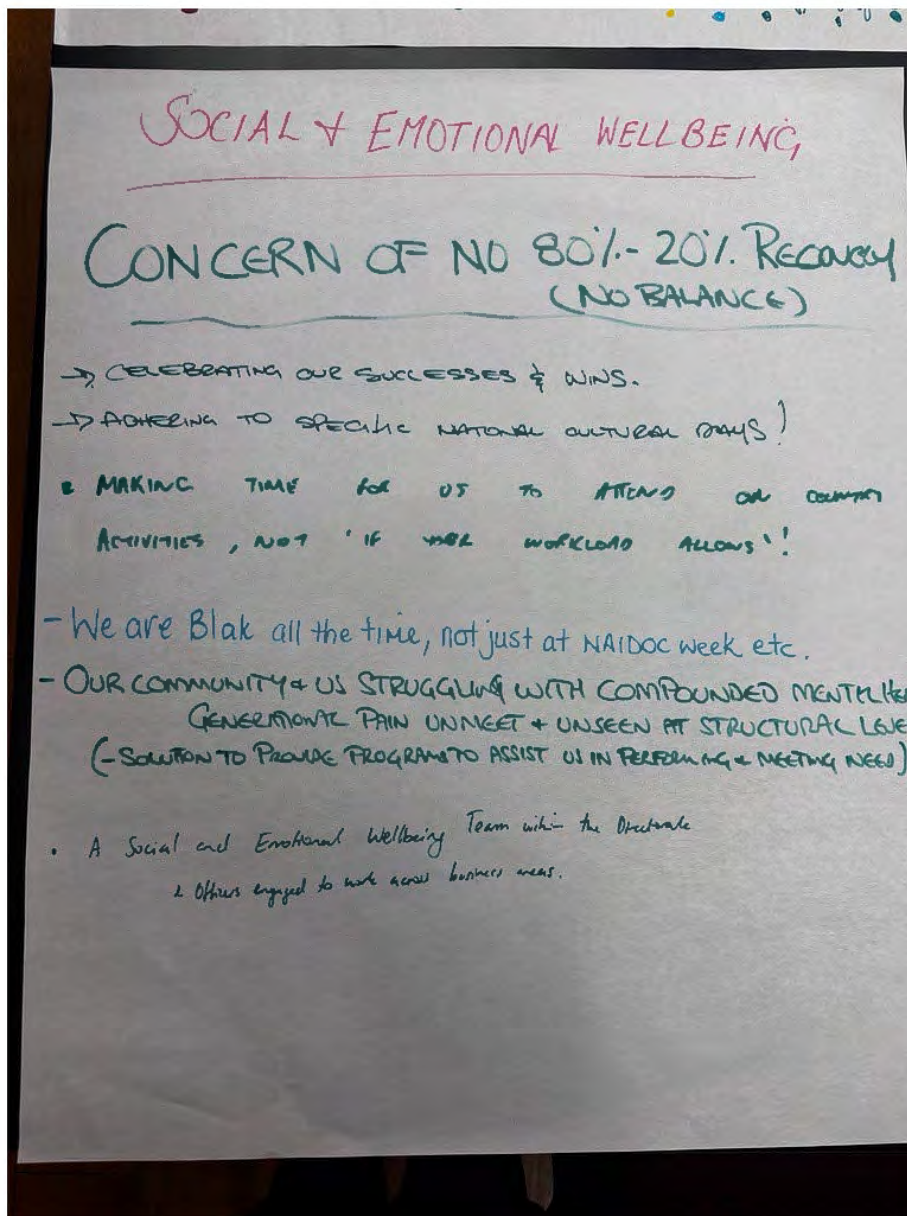
[what is the rest of this important sentence?]

- This was developed because no one was understanding what cultural load was, how to help or how to avoid contributing to it.
- Remember we always have to answer to community, not just government.
- Have a CSD wide cultural capability and practice framework (and actually enforce it)
- Cultural load tracker designed with lateral violence in mind between community and workplace



## CULTURAL SAFETY

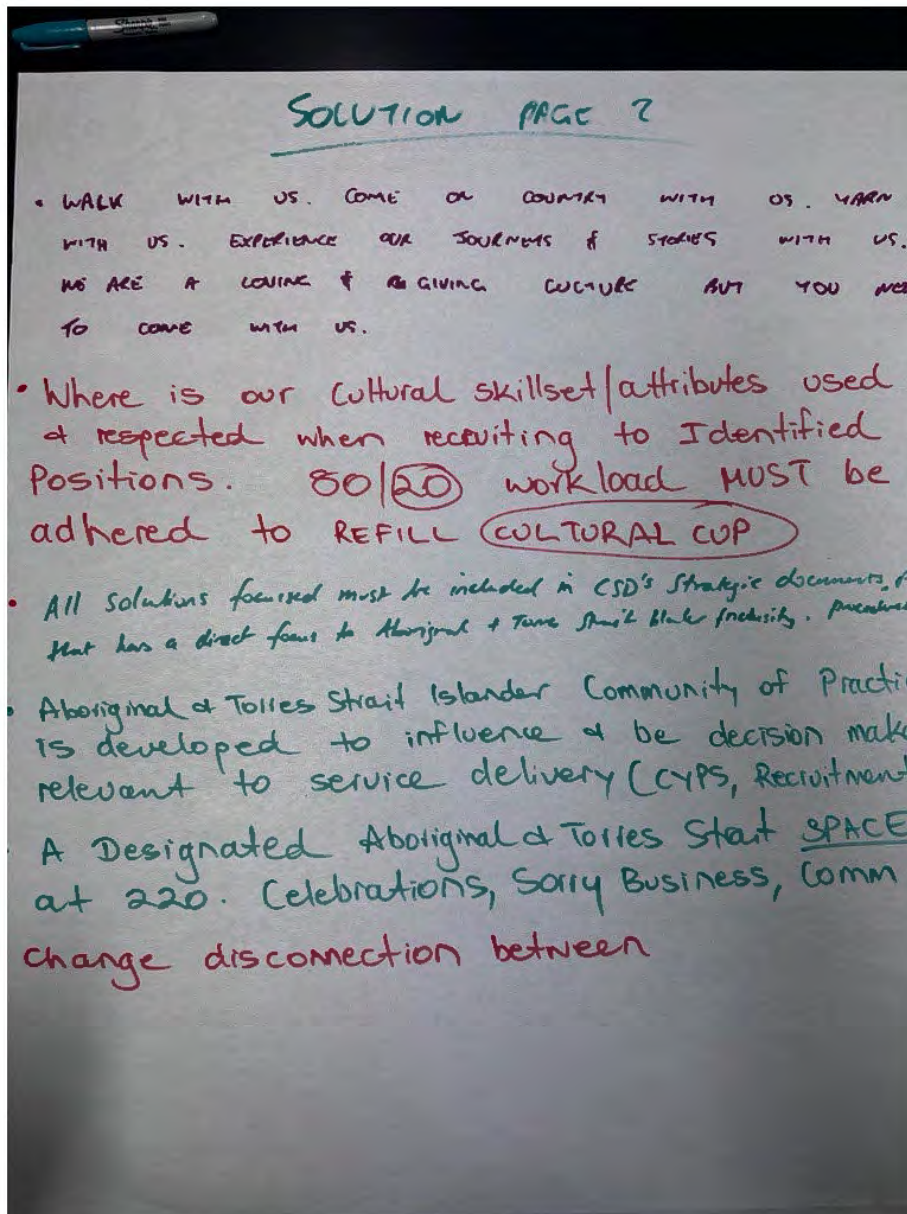
- Traineeships inclusions (increase, recommence, takes load off current staff)
- Invisible work outside of 9-5
- Elders/panel/Coord group
- Mentoring
- Induction pack/YB/Directorate MOB
- Missing when we are silo'd from each other
- Cultural learning and competency linked to pay rises and increment progression EBA
- Joint working area for Aboriginal staff at 220 London Circuit
- Inclusive recruitment:
  - informal conversations
  - meet with an indigenous panel member prior to interview
  - recognise lived experience
- A cultural safety framework developed and implementation plan enforced.



## SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

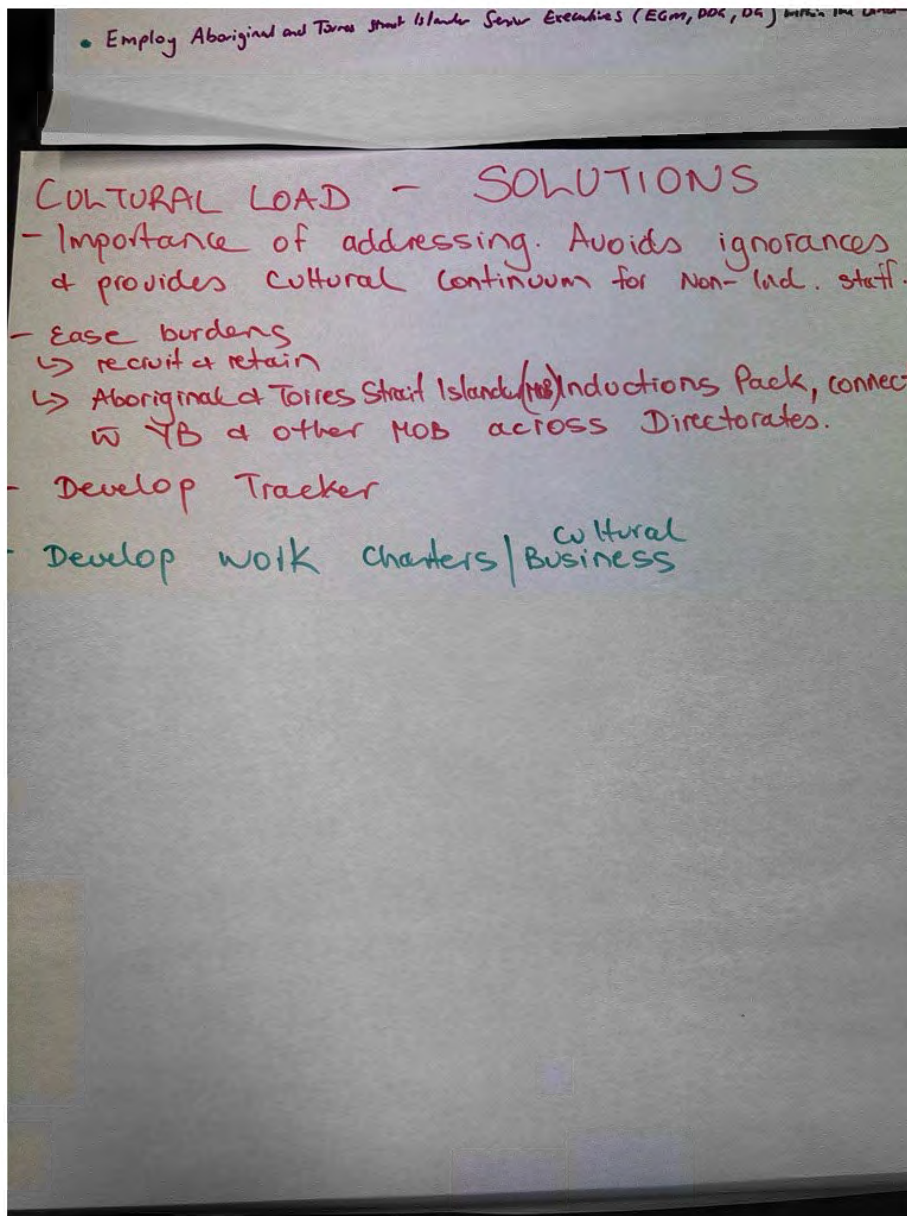
### Concern of no 80%-20% recovery (no balance)

- Celebrating our successes and wins
- Adhering to specific national cultural days
- Making time for us to attend on country activities, not "if your workload allows"
- We are Blak all the time, not just at NAIDOC week etc.
- Our community and us struggling with compounded mental health, generational pain unmet and unseen at structural level (solution to provide programs to assist us in performing and meeting need)
- A social and emotional wellbeing team within the directorate
  - o Others engaged to work across business areas.



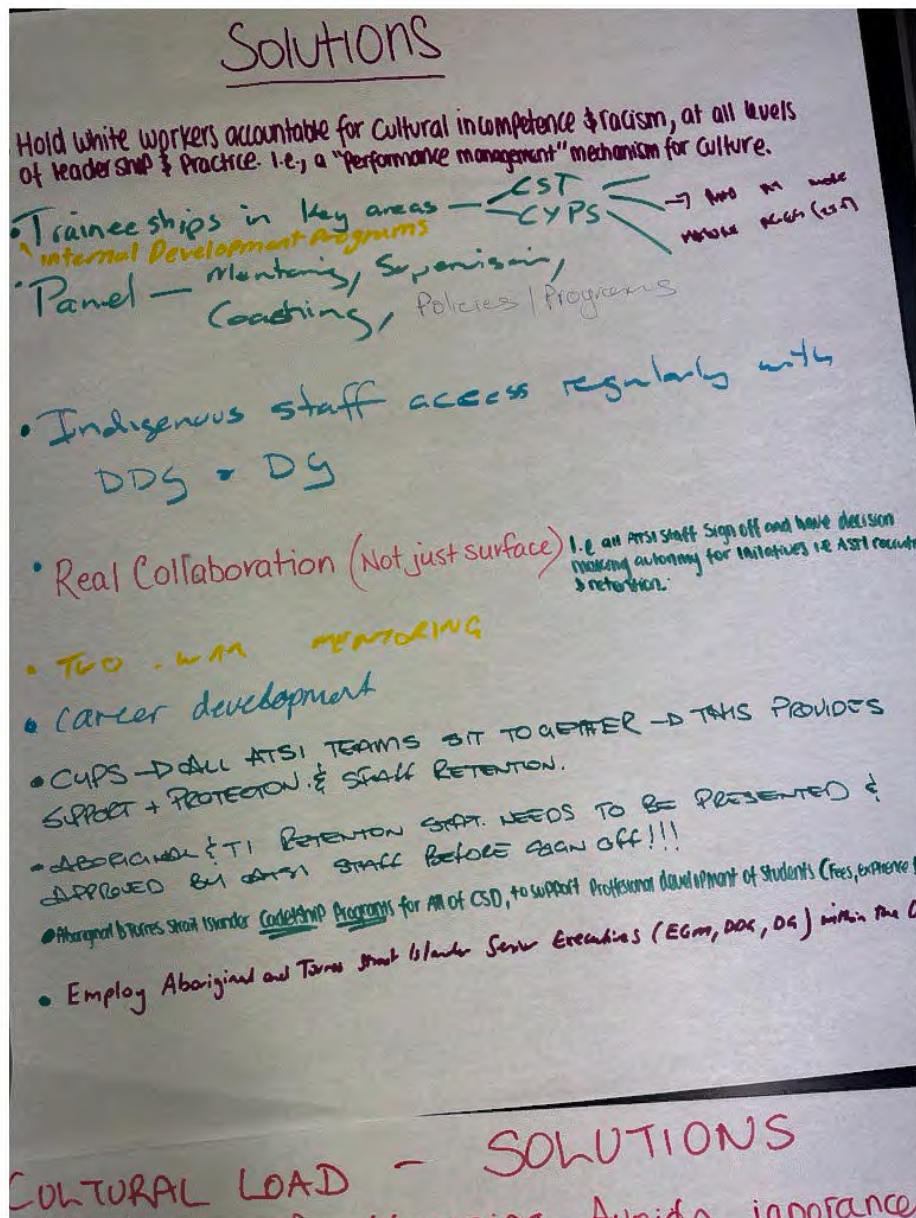
## SOLUTION PAGE 2

- Walk with us. Come on country with us. Yarn with us. Experience our journeys and stories with us. We are a loving and giving culture but you need to come with us.
- Where is our cultural skillset/attributes used and respected when recruiting to identified positions. 80/20 workload MUST be adhered to refill cultural cup.
- All solutions focused must be included in CSDs strategic documents that has a direct focus to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inclusivity. ??? [what is the word here?]
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of practice is developed to influence and be decision makers relevant to service delivery (CYPs, Recruitment etc)
- A designated Aboriginal and Torres Strait SPACE at 220. Celebrations, sorry business, comm
- Change disconnection between



### CULTURAL LOAD – SOLUTIONS

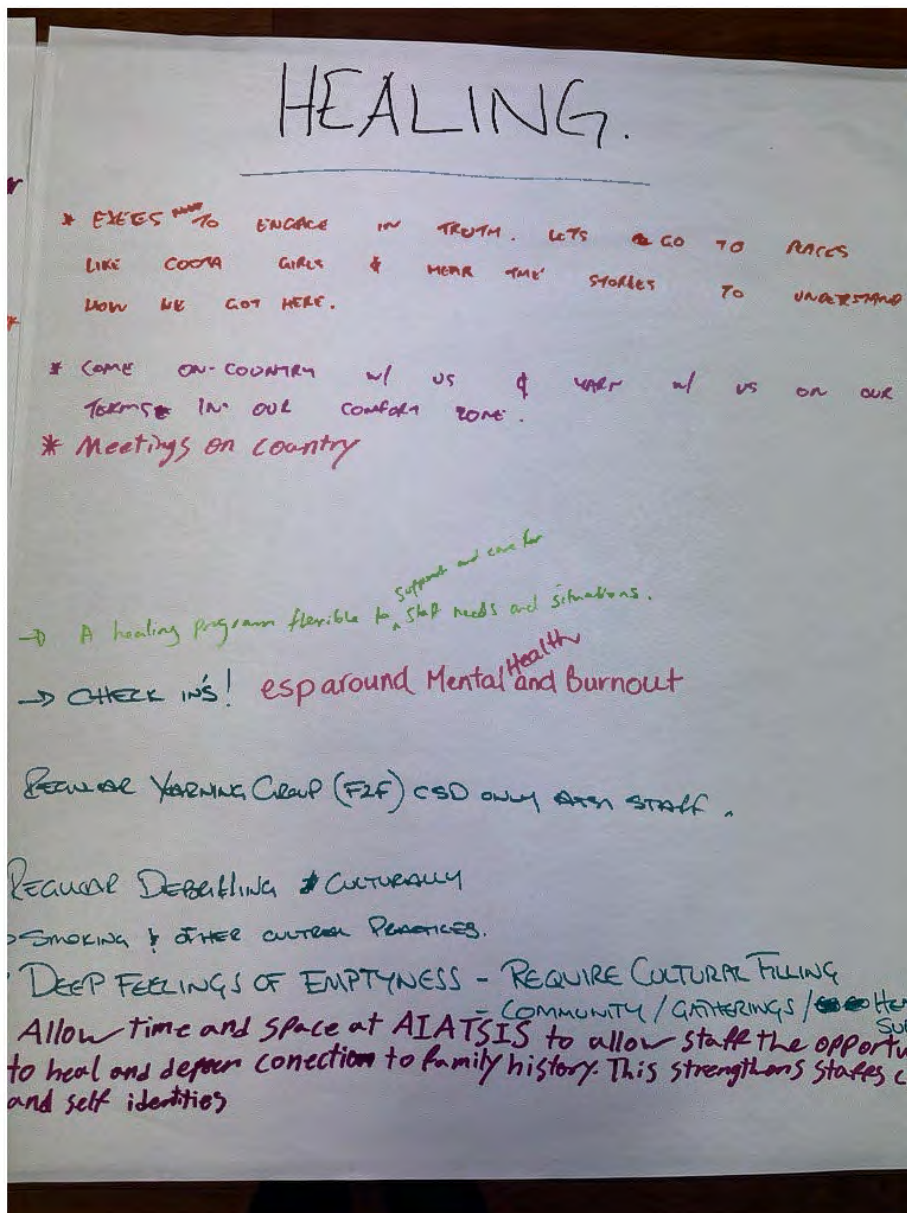
- Importance of addressing. Avoids ignorances and provides cultural continuum for non-indigenous staff.
- Ease burdens
  - Recruit and retain
  - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (mob) induction pack, connect with YB (Yarning Brew?) and other mob across directorates
- Develop tracker
- Develop work charters/Cultural business



## SOLUTIONS

- Hold white workers accountable for cultural incompetence and racism, at all levels of leadership and practice i.e. a "performance management" mechanism for culture.
- Traineeships and internal development programs in key areas (CST, CYPS) and at more mature ages
- Panel — mentoring, supervision, coaching, policies/programs
- Indigenous staff access regularly with DDG and DG
- Real collaboration (not just surface) i.e. all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff sign off and have decision making autonomy for initiatives (i.e. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment and restoration)
- Two-way mentoring
- Career development
- CYPS > all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teams sit together > this provides support and protection and staff retention.

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander retention strategy needs to be presented and approved by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff before sign off
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cadetship programs for all of CSD, to support professional development of students (fees, experience)
- Employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander senior executives (EGM, DDG, DG) within the directorate



## HEALING

Executives need to engage in truth. Lets go to places like Cooma Girls and hear their stories to understand how we got here.

Come on-country with us and yarn with us on our terms, in our comfort zone.

Meetings on country

A healing program flexible to support and care for staff needs and situations.

Check ins, especially around mental health and burnout

Regular yarnning group (face to face) in CSD only Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

Regular debriefing culturally

Smoking and other cultural practices

Deep feelings of emptiness – Require cultural filling, community/gatherings/healing support

Allow time and space at AIATSIS to allow staff the opportunity to heal and deepen connection to family history. This strengthens staffs cultural and self-identities.

# CSD SBOM, Thursday 7 November

Aboriginal and Torres Strait  
Islander Cultural Supervision  
and Support





**We wish to acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the land we are meeting on and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region. We wish to acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.**

**We would also like to acknowledge and welcome other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who may be attending today.**



**Detail of: *Meeting Place* by Leah Brideson**

A representation of Canberra as a meeting place. The palette is inspired by colours of our natural environment and the textures of the land, mountains and rivers that surround this beautiful city.

# Valuing and supporting our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues

- CSD's Strategic Plan commits to providing stronger outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. All staff have a role to play.
- Development and delivery of cultural supports also aligns with:
  - [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#).
  - [ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028](#)
  - [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Attraction, Retention and Development Plan](#)
- Significant work has increased recruitment but also increasing is the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff leaving CSD.
- Improving the quality of cultural supports is crucial to staff feeling safe and supported.
- By providing cultural support it will increase the likelihood that staff will stay and develop their careers at CSD.

# Cultural Support Program

We are proposing a program of culturally responsive support for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff:

- On Country gatherings offered to all staff twice a year to gather, heal, recover and re-energise.
- Six monthly meetings/morning teas with senior Executives to discuss staff wellbeing – what is working and what needs improving.
- One on one and group session to receive cultural de-briefing, supervision and mentoring.

# Background

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at CSD are often placed under significant cultural load due to the sensitive and complex issues facing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community they work with and live in

Exacerbated in 2023 by:

- Failed referendum to establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice
- Working Together For Our Booris symposium
- Ongoing high-pressure expectations put on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff

On Country experience was held for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff on 10 November 2023 at Mulligan's Flat

A follow up 2-day healing and feedback session at the Yarramundi Cultural Centre.

## Key themes arising from the sessions

- Staff felt unsafe, exhausted, broken and blamed by community for decisions they have no part in. Staff also reported feeling isolated and having no collective voice in decision making.
- Deep feelings of emptiness and lack of being valued or supported within CSD – Require cultural filling, community/gatherings/healing support.
- A healing program flexible to support and care for staff needs and situations.
- Concern of no 80%-20% recovery (no balance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff who connect and live within the community we serve) noting that some staff are on 150% of the time.
- A cultural safety framework needs to be developed and enforced.
- One on one and group session to receive cultural de-briefing, supervision and mentoring is needed.
- The need for CSD to figure out actual support in practice, to NOT continue loading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mob up with ALL Aboriginal affairs related work. Have Executives be accountable to do the hard work.
- Remember Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff have to answer to community, not just government.
- Celebrate NAIDOC week better with more events for all staff (not organised by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff – adds to cultural load)

# The report recommendations:

## DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN TOGETHER

Current decision-makers to meet with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to develop a prioritised action plan with issues to be addressed, time frames and accountability mechanisms.

## INCLUDE STAFF IN DECISION-MAKING

Develop mechanisms that include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in decision-making on policies and procedures, cultural support and supervision processes that are designed to meet the cultural load uniquely experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

## MEET REGULARLY

DDG and the DG regularly meet with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to hear their concerns, be accountable for their decision-making and further build on their understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culture.

## LET US BE TOGETHER

Address the isolation and disconnection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff by providing opportunities to sit and work together.

Also more opportunities for non-Indigenous staff to spend time with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff On Country to increase their cultural awareness, cultural competency and cultural care.

## DEDICATED SPACES

Provide a designated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander space at 220 London Circuit where cultural business like but not limited to celebrations, sorry business, communications can be attended to.

# Understanding Cultural Load

As staffing numbers increase we need a combination of support and feedback

5.92% (68 people) in Q4 of 22/23

7.1% (87 people) in Q4 of 23/24

April 2024 People, Capability and Culture (PCC) distributed a Cultural Load matrix

***“Cultural load is a term to describe the (often invisible) load borne by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the workplace, where they are either the only person or one of a small number of people from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.”*** - Diversity Council of Australia

Cultural load increases when staff are stuck between government and community, and the trauma associated with extreme cultural load is communicated and ignored, disregarded and not acted upon, or in worst case scenarios where behaviours increasing cultural load are justified with no recognition of the impact on the staff member/s.

# Cultural load matrix – Guide for managers and supervisors

Cultural load rating	Engagement characteristics	Examples	Support required
<p><b>Low</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A calm and respectful conversation.</li> <li>• A genuine interest in learning.</li> <li>• A commitment to a positive result for all parties.</li> <li>• Topics discussed were not distressing, did not cause harm or include the harm of others.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarifying terms and phrases.</li> <li>• Support with Acknowledgment of Country.</li> <li>• Connecting people with Elders or delegates for Welcome to Country.</li> <li>• Recruitment/panel advice or participation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show gratitude for the advice.</li> <li>• Take the advice on and note it for future use (avoid asking the same question again).</li> <li>• Share how you have implemented the advice and how it helped.</li> <li>• Familiarise yourself with the Closing the Gap and ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Moderate</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A respectful conversation with tense moments.</li> <li>• Requires patience and empathy to work through an issue.</li> <li>• Requires advisor to unpack more cultural elements.</li> <li>• Multiple stages to reach a safe and respectful outcome.</li> <li>• Topics discussed contain challenging or confronting aspects.</li> <li>• Matters where relationships are impacted.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advice regarding misunderstanding with a community member.</li> <li>• Where opinions of First Nations people or culture are shared without care or respect.</li> <li>• Sorry Business (providing explanation, education or awareness of).</li> <li>• Events and larger gatherings.</li> <li>• Events of cultural significance (organising or providing advice on planning).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managers to check-in on staff workload.</li> <li>• Have an ongoing check-in on cultural load.</li> <li>• Encourage other members of the team to contribute to organising events.</li> <li>• Show empathy, and treat information with respect.</li> <li>• Be proactive in educating your team.</li> <li>• Listen to learn and understand.</li> <li>• Understand community supports such as <a href="#">Yarning Brew</a>.</li> <li>• Cultural load is a serious workplace hazard. Support staff proactively, and according to your WHS protocols.</li> </ul>
<p><b>High</b></p> <p>Some areas of CSD arguable operate almost exclusively in the 'high' category</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A high intensity conversation/debate or roundtable.</li> <li>• Where racism, harm, or distressing content is discussed.</li> <li>• A safe and appropriate outcome not reached.</li> <li>• Where culture is objectified or insulted.</li> <li>• Matter is ongoing.</li> <li>• Where a conflict between people is not resolved, or where there is low interest in a resolution to a conflict.</li> <li>• Advisor requires debrief.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sorry Business.</li> <li>• Complaints of racism with staff and/or community.</li> <li>• Providing advice on policy or legislation containing distressing topics.</li> <li>• Implementing something with a cultural lens for the first time – project, program, framework etc.</li> <li>• A community consultation process of any kind.</li> <li>• Multiple requests for the same advice, then advice not utilised often triggering devaluation of the staff member and community concerns.</li> <li>• Political matters (including national campaigns and local community/cultural politics).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the staff member to reprioritise workload.</li> <li>• Prioritise debriefing with staff member and First Nations support person if desired.</li> <li>• Support the staff member to learn of cultural networks to share the load.</li> <li>• Before asking for advice, check if this has already been provided and recorded.</li> <li>• Offer leave options to support recovery post matter.</li> <li>• Cultural load is a serious workplace hazard. Support staff proactively, and according to your WHS protocols.</li> </ul>

# What happens if we don't do this?

Nova and Brendan to share their experiences

# In summary, we are proposing:

- 1. 12 month pilot to determine composition, demand and cost:**
  - **On Country event for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff twice per year**
  - **Six-monthly meetings with CSD executives**
  - **One-on-one and group sessions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff**
- 2. On Country event by Dec 2024 to identify working group to facilitate the program (with non-indigenous support)**
- 3. Project to identify a space in 220 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander staff**
- 4. A complementary training and support program for non-indigenous staff.**

# What is cultural load? – Guide for managers and supervisors

“Cultural load is a term to describe the (often invisible) load borne by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the workplace, where they are either the only person or one of a small number of people from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.”

- Diversity Council of Australia



## Impacts of high cultural load

**Cultural load imposes additional workload on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff.** We recruit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to leverage their lived experience, cultural insights and connections with the community so we can strengthen outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. However, when staff feel pressured to provide insights and education on issues like days of significance, First Nations inclusion, guidance on issues, and support to other staff, the impacts are felt cumulatively. This may impact the staff member’s mental health and wellbeing, ability to perform their role, and sense of belonging and feeling supported at work.



## Why should I care about cultural load?

**You might not have heard of, or think you’ve seen cultural load before.** Since we’ve been talking more about cultural integrity in the public sector, we’ve been learning more about experiences of cultural load. Unconscious bias describes the tendency for our brains to assume that everyone around us has the same experiences that we do. Unconscious bias can also lead us to make assumptions about the experiences and characteristics of other people. If you haven’t experienced cultural load or minority stress before, it might challenge you to understand the impacts of cultural load, and that’s ok: listening and learning proactively is the best way to support your colleagues.



## Providing support during times of high cultural load

**Sometimes it is not possible to reduce cultural load, e.g. when there are events happening in the community, or when providing advice and education is part of the staff member’s role.** The matrix on the next page provides a range of examples of engagements which involve cultural load, and how you can support your staff.



## Reducing cultural load

**In other cases, there are ways we can reduce the cultural load borne by ACTPS Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander colleagues.** Review our educational resources and information on the subject you’re interested in before approaching a colleague. The [Diversity Council of Australia](#), the [Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs](#), and [AIATSIS](#) have resources on different topics such as First Nations history, inclusion, days of significance, cultural protocol, and more. Check out the development opportunities available on the [Learning Management System](#) including Cultural Awareness Training, and the SBS Inclusion modules. Finally, it’s important that all staff are familiar with the ACTPS obligations under the [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#), as well as the [ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement](#) – **it is everyone’s responsibility to support and progress this work.**

**The Cultural Advisers are a great resource in the ACTPS.** If you’d like more information on cultural load or other matters, book a conversation with a Cultural Adviser: [Sched 2.2 \(a\)\(xi\) FOI Act 2016](#)

## Case study – what is cultural load?

During the 2023 Referendum on an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people around the country experienced very high cultural load. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people were often expected to educate or advocate, including in the workplace, for many months leading up to and following the vote. Expectations for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff to be representatives for all First Nations people, despite the huge diversity within this community, was taxing and challenging. Regardless of individual positions on the Voice, returning to work following the result required significant emotional processing at the same time as performing their duties.

# Cultural load matrix – Guide for managers and supervisors



Cultural load rating	Engagement characteristics	Examples	Support required
<b>Low</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A calm and respectful conversation.</li> <li>A genuine interest in learning.</li> <li>A commitment to a positive result for all parties.</li> <li>Topics discussed were not distressing, did not cause harm or include the harm of others.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarifying terms and phrases.</li> <li>Support with Acknowledgment of Country.</li> <li>Connecting people with Elders or delegates for Welcome to Country.</li> <li>Recruitment/panel advice or participation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Show gratitude for the advice.</li> <li>Take the advice on and note it for future use (avoid asking the same question again).</li> <li>Share how you have implemented the advice and how it helped.</li> <li>Familiarise yourself with the Closing the Gap and ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement.</li> </ul>
<b>Moderate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A respectful conversation with tense moments.</li> <li>Requires patience and empathy to work through an issue.</li> <li>Requires advisor to unpack more cultural elements.</li> <li>Multiple stages to reach a safe and respectful outcome.</li> <li>Topics discussed contain challenging or confronting aspects.</li> <li>Matters where relationships are impacted.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advice regarding misunderstanding with a community member.</li> <li>Where opinions of First Nations people or culture are shared without care or respect.</li> <li>Sorry Business (providing explanation, education or awareness of).</li> <li>Events and larger gatherings.</li> <li>Events of cultural significance (organising or providing advice on planning).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managers to check-in on staff workload.</li> <li>Have an ongoing check-in on cultural load.</li> <li>Encourage other members of the team to contribute to organising events.</li> <li>Show empathy, and treat information with respect.</li> <li>Be proactive in educating your team.</li> <li>Listen to learn and understand.</li> <li>Understand community supports such as <a href="#">Yarning Brew</a>.</li> <li>Cultural load is a serious workplace hazard. Support staff proactively, and according to your WHS protocols.</li> </ul>
<b>High</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A high intensity conversation/debate or roundtable.</li> <li>Where racism, harm, or distressing content is discussed.</li> <li>A safe and appropriate outcome not reached.</li> <li>Where culture is objectified or insulted.</li> <li>Matter is ongoing.</li> <li>Where a conflict between people is not resolved, or where there is low interest in a resolution to a conflict.</li> <li>Advisor requires debrief.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sorry Business.</li> <li>Complaints of racism with staff and/or community.</li> <li>Providing advice on policy or legislation containing distressing topics.</li> <li>Implementing something with a cultural lens for the first time – project, program, framework etc.</li> <li>A community consultation process of any kind.</li> <li>Multiple requests for the same advice, then advice not utilised often triggering devaluation of the staff member and community concerns.</li> <li>Political matters (including national campaigns and local community/cultural politics).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the staff member to reprioritise workload.</li> <li>Prioritise debriefing with staff member and First Nations support person if desired.</li> <li>Support the staff member to learn of cultural networks to share the load.</li> <li>Before asking for advice, check if this has already been provided and recorded.</li> <li>Offer leave options to support recovery post matter.</li> <li>Cultural load is a serious workplace hazard. Support staff proactively, and according to your WHS protocols.</li> </ul>

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Organisations		
Organisation	Service provided	Costings
<b>Yamurrah (Rowena Laurie) – Australia-wide – located in NSW</b>		
<p><a href="https://www.yamurrah.com.au">https://www.yamurrah.com.au</a></p> <p>0451 500 584 (text only)</p> <p>info@yamurrah.com.au</p>	<p>Yamurrah is a collective of First Nations clinicians, educators, consultants, academics, and legal professionals, who are specialists in trauma, recovery, and healing.</p> <p>Consultancy advice from members who are trauma specialists, legal experts, researchers, academics and clinicians.</p> <p>Supervision (both clinical and non-clinical) services for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal workers. All supervision sessions are provided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clinicians who are trauma-informed and hold relevant qualifications in social work, psychology and/or human services.</p> <p>Supervision Alliance: Our Ways is a self-determined, first of its kind alliance that brings together unique Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of providing supervision. This initiative represents a national collaboration focused on cultural supervision.</p>	<p>One on one wellbeing sessions are usually between 50-60mins, staff may access up to six wellbeing sessions (or more) per year and may request additional sessions where required. Cost is <small>Sched 2.2 (a)(xiii) FOI Act 2016</small></p> <p>Individual sessions on bi-monthly basis and group sessions on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>Individual sessions <small>Sched 2.2 (a)(xiii) FOI A</small> (phone or face to face)</p> <p>Group sessions online (4-8 participants) <small>Sched 2.2 (a)(xiii) FOI Act 2016</small></p> <p>Group sessions face to face (4-8 participants) <small>Sched 2.2 (a)(xiii)</small></p>

O Consultative – Mary and Steven O’Neill – Wagga Wagga		
<p>O Consultative – no facebook or website</p> <p><small>Sched 2.2 (a)(xi) FOI Act 2016</small></p> <p><a href="mailto:info@oconsultative.com.au">info@oconsultative.com.au</a></p> <p><u>Wagga Wagga NSW</u></p>	<p>O Consultative is an organisation consisting of Melissa (Mary) and Steven O’Neill who have a combined 20 years of experience in education and working with non-government organisations to deliver quality services meeting community needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Holding Strong</b> provides one on one or group supervision/cultural supervision to ensure appropriate support for individuals as well as increased understanding and awareness at the organisational level including general supervision, cultural supervision and mentoring of new and established managers who are supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.</li> <li>• <b>Learning Together</b> focuses on creating a learning space to have meaningful and robust conversations to use as a foundation for cultural learning and growth. This aims to enhance existing cultural knowledge or create a new stream of learning within an organisation.</li> <li>• <b>Mutual Ground</b> is centred on creating a space to have uncomfortable or unpleasant conversations supported by a facilitator who brings a cultural lens to the conversation alongside an understanding of mainstream systems.</li> </ul>	<p>One on one cultural supervision – 20x bookings on a bi-monthly rotation <small>Sched 2.2 (a)(xiii) FOI Act 2016</small> each</p> <p>On call contact and debrief – per staff 15 minute increments <small>Sched 2.2 (a)(xiii) FOI Act 2016</small> as required</p> <p>Group supervisor supervision - <small>Sched 2.2 (a)(xiii) FOI Act 2016</small> – bi-monthly</p>
Burbirra – Dr Karen Demmery – Canberra based		
<p><a href="https://www.burbirra.com.au/">https://www.burbirra.com.au/</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training and development addressing the impact of trauma on personal growth and professional productivity with</li> </ul>	<p>Cultural Supervision Session (60 minutes) <small>Sched 2.2 (a)(xiii) FOI Act 2016</small></p>

<p>0410 885 757</p> <p>karen@burbirra.com.au</p>	<p>programs designed to foster holistic development and cultural understanding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural supervision to provide specialized guidance and mentorship to professionals navigating the complexities of culturally diverse environments.</li> <li>• Executive coaching that delves into leadership development, strategic decision-making and effective communication within a framework of cultural sensitivity.</li> <li>• Mental health first aid to equip individuals and communities with the skills to provide initial and effective support to those experiencing mental health issues within a culturally informed framework.</li> </ul>	<p>Trauma Healing Coaching Session (60 minutes) - <small>Sched 2.2 (a)(xiii) FO</small></p>
<p><b>Black Ink Coaching Australia – Robyn Forester – Canberra based</b></p>		
<p><a href="https://blackinkcoachingaustralia.com.au/">https://blackinkcoachingaustralia.com.au/</a></p> <p>Phone: 0414 917740</p> <p><a href="mailto:info@blackinkcoachingaustralia.com.au">info@blackinkcoachingaustralia.com.au</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coaching and mentoring programs successfully working with individuals and groups.</li> <li>• Strategic Workforce Development - using strategic workforce development frameworks to support businesses by building, attracting, and retaining a skilled workforce that meets the needs and aspirations of the business to be successful.</li> </ul>	<p><b>One on One Coaching</b> - from <small>Sched 2.2 (a)(xiii) FOI Act 2016</small> per participant</p> <p>Executive Coaching from <small>Sched 2.2 (a)(xiii)</small> per participant</p> <p><b>Group Coaching</b> – from <small>Sched 2.2 (a)(xiii)</small></p> <p><b>Mentoring</b> - from <small>Sched 2.2 (a)(xiii)</small> per participant</p> <p>Group Mentoring from <small>Sched 2.2 (a)(xiii)</small></p> <p><b>Strategic Workforce development</b> - from <small>Sched 2.2 (a)(xiii) FO</small></p>
<p><b>The Connected Purpose–Justin Church – Canberra based</b></p>		

<p><a href="https://www.facebook.com/people/The-Connected-Purpose/100088719110788/?rdr">https://www.facebook.com/people/The-Connected-Purpose/100088719110788/?rdr</a></p> <p>0451 551 471</p> <p>justin@theconnectedpurpose.com</p>	<p>Justin is a Diploma qualified, trauma aware, informed and responsive counsellor offering flexible and safe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 on 1 counselling</li> <li>• Relationship counselling</li> <li>• EAP counselling</li> <li>• Professional debriefing</li> <li>• Cultural supervision</li> <li>• Counselling at conferences, events and workshops</li> <li>• Group work and speaking opportunities</li> </ul>	<p>Sched 2.2 (a)(xiii) FOI Act 2016</p>
<p><b>Koorreen Enterprises – Richard J Franklin – Tyrendarra Victoria based</b></p>		
<p><a href="http://koorreen.com.au">koorreen.com.au</a>  </p> <p>Koorreen Enterprises specialises in delivering a variety of workshops, training platforms and strategic processes to promote cross-cultural safety, counteract lateral violence and enable organisations to undertake First Nation-derived dispute resolution processes.</p> <p>0425 815 301</p> <p>7608 Princess Highway Tyrendarra VIC 3285</p>	<p>Koorreen Enterprises provides workshops for Indigenous and non-Indigenous leaders in order to empower and equip them with knowledge and the right frameworks to bring back to and share with their own communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healing Lateral Violence</li> <li>• Cultural Awareness</li> <li>• Cultural Camps</li> <li>• Collective Therapy</li> </ul> <p>7 Day intensive Train the Trainer</p> <p>Koorreen also offer a 7 day intensive training program for up to 12 people, they are provided all the training to be able to present back at the organisation, their database of resources, narrative therapy.</p>	<p>Our workshops can be run over</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 hour ( <sup>Sched 2.2 (a)(xi)</sup> ),</li> <li>• 3.5 Hours ( <sup>Sched 2.2 (a)(xiii) F</sup> ) or</li> <li>a</li> <li>• full day ( <sup>Sched 2.2 (a)(xi)</sup> ).</li> </ul> <p>Sched 2.2 (a)(xiii) FOI Act 2016</p> <p>Done with a team of five consultants to support the workshop. Can be quoted on request</p>

<b>Big River Connections – Felicity Ryan – Telegraph Point, NSW based</b>		
<p><a href="https://bigriverconnections.com.au/">https://bigriverconnections.com.au/</a></p> <p><a href="tel:0413444705">0413 444 705</a></p> <p>Telegraph Point NSW 2441</p>	<p>Workshops</p> <p><b>Lateral Violence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defining the concept of lateral violence</li> <li>• Identifying why lateral violence occurs</li> <li>• Identifying when and where lateral violence occurs</li> <li>• Describing the effects and impacts of lateral violence</li> <li>• Developing strategies and tools to combat lateral violence and its effects</li> </ul>	<p>Costings coming</p>
	<p><b>Self-Care for Aboriginal Workers</b></p> <p>This 1-day workshop is designed to assist Aboriginal staff in developing skills to address additional cultural complexities and maintain well-being whilst working within a health or community services setting</p> <p><b>Course topics include:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increased understanding about trauma and its potential effects on workers</li> <li>2. Identifying Compassion Fatigue and its effects</li> <li>3. Increased understanding of the importance of self-care within the workplace</li> <li>4. Increased understanding around individual support requirements to address own care within the workplace</li> </ol> <p>*Please note: this workshop may be presented online</p>	

	<p><b>Managing Difficult Situations Workshop</b></p> <p>This 1-day workshop is designed to assist Aboriginal staff in developing skills to more confidently manage challenging situations that may arise in and outside of the workplace, in a positive and productive way.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Developing an understanding of personal values and their potential impact on others</li> <li>2. Identifying differing communication styles and personal reactions</li> <li>3. Learning about conflict and how to reach positive outcomes</li> <li>4. Gaining an understanding around assessing risk and implementing safe work practices</li> <li>5. Understanding compassion fatigue and its effects</li> <li>6. Developing personal skills to manage self-care when working with individuals and/or families with complex needs</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Spirit Dreaming Education and Training Solutions and Australian Family Group Conferencing - Mel Brown – Alstonville NSW based</b>  <b>** Ngunnawal woman living in North Coast – Doing significant work with Canberra Hospital right now around lateral violence.</b></p>		
<p><a href="#">ABOUT THE FACILITATOR   Cultural Training (aboriginalculturaltraining.com.au)</a></p> <p>0418 477 093</p> <p><a href="mailto:michael@spiritdreaming.com.au">michael@spiritdreaming.com.au</a></p> <p>PO Box 84 Alstonville NSW 2477</p>	<p><b>Lateral Violence Training - killing me softly 1 day workshop</b></p> <p>Workshop content and outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to Lateral Violence -</li> <li>• Understand specific laterally violent behaviours</li> <li>• Explore why we engage in lateral violence and where we have learnt such behaviours</li> <li>• How Lateral Violence impacts on Individuals, Families, community and organisations -</li> </ul>	<p>Sched 2.2 (a)(xiii) FOI Act 2016</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore how each person has been effected by lateral violence personally and within their communities and workplaces</li> <li>• Strategic Plans -Develop personal and professional plans either individually or in a group to address lateral violence</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Whats up with my mob – workshop</b></p> <p>What’s Up with My Mob workshop aims to address cultural realities in order to improve service delivery to Aboriginal clients and co-workers. This workshop will explores the issues related to;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Learning about the three major issues which impact on Aboriginal Peoples of today; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transgenerational Trauma</li> <li>• Lateral Violence</li> <li>• Trauma in Aboriginal Communities</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Identify and consider the actual and potential impacts of these issues upon Aboriginal Peoples.</li> <li>3. Develop the skills for managing clients and families who are affected by these issues.</li> <li>4. Learn about available resources to better provide services to Aboriginal clients and families.</li> </ol>	Sched 2.2 (a)(xiii) FOI Act 2016
<p><b>3 day Leadership workshop (this could be good for the committee)</b></p>	<p><b>Stepping Up – 3 day workshop</b></p> <p>A leadership program which aims to benefit Aboriginal workers moving upward into management positions.</p>	Sched 2.2 (a)(xiii) FOI Act 2016

### Day 1 - Welcome

#### **Pre-Skills Evaluations**

#### **Personal History**

#### **Resilience**

Participants to explore their strengths and learn how personal history's impacts on abilities to succeed.

Assessment of prior knowledge, personal wellbeing and workplace satisfaction.

Explore how personal history and experiences impact on ability to be successful.

Explore personal strengths.

### Day 2 - Strong and Deadly

#### **Tough Times**

#### **Dumping the Rubbish**

Participants to gain an in-depth understanding of their coping mechanisms, triggers and problem solving skills.

Engage in arts based activities to explore inner strengths.

Explore how participants manage difficult situations in personal and professional life.

Therapeutic exercise to disengage from destructive behaviours.

### Day 3 - Who Am I

#### **Magic Wand & Developing individual support plans**

Participants to consolidate their learnings to be confident in their skills and to create goals for both professional and personal uses.

Participants to engage in a therapeutic activity to find the best that they can be.

Personal and professional goal setting.

Create individual and professional support plans.

<p><b>Workplace Wellbeing</b></p>	<p><b>1 day workshop</b></p> <p>AIM - Explore how each individual impacts on other's and how this can affect personal, community and professional relationships and outcomes.</p> <p>This workshop is based on team building principles, exploring values and ethics, and how these impact on the way we view ourselves personally and within our workplace and communities.</p> <p>Team Building is an ever-evolving process which involves various types of activities to enhance social relations and define roles within teams, and is designed to improve the efficiency, and explore interpersonal relationship which effect the overall moral of a team.</p> <p>Our workshop is deigned to gently and respectfully explore and address a range of issues which effects teams who have undergone major changes, experienced traumatic events, changes of management or are working in isolation.</p> <p>This workshop is intended to improve personal wellbeing, team performance and client service by;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding and aligning the goals of the participants</li> <li>• Enhancing existing working relationships</li> <li>• Reducing participant's ambiguity in relation to their roles</li> <li>• Finding solutions to team problems</li> <li>• Understanding our relationships in our communities and with our communities</li> <li>• Understand the concept of lateral violence and it's impacts</li> </ul>	<p>Sched 2.2 (a)(xiii) FOI Act 2016</p>

Fun is an important component to this workshop, but the intent is productive, focused, and aligned with the Organisations goals for our training outcomes.

Our workshop will allow participants the opportunity to create solutions that are meaningful to themselves, the team and the organisation.

## Health and Community Services Directorate

<b>To:</b>	Director-General	Tracking No.: DBC-25/927
<b>CC</b>	Deputy Director General Children, Families and Strategic Reform Deputy Director General Implementation	
<b>Date:</b>	8 September 2025	
<b>From:</b>	Executive Branch Manager, Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs	
<b>Subject:</b>	Resourcing and authorising environment - OATSIA	
<b>Critical Date:</b>	30 September 2024	
<b>Critical Reason:</b>	To address continuously increasing pressures and risks identified in this brief.	

- DDG      .../.../...
- EGM      .../.../...
- EBM      .../.../...

### Purpose/reason

To advise you of the continually deteriorating position that OATSIA continues to face including inappropriate classifications and resources, authorising environment and structure within HCSD and the ACTPS; and seek your agreement to undertake processes to address these systemic issues. This brief is extensively detailed as matters have been repeatedly raised and now requires an understanding of the entire situation due to issues identified.

### Recommendations

That you:

1. Note the information contained in this brief.

**Noted / Please discuss**

2. Agree to the transition of cost-pressure positions currently in OATSIA's structure to permanent positions to allow for recruitment against critical functions.

**Agreed / Not agreed / Please discuss**

- 3. Agree to urgently implement measures to address cultural safety and cultural load as per previous requests from staff and in line with ACT Government commitments.

**Agreed / Not agreed / Please discuss**

- 4. Agree to undertake an independent review of OATSIA for sufficient resourcing, classification and span of control (in line with Mercer process), cultural load requirements and supports.

**Agreed / Not agreed / Please discuss**

Catherine Rule..... /...../.....

Director-General's comments
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**Background**

- 1. The role and functions of the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs as detailed in the CSD Annual Report is:

*“The Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (OATSIA) leads and coordinates policy reform across the ACT Government to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.*

*OATSIA is responsible for the development and provision of strategic policy, governance and advice to the Minister responsible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, and ACT Government on matters of importance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in the ACT. In addition to programs and policy frameworks, it is responsible for and provides strategic leadership, cultural expertise and strategic policy advice across the ACTPS to support the ACT Government to address local and national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community priorities as they arise.*

*OATSIA provides strategic oversight and coordination of the ACT Agreement and the National Agreement, including supporting the governance and performance of the ACT Government against commitments and outcomes within the agreements. This includes providing support for the ACT Government to participate in key national dialogues and governance structures such as the Joint Council on Closing the Gap.”*

- 2. The National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement) and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028 (ACT Agreement) were both agreed by the ACT Government and set the overarching policy framework for the

ACTPS to deliver outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This includes:

- a. Key targets and outcomes.
  - b. Transforming the way that the ACTPS works with the community.
  - c. Structural and cultural transformation.
  - d. Cultural capability and addressing systemic and institutional discrimination.
3. Discussions within the CSD leadership have raised the need to develop an overarching policy position on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs. OATSIA disagrees with this position as we fundamentally have the overarching requirements through the key agreements and legislation that we are required to deliver on. These include:
- a. The Agreement and subsequent reviews that relate to the ACT Government's delivery of these commitments.
  - b. The National Agreement and subsequent reviews that relate to the ACT Government's delivery of these commitments.
    - i. This includes the delivery of Joint Council agreed Policy Partnerships and Sector Strengthening Strategies, and all reporting required to deliver on the National Agreement.
  - c. The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body Act 2008* and ACT Government agreed positions in relation to the recommendations made under Section 10 of the Act.
  - d. The *Native Title Act 1993*.
4. In February 2023 Brendan Moyle commenced as the EBM for OATSIA. It was immediately identified that there were concerns around the structure, resources, classification and authority of OATSIA.
- a. This was raised with the former DDG and in commencement discussions with the Head of the ACTPS.
5. Concerns were raised by external parties including the Elected Body and members of the Coalition of Peaks that OATSIA and the ACT Government were not fulfilling the requirements under the National Agreement and the ACT Agreement.
- a. To address this, the EBM commenced an early review of the resourcing and structure of OATSIA.
6. On 20 March 2023, to address some of the immediate pressures OATSIA briefed you raising concerns about the functions and deliverables required not being supported through the staffing structure (DBC-23/235) (Attachment A).

- a. You agreed to the proposed structure which required a nominal increase in the staffing budget of \$210,000 per annum and one additional FTE. This structure saw two existing ASO6 positions reclassified to two SOGC positions with one additional SOGC position created.
  - b. In the comments, you noted *"I appreciate the revised brief and the smaller budget ask. Happy to monitor and have a further discussion on resourcing for OATSIA (if needed) once the new structure has been implemented and the team has had time to settle."*
7. In November 2023, the EBM emailed Senior Leaders identifying serious concerns about these issues and the blockages in progressing work relating to ACT Government commitments and the impact of this on his decision to apply for positions outside the ACTPS. An initial commitment to address this was made in December 2023 with follow up discussions to occur in early 2024. These never happened and the placement of OATSIA in a position with increased authority did not occur.
8. Further attempts to brief on the need to review OATSIA's operating structure (including appropriate resourcing, classifications based on established workload and work level requirements, and authority) were attempted including:
  - a. August 2023 IDC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs discussion paper which was removed without prior consultation with OATSIA. This cited the issues that were already being identified and reports at that stage. This has now intensified as the issues have continued to get worse and an increasing number of reports have highlighted these issues.
  - b. Briefing on business strategies and priorities across CSD throughout 2023 and 2024 including through governance structures.
  - c. Individual briefings to CSD Senior Leadership and Ministers on the annual timeline and workload for OATSIA in 2024 and 2025.
  - d. Risk management and psychosocial risk planning processes through November 2024, February 2025 and May 2025.
9. In November and December 2023, OATSIA co-led Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healing sessions noting the seriously increasing impacts on staff following community engagements and the failed referendum. Several significant issues were identified including:
  - a. The lack of cultural capability and cultural safety within CSD noting that the directorate is the ACTPS lead for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs.
  - b. The need for a culturally safe workplace including the provision of a cultural space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and business areas to be co-located and work together.

- c. The serious impact of cultural load on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.
  - d. The need for cultural debriefing and supervision to support staff.
  - e. The need for pastoral care events 'on country' to provide a culturally safe space for staff to engage and decompress.
10. Briefings were provided detailing support required in August 2024 (including a presentation to SBOM).
11. On 2 August 2024, evidence from CSD at Estimates was that there was awareness and work being undertaken to address the cultural load on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander senior leaders and staff.
  - a. The EBM subsequently raised serious concerns that this was not correct and that there was no support, and contrary behaviours which promoted a lack of cultural safety and capability.
12. OATSIA has repeatedly raised concerns that CSD did not have any active cultural integrity framework (such as a RAP) as required as a measurable under Priority Reform Three of the National Agreement.
  - a. Feedback provided was that CSD was still implementing the 2018 Reconciliation Statement, noting concerns that implementation had not been progressed and it had not been amended to align to ACT Government Commitments under the Cultural Integrity Core Focus Area of the ACT Agreement (signed in 2019) and Priority Reform Three of the National Agreement (signed in 2020).
  - b. Further feedback was provided by OATSIA that this was a serious risk for CSD in the lead up to the August 2025 Elected Body hearings as the Elected Body had pursued all directorates on their measures to improve cultural capability in the August 2023 hearings.
  - c. OATSIA did not receive support for this noting that CSD was the directorate responsible for leading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs which held significant risk for the ACT Government and ACTPS. This again highlights the lack of commitment to deliver on commitments, and the lack of authority that OATSIA holds in matters relating to the delivery of government commitments and those relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural capability.
13. Further discussions have occurred with Senior Leaders across CSD throughout 2025 in which these same issues were raised, along with concerns that there was no substantial or significant approaches to address these issues apart from some specific measures provided in CYPs and commencement of work in Housing.

14. The Cultural Transformation Branch from within OIRWS has been engaging with CSD Senior Leaders and OATSIA since early 2024 and have provided advice on the need for supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. OATSIA staff have not identified any outcomes from this advice.
15. Options relating to these issues, including the commitment to deliver a specific space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and business areas to work were raised in HCSD's evidence in the August 2025 Elected Body hearings.
16. Significant challenges have been experienced by OATSIA in delivering on ACT Government commitments as agreed through various ACTPS and ACT Government processes demonstrating a lack of appropriate authority to deliver on those commitments across CSD (now HCSD) and the ACTPS. This includes key bodies of work including:
  - a. Delivering on the requirements of the National Agreement and the ACT Agreement, including meeting statutory and policy obligations across Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs.
  - b. Progressing the implementation of the ACT Government and Joint Council agreed positions in relation to the Productivity Commission Essential Actions.
  - c. Progressing the development and implementation of ACT Government commitments relating to the development of Phase Three of the ACT Agreement.
  - d. Progressing the development and implementation of the ACT Closing the Gap Transformation Strategy.
  - e. Progressing ACT based approaches to Truth Telling in accordance with election commitments, Legislative Assembly agreed positions, and requirements under Priority Reform Three of the National Agreement.
17. Further issues identified by OATSIA staff include:
  - a. Constantly facing challenges and pushback, and at times flat refusal to provide data and information required to report on government commitments under the National Agreement (reported nationally) and the ACT Agreement (reported jurisdictionally).
  - b. Having to constantly redo work due to the lack of input from other directorates or areas within CSD (now HCSD).
  - c. Lack of internal commitment to deliver on ACT Government commitments, with behaviours demonstrating lack of awareness and accountability for the delivery of commitments across many business areas.

- d. Tokenism, particularly when OATSIA and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are used as the face of failures to deliver.
  - e. Lack of genuine engagement or willingness to develop cultural capability across CSD staff, and the impact on OATSIA who are often responsible for organising events which are used to publicly 'demonstrate' the cultural capability of the directorate.
  - f. Cultural knowledge and technical advice and expertise of highly experienced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff is often diminished and ignored. This has caused significant issues across various bodies of work as the approaches ultimately taken expose the directorate and ACT Government to risk.
  - g. OATSIA is the dumping ground for many requests that relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people but should be the responsibility of other business areas. Regardless that we have been told to push back, there is no support when we try to leave OATSIA then diverting already stretched resources to undertake work that is not ours.
  - h. Lack of any visible action against the issues and concerns raised by OATSIA, and often people refuting or dismissing concerns. Examples include concerns regarding the lack of action on Phase Three of the ACT Agreement, the Closing the Gap Transformation Strategy, Native Title, major cross-jurisdictional reforms, cultural safety and capability, and Truth Telling.
  - i. Lack of support to stabilise recruitment to critical positions within OATSIA from other business areas within CSD (now HCSD). This has left some staff with increased psychosocial risks.
18. These issues have been experienced multiple times across each of the areas OATSIA has been tasked to lead the delivery of ACT Government commitments. These issues do not reflect the capability within OATSIA and arise from structural barriers. Issues include:
- a. Insufficient resources to undertake the work.
  - b. Structural barriers and behaviours within HCSD and across the ACTPS that inhibit and at times intentionally block key bodies of work such as Phase Three of the ACT Agreement, reporting and Truth-Telling.
  - c. Lack of cultural capability and cultural safety within the agreed positions under the National Agreement, ACT Agreement, and ACTPS and CSD (now HCSD) policies and frameworks.

- i. This flows to the overarching lack of authorising environment across the ACTPS and the lack of support for OATSIA to deliver on the ACT Government commitments as evidenced through the blockages
    - d. Lack of authority within HCSD and the ACTPS to progress work or direct other areas and directorates in line with government agreed positions and legislative requirements which OATSIA is required to deliver on.
    - e. Compounding extreme stress and cultural/colonial load that continues to be identified with no or limited support or action to address in line with ACT Government and directorate policies.
- 19. The history of raising these issues includes no response provided, no action, and in some cases statements from Senior Leaders that they are having conversations but there is no follow up and no inclusion of the staff impacted.
  - a. This further exacerbates issues where it relates to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety and capability (in line with ACT Government commitments); and policies and programs in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are the technical experts. Yet discussions around cultural capability and cultural safety are led by and dominated by non-Indigenous staff.
  - b. This operates contrary to the intent of the following:
    - i. National Agreement Priority Reform One which states *“The Parties commit to building and strengthening structures that empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to share decision-making authority with governments to accelerate policy and place-based progress against Closing the Gap”* and Priority Reform Three which states *“Ensure when governments are undertaking significant changes to policy and programs that primarily impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, they engage fully and transparently.”*
    - ii. ACT Agreement Relationship Principles *“Respectful interaction with the community - People appreciate being recognised, listened to and understood. Relationships develop when we interact”*
- 20. Requirements to deliver on ACT Government commitments has continued to grow exponentially with the increasing pressures and requirements relating to the two Agreements, Native Title processes increasing, leading the ACT Government position on the failed 2023 Indigenous Voice Referendum, expectations to lead cultural capability development, and providing pastoral and cultural care and support due to a lack of consistency of these across the former CSD. Without structural change, this

unsustainable cultural load, significant WHS risks, and the perception that OATSIA is accountable for outcomes it does not control.

- a. Other jurisdictions have been actively building their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business areas reflective of the escalating requirements and issues identified in those reports, including the assessment of classifications of staff based on what their actual span of control and workload is (not creating new positions) and increasing resources and authority.
  - b. Based on feedback across the National Partnership, the ACT is the only jurisdiction that has chosen not to address this.
21. Multiple independent reviews have highlighted the structural and functional issues identified by OATSIA (and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leads across jurisdictions) These reports confirm that current resourcing, authority and governance arrangements are not sufficient to deliver on the ACT Government's commitments under the National and ACT Agreements. A summary is provided at Attachment B.
22. The issues underpinning these recommendations and findings create significant risk for the ACT Government and further compound the pressure on OATSIA to deliver against its functions.
23. In November 2024, OATSIA met with the Risk Management and Business Continuity Regulation, Assurance and Quality team and underwent a Risk Review.
  - a. This review was assessed and OATSIA was identified as requiring 'Focused Support'. To date no focused support has been provided to address the issues identified (Attachment C).
  - b. This was followed up in May 2025 where the number of extreme risks was increased due to deteriorating positions and trust between the ACT Government and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community (Attachment D).
24. In January 2025, OATSIA was contacted by Corporate Services with a draft psychosocial risk plan. This was ineffective as it identified tools such as the Cultural Load Matrix that was distributed in April 2024 but failed to identify any supports to address the issues including those identified in the Matrix (Attachment E). No further action was taken beyond OATSIA's feedback.
25. In May 2025, the ACTPS Machinery of Government Taskforce Report was published. It noted the serious issues and impacts that must be addressed in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and what was required for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff (Attachment B).
  - a. While the report identifies the critical need for a review and the lack of authority or time to progress this, OATSIA notes the ongoing serious concerns

about the operating environment and treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff have been raised for over two years. As such, many of these issues are now critical to the ACTPS' ability to deliver on ACT Government commitments and legislative requirements.

### Issues

26. The OATSIA leadership team have identified the following issues that are impacting on them:
- a. Lack of support or authority to ensure that OATSIA can deliver on its functions and role as detailed in this brief and various Annual Reports and other corporate documents.
  - b. Being held accountable across the ACTPS and broader community for ACT Government failures to deliver on commitments under the National Agreement and the ACT Agreement.
  - c. Positions requested in March 2023 were not provided as permanent positions meaning that OATSIA is unable to recruit to these for longer than 12 months. This creates backlogs for other areas where staff are acting in those positions, and additional pressure from those business areas to not extend arrangements exposing staff to psychosocial harm and OATSIA unable to deliver critical functions.
  - d. Critical functions are often reliant on one person within OATSIA. Examples include the development of significant reports which must be published under the National Agreement and ACT Agreement. This increases the risk of critical points of failure.
  - e. Lack of resources to cover critical functions continuing to expose the ACT Government to risk. This includes specific requirements under the National Agreement and ACT Agreement, and in response to agreed government positions on key matters.
  - f. Lack of compliance across the directorate with ACT Government commitments to cultural capability under the National Agreement and the ACT Agreement. It is noted that the former CSD is likely to have the lowest standards across the ACTPS as identified by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.
  - g. Deteriorating cultural safety and psychological impacts on all staff, with specific focus on the additional cultural implication on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

- h. Extreme workloads that continue to grow creating various psychosocial and physical health risks for OATSIA staff.
  - i. Lack of support addressing issues relating to Health and Wellbeing of staff, including the lack of any supports in response to various requests for assistance (verbal and in writing).
  - j. Increased Workplace Health and Safety conditions including physical, mental and psychosocial issues presenting in affected staff. This is increasing over the last 18 months.
- 27. When escalated through divisional and directorate governance processes, risks identified by OATSIA were downgraded and reclassified at a lower level based on the accumulated position. This diminished the seriousness of the issues continuing to be experienced, delayed and diminished the need for intervention, and contributed to continued exposure of cultural safety, Work Health and Safety issues, and reduced delivery of outcomes against ACT Government commitments.
- 28. Work pressures for OATSIA continuing to increase rapidly, driven by government commitments in response to findings that raise concerns about the failure to deliver against established government commitments; increased community expectations; and responsibilities that sit outside our span of control.
  - a. This has been raised by OATSIA for over 2.5 years with no resolution or support.
  - b. Without appropriate resourcing and authority, these pressures are unsustainable and place both OATSIA staff and the ACT Government at heightened risk of failure to meet obligations under the ACT and National Agreements.
- 29. While actions to address the cultural and colonial load impact have been put forward including cultural debriefing, a specific space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and business areas and the implementation of cultural capability requirements in accordance with commitments under the National Agreement and ACT Agreement none of these have been provided to OATSIA by CSD further compounding the issues being experienced and increasing trauma and psychosocial injury to staff.
- 30. Delivery of these would go some way to addressing some immediate pressures, however a structural review of OATSIA is critical to ensuring that the ACT Government can deliver against its commitments while also addressing increasing Work Health and Safety risks.
  - a. Noting the recommendation from the Machinery of Government Taskforce Report, this in its first instance should be a comprehensive review of OATSIA as an immediate action, including the following:

- i. Structural position within HCSD to increase the authorising environment to deliver on ACT Government commitments.
  - ii. Mercer review of current positions based on workload, expectations and span of control (as previously identified as an option by the CTB and OIRWS).
  - iii. Additional staff resources required as an interim measure to address immediate work pressures.
  - iv. The application of the Cultural Load allowance for agreed positions within the OATSIA structure (as previously identified as an option by the CTB and OIRWS). This should include retrospective payments based on the history of raising serious concerns and the load carried.
  - v. Demonstrated action to address cultural safety within the directorate, including addressing serious concerns of systemic discrimination.
31. This now requires immediate action.
32. The Cultural Transformation Branch within OIRWS has been consulted in the preparation of this brief noting advice provided by them to CSD during 2024 and 2025.

### **Financial Implications**

33. There is no additional cost to the transfer of current cost pressure positions to permanently funded positions.
34. To be determined based on the costs of appropriate classifications, structures and staffing numbers, and costs associated with remunerating and supporting cultural and colonial load.

### **Work Health and Safety**

35. There are significant and increasing Work Health and Safety Risks with the current approach. This has serious implications for HCSD and managers under Section 19 of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 – Primary duty of care*.
36. There are increasing reports of physical, mental and psychosocial stress being reported by OATSIA staff through various forums. OATSIA continues to experience growing issues relating to this over the last two years with increased unplanned leave, staff mental health deteriorating, and the EBM taken to hospital from work for a suspected heart attack on 6 August 2025.
- a. Issues causing this have been identified as per the brief above.

**Benefits/Sensitivities**

37. The review and appropriate structuring of OATSIA, including classifications and resources commensurate with functions, and strengthening of the authorising environment will help accelerate the ACT Government's delivery of key commitments.

**Communications, media and engagement implications**

38. Nil.

Signatory Name: Brendan Moyle Phone: MS Teams  
 Action Officer: OATSIA leadership team Phone: Ms Teams

**Attachments**

<b>Attachment</b>	<b>Title</b>
Attachment A	DBC-23/235
Attachment B	Summary of report findings and recommendations relating to the issues identified in this brief.
Attachment C	Email and November 2024 OATSIA Risk Profile
Attachment D	Email and May 2025 OATSIA Risk Profile
Attachment E	Email and OATSIA draft Psychosocial Care Plan

## Community Services Directorate

To: Director-General

Tracking No.: DBC-23/235

Date: 20 March 2023

From: Executive Branch Manager, Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (OATSIA)

Subject: Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs – Staffing Arrangements

Critical Date: N/A

Critical Reason: N/A

- DDG 13/4/23
- EGM 4/4/23
- EBM .../.../...
- CFO .../.../...

**Purpose/reason**

To seek your approval to engage additional resources within the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (OATSIA).

**Recommendations**

That you:

1. Agree to the proposed structure of OATSIA, which will require a nominal increase in staffing budget of \$210,000 per annum and one additional FTE.

 **Agreed**  **Not agreed / Please discuss**
Catherine Rule.....  ..... 15/5/2023

## Director-General's comments

*I appreciate the revised brief and the smaller budget ask. Happy to monitor and have a further discussion on resourcing for OATSIA (if needed) once the new structure has been implemented and the team has had time to settle.*

## Background

1. OATSIA is responsible for the development and provision of strategic policy, governance, and advice to the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs on matters of importance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the ACT.
2. This work includes, but is not limited to:
  - Oversight and coordination of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028 across the ACT Government.
  - Coordination of the ACT Government's commitments and reporting under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, including reporting, participation in the Partnership Working Group, support for the ACT Government's participation in the Joint Council, and development of cross-jurisdictional partnerships to support the ACT's implementation of the National Agreement.
  - Leading the ACT Government's commitments around the Uluru Statement from the Heart, including:
    - Voice – supporting external facing bodies lead discussions across the ACT in line with the ACT Government's mission to have the highest 'yes' vote in Australia. This will also require significant structural reforms to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander governance structures.
    - Treaty – there were previous discussions on this which drew concerns from community, with a forward action plan and policy position yet to be developed for the ACT Government.
    - Truth-telling – a policy position and forward action plan yet to be developed.
  - Supporting the Healing and Reconciliation Project currently being commissioned through the Healing Foundation, noting emerging issues and the need to strategically address these. The outcome of the project will significantly influence the ACT Government's work on Voice, Treaty and Truth.
  - Secretariat and support for the operation of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Representative Body (ATSIEB), United Ngunnawal Elders Council (UNEC) and the Reconciliation Council.
  - Genealogy project, responses to Native Title and claims of Traditional Ownership. This includes complex stakeholder engagement and management of issues emerging from the Supreme Court action and subsequent settlement.
  - Support for the implementation of Our Booris Our Way.
  - Management of languages funding, noting that there is no policy position on what the ACT Government's position is regarding language revitalisation in line with Outcome 16 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

- Delivering a purpose-build facility with the Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation to better deliver essential services.
- Support for strategic reforms to enable the growth of the Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) in the ACT.
- Community relationship management, particularly in the management of complex issues and the ACT Government's intersections with community politics.
- Providing cultural and strategic advice across the ACT Government on matters relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and community.
- Enabling functions in the provision of policy advice for other directorates.

### Issues

3. Work pressures continue to increase due to external drivers as OATSIA manages the ACT Government's intersections with the community. This has significantly intensified during late April and May 2023.
4. These pressures are further increased by commitments made through the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and the ACT Government's position on national agendas (Voice, Treaty and Truth). These will require significant structural reforms, including the development of policy positions and legislation which will need to be developed in partnership with other jurisdictions (under the National Agreement) and the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
  - This includes increased priority on data management and improved reporting through established reporting mechanisms and to meet commitments under Priority Reform Four of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.
5. In addition to these emerging pressures, OATSIA received the following feedback from external community stakeholders through the Auditor General's review into the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan. These highlight possible capability and reputational issues which are likely to affect the effectiveness and outcomes of OATSIA:
  - A lack of cultural safety in how ACT Government delivers services and consults with community, and for its own Aboriginal staff.
  - There is no relationship directly with the community and ACT Government lacks staff with lived experience of the community. A response was given which also noted an over-reliance on e-learning as demonstrating cultural competency.
  - ACT Government agencies trying 'not to do the wrong thing' in the face of divisions in the community leading to disenfranchisement and discord.
  - A view that consultation by ACT Government focussed on a small number of community stakeholders (ATSIEB, UNEC, those with direct contacts to ministers), and that these views may not be representative of the broader community.

6. Several structural issues have been identified which impact staffing and delivery, including:

- OATSIA has carried vacant positions over the last two to three years which has increased pressure. OATSIA currently has three vacant ASO6 positions which increases workload pressure on positions currently filled.
- The classification structure does not reflect the level of strategic work required, with cross-jurisdiction and cross-portfolio management of complex issues, strategic policy development, strategic stakeholder management, cabinet briefing processes, and legislative amendments/reform not able to be effectively addressed through junior officers.

### **Proposed Structure/Reform**

7. The proposed reform of OATSIA would see the following elements applied:

- Three streams would remain but be reconfigured to accommodate the following:
  - Governance (led by SOGB) – management of key governance structures (ATSIEB, UNEC Reconciliation Council) along with key projects linked to each of those mechanisms (genealogy, native title claims, Reconciliation Day, Boomanulla Oval, etc). This function would be focused on the delivery of our stakeholder projects and governance structures.
  - Whole-of-government and Reporting (led by SOGA) – leadership on government processes including the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement, development, and implementation of the ACT Government’s response to the Auditor General’s report, and an increase in the ACT’s data capability across Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servicing.
  - Strategic Policy (led by SOGA) – Closing the Gap support, leadership of the Gugan Gulwan and other capital projects, development and management of language policy, management of the Healing and Reconciliation Project to inform the process for Voice and Treaty, development of policy positions relating to the Voice and Treaty, structural and legislative reform to enable the reconfiguration of governance processes to enact commitments under the Voice, the design of alignment and management of policy with the cultural grants program, development and implementation of policy framework and cross-jurisdictional elements relating to Treaty negotiations, cross-ACTPS cultural policy and protocols.
- Each of these streams of work have significant levels of complexity, whether it be the development and implementation of policies and programs or the management of complex stakeholder relationships. Often, these appear as high priority and/or high risk for the ACT Government.

- The proposed structure would see two vacant ASO6 positions reclassified to two SOGC positions.
  - One additional SOGC positions would be created.
  - This would increase the strategic capability of OATSIA recognising the heightened level of work and stakeholder engagement required in line with the CMTEDD Structures Classification Standards.
    - Under these standards, SOGC positions work is undertaken at this level under limited direction as to work priorities and the detailed conduct of the task. The tasks undertaken may be of a complex or specific nature encompassing a major area of agency operations. This also includes undertaking involved research and complex project work on matters associated with the functions of a Branch/Division.
    - This is more conducive to the work of OATSIA.
  - Each stream would be given a SOGC to increase capability and capacity in line with these standards, recognising current pressures.
8. Another pressure within OATSIA remains the number of staff who are not permanently appointed to their positions. Of the 13 staff currently employed in OATSIA, ten (10) are acting in roles with eight (8) of these temporarily appointed external from the Branch. This includes:
- Two Aboriginal staff are acting in positions (one SOGA and one SOGB) that are owned by other staff.
  - Five Aboriginal staff are acting or temporarily appointed to positions, but do not own substantive positions within OATSIA.
  - Three non-Indigenous staff are acting or temporarily appointed to positions, but do not own substantive positions within OATSIA.
9. The proposed structure will still include six positions within ASO classifications, providing opportunities for entry level staff and growth within OATSIA. The structure will maintain approximately six (6) ASO classified positions which would remain responsible for secretariat and administrative work within OATSIA.
10. The proposed structure would see some of these pressures released, with the ability to appoint Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff into key roles as a priority.
11. CSD is currently running SOGB and SOGC recruitment processes targeted to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. These are being chaired by the Executive Branch Manager OATSIA, with the intent to finalise recruitment processes in June/July 2023.
12. OATSIA is identifying other processes which can be used to finalise the recruitment of ASO positions within the structure.

**Funding/FTE**

13. Specific consideration has been given to offsetting the costs of the proposed positions from the current structure. The deletion of two ASO6 positions will largely offset the cost of two SOGC positions, but the volume and complexity of work within OATSIA will not allow further reductions of staff to provide additional offsets.
14. The current OATSIA Staffing Budget is \$2.2 million.
15. CSD Finance have advised that the proposed new structure will require a budget increase of \$210,000 per annum from 2023-24.
  - This would increase the annual budget to \$2,410,00 plus 2023/24 financial year indexation rate.
16. OATSIA currently has a staffing budget underspend of \$226,621 in 2022-23. This will be used to offset the increase for the remainder of the financial year.
17. As per above, this will result in an increase in FTE from 15 to 16. This will comprise:
  - Three additional SOGC positions.
  - The deletion of two ASO6 positions.

**Consultation****Internal**

1. CSD Finance

**Cross Directorate**

2. Nil

**External**

3. Nil

**Work Health and Safety**

4. Nil

**Benefits/Sensitivities**

5. Nil

**Communications, media and engagement implications**

6. Nil

Signatory Name: Brendan Moyle

Phone: Sched 2.2 (a)(ii) FOI Act 2016

Action Officer: Telesha Newman

Phone: 6207 4427

## **Summary of Report Recommendations and Findings relating to the function of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs in the ACT**

### ***August 2023 - Audit Report into the Implementation of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement (No 6/2023)***

#### Conclusions:

- Governance arrangements to oversight the implementation of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028 have not been effective.
- Directorates are not yet able to demonstrate their ability to support self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. While most directorates were able to show how they consulted with, and took account of the views of, local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, their activities were on a small-scale and had only recently commenced.
- Performance management and monitoring arrangements for the implementation of the 2019 Agreement have not been effective.
- Reporting does not enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to hold the government to account for the implementation of the 2019 Agreement as it is not materially complete or faithfully presented.
- Two cross-directorate governance committees were established to oversight the implementation of the 2019 Agreement; the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs sub-committee of the ACT Public Sector Strategic Board; and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Inter-Directorate Committee. Neither committee has had sufficiently stable and consistent attendance by members since the commencement of the 2019 Agreement and neither committee has met according to the timeframes set down by their terms of reference.
- Each directorate has an implementation plan that documents its commitments under the 2019 Agreement. Despite these arrangements, a review of directorates' commitment registers found missing commitments and reported actions that did not sufficiently relate to the commitment on the directorate's implementation plan.
- The Annual Report on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028 was tabled in the Legislative Assembly in April 2020. There was a lack of structure to the report and it was not possible to accurately determine which parts of the 2019 Agreement had (or had not) been progressed. The report predominantly consisted of unstructured reporting of highlights, which does not provide a faithful representation of progress that has (or has not) been made.
- Directorates' reporting of their activities to implement the 2019 Agreement, as shown in their 2020-21 annual reports, did not provide a faithful representation of their activities.

#### ***14-16 August 2023 – Elected Body public hearings***

#### Recommendations:

- *Know your commitments*—Both the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement has specific actions and targets that need to be reached. Directorates are not yet able to demonstrate their ability to support self-

determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. While most directorates were able to show how they consulted with, and took account of the views of, local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, their activities were on a small-scale and had only recently commenced.

- *Work together*—the nature of the agreements are that there are contributions to be made by all directorates to all outcomes. Work with purpose and across directorates to achieve outcomes

#### Priority Reform One: Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision Making

- The examples that the ACT directorates supplied as examples of partnerships, do not meet the thresholds described in the National Agreement.
- The disappointing results around partnership and shared decision-making are echoed by the recent Productivity Commission Review which states, “persistent barriers to progressing the Agreement’s Priority Reforms are the lack of power sharing needed for joint decision-making, and the failure of governments to acknowledge and act on the reality that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people know what is best for their communities.”

#### Priority Reform Three: Transforming Government Organisations

- The responsibility for action and change in Priority Reform 3 is held by governments. At the ACT level, we see effort in some elements of transformation, however, there are some, particularly in the 'Identification and elimination of racism' (Clause 59a.) where both the understanding and action is not aligned.
- We need to see more commitment and action for systemic and structural transformation of the ACT Government and a willingness to improve accountability and respond to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
- These questions were provided to the Elected Body by community organisations who at times find some staff in identified roles lack knowledge of the local services, history, trauma and protocols and that has a detrimental impact on their ability to provide services to those who need it the most.
- Most importantly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not the cause of the issues arising from systemic racism in the design and delivery of government programs, and it is not their role as public servants to be the answer.

#### Priority Reform Four: Shared Access to Data and Information at a Regional Level

- All directorates as a matter of urgency need to build, adjust or utilise data that provides the ability to track progress against the agreement. The Elected Body also seeks from the ACT Government a data exercise to illustrate our current trajectory against all indicators, as well as modelling on what would be required against each to actually meet the 2030 targets.

#### ***February 2024 – Productivity Commission Review into the Implementation of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap***

##### Findings:

- Some governments have demonstrated a willingness to partner and share decision-making in some circumstances, however this is not observed more widely and, in some instances, there is contradictory practice. Governments are not yet sufficiently investing in partnerships or enacting the sharing of power that needs to occur if decisions are to be made jointly.

- There appears to be an assumption that ‘governments know best’, which is contrary to the principle of shared decision-making in the Agreement.
- The Agreement requires systemic and structural transformation of mainstream government agencies and institutions to ensure they are accountable for Closing the Gap and are culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including through the services they fund (Priority Reform 3).
- Governments’ efforts to date have largely focused on small-scale, individual actions (such as cultural capability training and workforce strategies to increase employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the public sector), rather than system-level changes to policies and practices (although some positive changes to Cabinet and Budget processes have been implemented in several jurisdictions, including by the Australian, New South Wales and Northern Territory Governments).
- Despite the range of accountability mechanisms in the Agreement, they are not sufficient to influence the type of change envisaged in the Agreement. The existing mechanisms lack ‘bite’ – they are not sufficiently independent, do not contain timely and appropriate consequences for failure, obscure the individual responsibilities of each party and are not informed by high-quality evaluation.
- As it currently stands, governments do not face timely or appropriate consequences for failure to meet the commitments they made in the Agreement. Decision-makers have not faced negative repercussions (timely or otherwise) for poor decisions, or for the continuation of similar practices that exacerbate, rather than remedy, disadvantage and discrimination.
- Where governments have behaved in ways that were contrary to the Agreement – for example, by imposing a program or service in a community without meaningfully engaging with that community, or by giving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations too little time to meaningfully respond to a request for consultation – the people, organisations and communities have no way to hold governments to account. The Agreement does not provide any recourse, and does not stop the program being implemented or the decision being made without meaningful input from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Departments or agencies with responsibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy have relevant expertise, but are often small groups within larger agencies, and may lack the necessary authority and influence to motivate other larger agencies to do what has been committed to in the Agreement.

#### Recommendations:

- Recommendation 1: Power needs to be shared. Relevant essential actions include:
  - Governments adequately resourcing the implementation of the Agreement - At a minimum, this should include additional resourcing for:
    - government organisations to implement the Priority Reforms
    - accountability mechanisms to oversee the implementation of the Priority Reforms and drive change.
  - Governments writing implementation plans more strategically, in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people - The Australian, state and territory governments should:

- treat Closing the Gap implementation plans as strategic documents (not as ‘laundry lists’ of current activities)
  - work closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners to agree strategies and actions that are substantive and critical to achieving the objectives of the Agreement
  - develop a clearly articulated theory of change that demonstrates how the agreed strategies and actions will contribute to the desired change
  - include the strategies and actions agreed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners in implementation plans, together with details of the funding and timeframe for each agreed action
  - ensure that implementation plans fully reflect the diversity of regional needs, cultures and governance structures in the jurisdiction (such as the unique needs, cultures and governance structures of people living in the Torres Strait)
  - report on every one of the agreed strategies and actions in Closing the Gap annual reports
  - update implementation plans when there are changes that affect the agreed strategies
- Recommendation Three: Mainstream government systems and culture need to be fundamentally rethought. Relevant essential actions include:
  - Government departments develop and execute a transformation strategy for the portfolio. This should:
    - have a clear theory of change
    - contain the evidence base as to how actions (both individually and collectively) will give effect to the committed change
    - be underpinned by an Aboriginal- and Torres Strait Islander-led assessment of its history with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and truth-telling to enable reconciliation and active, ongoing healing.
  - The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led assessment should also include an assessment of progress on other transformation elements, including institutional racism in the department; unconscious bias in the department and the department’s current approach to engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Once this assessment has been undertaken, each department should develop and execute a transformation strategy to address identified issues, and to implement the transformation elements in a coordinated, coherent and comprehensive manner.
  - Review and update funding and contracting rules so that they explicitly incorporate accountability for funders to abide by the Priority Reforms in commissioning processes.
  - Review and update Cabinet and Budget processes so that they explicitly promote, support and encourage the Priority Reforms.
  - Embed responsibility for improving cultural capability and relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into public sector employment requirements.

### **April 2024 – Elected Body public hearings**

#### Recommendations:

- *Improve collaboration within government*—More collaboration is required between directorates when trying to achieve outcomes. Each priority area of the Agreement is a broad issue that requires the engagement of more than one, and often many directorates.
- *Data analysis, reporting and insights* - The Elected Body notes that there are serious omissions in the collection, analysis, and availability of data for strategies and progress against the stage 2 directorate implementation plans and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement overall. The Elected Body is aware of work to coordinate both the National and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreements. However, more work needs to be done to establish sound data governance, collection, analysis and reporting practices across the ACT.

### **May 2025 – Machinery of Government Taskforce Report**

#### Findings:

- The place and role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and of functions which deliver specific services for or policy development in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has been a frequent topic raised during consultations (paragraph 53).
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are major assets for the ACTPS and the functions are a high priority for the Government. Areas of particular priority include work to increase cultural safety within the ACTPS and the work to implement the Priority Reforms set out in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. A number of staff expressed concern that they were not set up in the manner by which they could best achieve the outcomes to which the Government has committed (paragraph 54).
- This is clearly a sensitive and important topic with much at stake for the Government, the service as a whole and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and I have had neither the time nor the cultural permission to explore it fully (paragraph 58).
- The work of the ACT Government in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs remains vitally important and I recommend that the new Directors-General continue to engage with affected and interested staff on the best way to progress it. It may be that structural changes become valuable at a later time or there are other mechanisms to increase the focus and success of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agenda. My limited recommendations on this topic reflect the need to carefully work through issues in a manner supported and led by staff over a longer period and I would urge this to occur (paragraph 60).

### **June 2025 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Led Review of the National Agreement**

#### Key Findings:

- *Key Finding 1: The Closing the Gap architecture is broadly sound but is inhibited by inaction.* The architecture under Closing the Gap and the 2020 National Agreement is broadly sound and provides a solid framework supported by all Parties, but the implementation challenges identified in both this Review and the 2024 Productivity Commission Review reflect a deeper tension between fundamentally different worldviews: a state-centric approach grounded in settler governance structures, and a First Nations vision rooted in human rights, self-determination and sovereignty.

- *Key Finding 4: The cultural load is heavy.* The successes achieved through the National Agreement rely heavily on dedicated individuals and teams across the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments rather than any systemic approaches to delivering on commitments under Closing the Gap. Linked to this is the reliance of governments on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander public servants as bearing responsibility for government transformation.
- *Key Finding 6: Governments have yet to commence any genuine transformative work.* Governments continue with business-as-usual approaches that are inconsistent with their commitments under the National Agreement and are not yielding widespread impact. Government remains ignorant of the cultural side of transformation required by their own systems. Governments must look to structural reforms, improvements and power shifts as essential – there is mixed effectiveness, uneven influence, resourcing and power across the mechanisms of Closing the Gap and positive steps and outcomes are often the result of committed individuals and teams within government
- *Key Finding 7: Accountability and transparency are critical.* Accountability, and transparency is critical and must be introduced as a matter of priority under the National Agreement. under the National Agreement.

#### Recommendations:

- *Recommendation Two: Drive genuine transformation within governments through systemic and structural changes.* Realising the transformational intent of the National Agreement requires sustained cultural and structural change across all levels of government. The following recommendations lay the groundwork for more effective, respectful and enduring implementation.
  - *2a) Embed systemic change into leadership contracts and KPIs.* The commitments under the National Agreement must be reflected in the key performance indicators (KPIs) and employment contracts of departmental Secretaries and agency heads, and flow through to senior executives and relevant staff. Position descriptions and performance development plans should explicitly include responsibilities for progressing structural reform, upholding genuine partnership, and delivering the Priority Reforms.
  - *2b) Address the cultural load.* Governments must recognise and understand the unique burden placed on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander public servants who are often expected to carry cultural, relational and representational responsibilities on top of their formal roles. This includes addressing the emotional and cultural labour associated with navigating colonial systems while advocating for community. Agencies should co-design and implement specific supports and make sure workloads and expectations are realistic, not extractive.
  - *2c) Recognising First Nations' worldviews as separate from Western worldviews.* In their interpretation and implementation of the National Agreement, Governments need to undertake a cultural and relational exercise, recognising First Nations' worldviews as separate from Western worldviews. Greater interconnectedness and workable structures, particularly of those 'cross-cutting' areas, are urgently needed to guarantee the functioning of the Agreement reflects the lived experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

- *Recommendation Four: Implement the existing roadmap on monitoring accountability.* Strengthening accountability is essential to ensuring that implementation of the National Agreement is both transparent and transformative. Current approaches remain overly transactional and compliance driven. The following recommendations are necessary steps to redressing this.
  - *4b) Shift from transactional to relational accountability.* Accountability processes should reflect genuine partnership. This means investing in relationship-building, feedback loops, and two-way learning, rather than relying solely on bureaucratic compliance mechanisms.
  
- *Recommendation Seven: Action Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Governance principles.* Transforming data practices is central to achieving genuine partnership and self-determination under the National Agreement. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples must be supported to govern, interpret and use data in ways that reflect their priorities and ways of knowing. The following recommendations focus on the actions that are necessary to realise this.
  - *7c) Share data as a matter of priority.* Governments must share access to regional and local data as a matter of equity and in a timely manner to enable informed, community-led participation. Data access must also be used to empower, not extract from, communities.
  - *7d) Simplify and demystify data.* Priority Reform Four implementation must meet ACCOs and communities where they are. This means simplifying processes, demystifying data and building data literacy through education and culturally grounded support.

**From:** [Moyle, Brendan](#)  
**To:** [Vu, ThiTho](#)  
**Subject:** FW: FOR REVIEW - Branch Risk Register and Risk Action Plan  
**Date:** Friday, 12 September 2025 9:42:04 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Risk Action Plan \(November 2024\).docx](#)

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OFFICIAL

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**From:** Murcutt, Bianca <Bianca.Murcutt@act.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Friday, 29 November 2024 2:21 PM  
**To:** Moyle, Brendan <Brendan.Moyle@act.gov.au>; Drejer-White, Maggie <Maggie.Drejer-White@act.gov.au>; Faaumu, Latu <Latu.Faaumu@act.gov.au>; CSD, Risk Management <csd.riskmanagement@act.gov.au>; Hesse, Anica <Anica.Hesse@act.gov.au>  
**Cc:** Evans, Jacinta <Jacinta.Evans@act.gov.au>; Sanderson, Mark <Mark.Sanderson@act.gov.au>; Collins, Diane <Diane.G.Collins@act.gov.au>; Ingram, Melinda <Melinda.Ingram@act.gov.au>; Wilson, Brian <Brian.Wilson@act.gov.au>; Armstrong, Jennie <Jennie.Armstrong@act.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: FOR REVIEW - Branch Risk Register and Risk Action Plan

OFFICIAL

Hi Brendan,

Thanks for your email – as discussed at the workshop, some of the issues you raised are beyond the scope of the risk workshop and will require further discussion at Executive level.

I have reviewed and responded to your comments in the Risk Action Plan – can you please add in the additional information provided in comments as actions that can be taken by OATSIA to better manage the identified risks. The Risk Team is keeping a separate list of actions that are being requested/raised by areas outside of their control – we will be added your points about authority and specific cultural awareness training (among others) to this list.

We have noted racism and unconscious bias in the risk register as a source against some of the identified risks. Please note I have also sought your comment on some of the proposed controls – these are in red text.

The risk register is intended to record risks to OATSIA achieving its objectives – hence retirement and attrition have not been recorded as controls or mitigation strategies. I appreciate your point that these strategies may assist individuals in managing their own personal circumstances, but they do not help the Branch deliver services or achieve objectives.

Kind regards,

**Bianca Murcutt** *(she/her)*

Director - Risk and Business Continuity Management | Regulation, Assurance and Quality

Phone: <sup>Sched 2.2 (a)(ii) FOI Act 2016</sup> | Email: [bianca.murcutt@act.gov.au](mailto:bianca.murcutt@act.gov.au)

ACT Community Services Directorate | ACT Government

220 London Circuit, Canberra City, ACT 2601 | [www.communityservices.act.gov.au](http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au)



**I acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the ACT and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region. I acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.**

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**From:** Moyle, Brendan <[Brendan.Moyle@act.gov.au](mailto:Brendan.Moyle@act.gov.au)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, 27 November 2024 11:16 AM

**To:** Drejer-White, Maggie <[Maggie.Drejer-White@act.gov.au](mailto:Maggie.Drejer-White@act.gov.au)>; Faaumu, Latu <[Latu.Faaumu@act.gov.au](mailto:Latu.Faaumu@act.gov.au)>; CSD, Risk Management <[csd.riskmanagement@act.gov.au](mailto:csd.riskmanagement@act.gov.au)>; Hesse, Anica <[Anica.Hesse@act.gov.au](mailto:Anica.Hesse@act.gov.au)>; Murcutt, Bianca <[Bianca.Murcutt@act.gov.au](mailto:Bianca.Murcutt@act.gov.au)>

**Cc:** Evans, Jacinta <[Jacinta.Evans@act.gov.au](mailto:Jacinta.Evans@act.gov.au)>; Sanderson, Mark <[Mark.Sanderson@act.gov.au](mailto:Mark.Sanderson@act.gov.au)>; Collins, Diane <[Diane.G.Collins@act.gov.au](mailto:Diane.G.Collins@act.gov.au)>; Ingram, Melinda <[Melinda.Ingram@act.gov.au](mailto:Melinda.Ingram@act.gov.au)>; Wilson, Brian <[Brian.Wilson@act.gov.au](mailto:Brian.Wilson@act.gov.au)>; Armstrong, Jennie <[Jennie.Armstrong@act.gov.au](mailto:Jennie.Armstrong@act.gov.au)>

**Subject:** FW: FOR REVIEW - Branch Risk Register and Risk Action Plan

OFFICIAL

Thanks Bianca and team.

I have CC'd in Jacinta and the Directors for line of sight.

I note that some of the risk mitigation strategies and issues have not been identified in the documents including:

- Racism and systemic discrimination have not been clearly articulated. One of my Directors has again flagged this as a concern as we seem to try to dodge the challenging issues faced.
- Mitigation strategies including 'retirement' and 'applying for other jobs' does not clearly appear. While it appears somewhat tongue-in-cheek, these are actual real options for our staff given ongoing issues and concerns and should be at least recognised in honouring them. Unfortunately, I don't know how to articulate this appropriately.
- As per my comments in the attached, the ability to address the systemic high and extreme

risks identified by OATSIA staff (both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous) sit outside OATSIA's control. This either relates to:

- Staff supports and strategies which should be put in place across CSD.
- Cultural awareness and capability as required under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap which should be put in place across CSD.
- The authorising and operating environment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs.
  - This has been raised since I first came to CSD almost two years ago, but previous attempts to drive this through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs cross-directorate governance processes have been pulled.
  - This is now consistent with the requirements on the development of a Transformation Strategy required under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.
  - If finally acted upon, it will also address issues identified by myself and SES across the ACTPS, as well as the findings from the Productivity Commission (2024) which noted that *'Departments or agencies with responsibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy have relevant expertise, but are often small groups within larger agencies, and may lack the necessary authority and influence to motivate other larger agencies to do what has been committed to in the Agreement.'*

I have CC'd Jacinta Evans EGM Strategic Policy into this so that she has line of sight, and Jennie Armstrong EGM Corporate Services who is working with myself and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to address some of the significant issues that have been getting raised and were again raised in this forum.

I want to give a personal shout out to yourself, the team and Maggie for progressing this work as it is greatly needed.

Cheers.

Brendan

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**From:** Murcutt, Bianca <[Bianca.Murcutt@act.gov.au](mailto:Bianca.Murcutt@act.gov.au)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, 26 November 2024 5:04 PM

**To:** Moyle, Brendan <[Brendan.Moyle@act.gov.au](mailto:Brendan.Moyle@act.gov.au)>

**Cc:** Drejer-White, Maggie <[Maggie.Drejer-White@act.gov.au](mailto:Maggie.Drejer-White@act.gov.au)>; Faaumu, Latu <[Latu.Faaumu@act.gov.au](mailto:Latu.Faaumu@act.gov.au)>; CSD, Risk Management <[csd.riskmanagement@act.gov.au](mailto:csd.riskmanagement@act.gov.au)>; Hesse, Anica <[Anica.Hesse@act.gov.au](mailto:Anica.Hesse@act.gov.au)>; CSD, OATSIA Work allocation <[OATSIAWorkallocation@act.gov.au](mailto:OATSIAWorkallocation@act.gov.au)>

**Subject:** FOR REVIEW - Branch Risk Register and Risk Action Plan

OFFICIAL

Hi Brendan,

Thank you for your participation in the productive risk workshop we had last week with Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs.

Please see attached the draft risk register for the Branch and the proposed risk action plan. I have noted some controls in red in the risk register that we need further clarification on and added comments to the risk action plan for your review and action.

Could you please:

- review the risk register
- review the proposed risk action plans – and work with your leaders to add in the remaining details of owners, timeframes and how to check the controls are effective
- consult with your Branch to finalise information in the risk action plans

We ask for your response by Tuesday 3 December – noting that there is a meeting on Friday 6 December to discuss Strategic Policy Division risks with Jacinta. It would be preferable to have a final risk register and action plan by this date to have a better informed discussion of divisional risks.

We will also prepare the Branch Risk Profile for your review once we have received your response on the risk register and risk action plan.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

**Bianca Murcutt** (*she/her*)

Director - Risk and Business Continuity Management| Regulation, Assurance and Quality

Phone: Sched 2.2 (a)(ii) FOI Act 2016 | Email: [bianca.murcutt@act.gov.au](mailto:bianca.murcutt@act.gov.au)

ACT Community Services Directorate | ACT Government

220 London Circuit, Canberra City, ACT 2601 | [www.communityservices.act.gov.au](http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au)



**I acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the ACT and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region. I acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.**






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## Risk Action Plan: Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

<b>Risk Register TRIM</b>	
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Risk Ref	Risk Description	Current Controls		Risk Rating	Avoid/ Mitigate/Accept
2	Lack of funding for services	Setting parameters for funding (Grants) Writing concept brief		Extreme	Mitigate
<b>Further Treatments</b>		<b>Responsible Action Officer</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>How will we check that it helps?</b>	
Explore seeking more funding to support grants – business case Rediversion of funding		EBM	March 2025	Funding is spent Evaluation of community impact	
Seek access to Healing and Reconciliation Fund		 EBM	March 2025	Funding is spent Evaluation of community impact	
Risk Ref	Risk Description	Current Controls		Risk Rating	Avoid/ Mitigate/Accept
3	Lack of staff capacity and/or capability			Extreme	Mitigate
<b>Further Treatments</b>		<b>Responsible Action Officer</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>How will we check that it helps?</b>	
 Training		EBM		Increased staff capability	
 Prioritising workloads		Manager	Ongoing	Increased staff capacity	
Review internal process on individual PDPs		 EBM		Increased staff capability	
 Increase funding and FTE		EBM DDG		Increased staff capacity Increased staff capability	

		D-G Minister		
	Access CMTEDD Capability Framework and programs	EBM D-G		Increased staff capacity Increased staff capability
<b>Risk Ref</b>	<b>Risk Description</b>	<b>Current Controls</b>		<b>Risk Rating</b>
<b>Avoid/ Mitigate/Accept</b>				
4	Unable to build and/or maintain stakeholder relationships (internal and external)	1. Being proactive (regular engagements, being seen at events, engaging in community) 2. Conscious sharing of opportunities amongst candidates/community groups		High
				Mitigate
<b>Further Treatments</b>		<b>Responsible Action Officer</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>How will we check that it helps?</b>
	Alternative Officer to be involved in BAU (UNEC, ASTIED, ACTRC) – this also links to providing cultural security and occupational safety.	Registered secretariat and Director	ASAP	Provide continuity to bodies and Branch
	Running EOI processes	General staff and networks	Ongoing	Be able to source new vendors
	Attending cultural events while being paid to represent OATSIA	Any Officer	Ongoing	Number and strength of relationships with community increase Reduced level of complaints Increased trust from community
<b>Risk Ref</b>	<b>Risk Description</b>	<b>Current Controls</b>		<b>Risk Rating</b>
<b>Avoid/ Mitigate/Accept</b>				
5	Lack of access to timely, accurate and/or relevant information to support reporting (ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement Impact Statement, Dashboard, Closing the Gap Annual Report, Elected Body public hearings,	Set expectations		Extreme
				Mitigate

	responses to ACT Government requirements).			
<b>Further Treatments</b>		<b>Responsible Action Officer</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>How will we check that it helps?</b>
Accountability of data custodians		SBC/IDC	Ongoing	Committee updates
Seek to increase resourcing for data management? Resourcing both financial and human is increased		SBC	ASAP	Committee updates
<b>Risk Ref</b>	<b>Risk Description</b>	<b>Current Controls</b>		<b>Risk Rating</b>
6	Our staff are exposed to occupational violence	Debriefing Internal OATSIA staff support		High
<b>Further Treatments</b>		<b>Responsible Action Officer</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>How will we check that it helps?</b>
Removed/confidentiality on brief papers to alleviate the external/home factor		Senior management	Ongoing	Remove or replace the “action officer” on briefs
Debriefing to occur after stakeholder meetings to help staff talk about occurrences in the meetings		Senior Staff Staff attending	Ongoing	Fewer sick days Less time off work Documented instances Staff movements
<b>Risk Ref</b>	<b>Risk Description</b>	<b>Current Controls</b>		<b>Risk Rating</b>
7	Breach of data privacy and/or confidentiality	Education to improve awareness		High
<b>Further Treatments</b>		<b>Responsible Action Officer</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>How will we check that it helps?</b>

Tools and connections, better data systems – having the resources to have appropriate data tools developed to manage data requirements under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement.		Senior Director Data and Governance	Incremental	External Audit	
Risk Ref	Risk Description	Current Controls		Risk Rating	Avoid/ Mitigate/Accept
8	Insufficient data and reporting project management	Use of “Teams Projects” Project plans		High	Mitigate
Further Treatments		Responsible Action Officer	Due Date	How will we check that it helps?	
Training and development		EBM EGM	Ongoing	Higher level outputs Reduced time management	
Developing project plans and ensuring that OATSIA has appropriate authority to drive the implementation of them in accordance with ACT Government commitments and requirements.		Directors	Ongoing	Analysis	
Seek support from BTS in project management?		EBM	March 2025	Staff report increased confidence in project management	
Risk Ref	Risk Description	Current Controls		Risk Rating	Avoid/ Mitigate/Accept
9	Unable to meet legislative requirements	Seeking advice from SMEs Multiple briefings		High	Mitigate
Further Treatments		Responsible Action Officer	Due Date	How will we check that it helps?	
Effective engagement with Executive		BM Directors	Ongoing	Increased ability to meet legislative requirements	

Increased resourcing (as per Risk 3)		ERC	Ongoing	Increased ability to meet legislative requirements	
Increased authority and support for OATSIA Executive		Senior Executive	Ongoing	Increased ability to meet legislative requirements	
Risk Ref	Risk Description	Current Controls		Risk Rating	Avoid/ Mitigate/Accept
10	Loss of corporate and cultural knowledge	TRIM		High	Mitigate
Further Treatments		Responsible Action Officer	Due Date	How will we check that it helps?	
Staff development and training cross pollination of knowledge		OATSIA Staff	Ongoing	Branch survey Branch discussions and standup	
Staff recruitment		OATSIA Executive	Ongoing	Feedback form Executive and Minister's Office	
Funding for more staff and staff development – as per Risk 3		ERC	Ongoing	Feedback form Executive and Minister's Office	
Risk Ref	Risk Description	Current Controls		Risk Rating	Avoid/ Mitigate/Accept
11	Systems and processes are not fit for purpose			Extreme	Mitigate
Further Treatments		Responsible Action Officer	Due Date	How will we check that it helps?	
Explore Community co-design		OATISIA ATSEIB		Comparison to community outcomes and outputs	
Change systems when possible - Need buy-in and risk appetite with other areas - Negotiate and educate		Exec Leadership Cross Directorate OATSIA		Level of community engagement increased Performance against CTG Agenda	
Risk Ref	Risk Description	Current Controls		Risk Rating	Avoid/ Mitigate/Accept

12	Misalignment between stakeholders (bias and racism, lack of shared understanding)	Information briefs	Extreme	Mitigate	
<b>Further Treatments</b>		<b>Responsible Action Officer</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>How will we check that it helps?</b>	
	Mandatory cultural competency training	EBM	June 2025	Execs have greater understanding and support of First Nations staff Reports showing participation increase Attend contemporary educational events	
<b>Risk Ref</b>	<b>Risk Description</b>	<b>Current Controls</b>		<b>Risk Rating</b>	<b>Avoid/Mitigate/Accept</b>
13	Conflicts of interest (governance)	COI declarations Consultation with others for collection decision making		Extreme	Mitigate
<b>Further Treatments</b>		<b>Responsible Action Officer</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>How will we check that it helps?</b>	
	Enforcing existing policies	All		Reduction in cultural bias	
<b>Risk Ref</b>	<b>Risk Description</b>	<b>Current Controls</b>		<b>Risk Rating</b>	<b>Avoid/Mitigate/Accept</b>
14	Our staff are exposed to psychological/psychosocial harm (inclusive of cultural load)	Sub-Team meetings to check in and build rapport and trust Informal chats Cultural supervision		Extreme	Mitigate
<b>Further Treatments</b>		<b>Responsible Action Officer</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>How will we check that it helps?</b>	
	Managing harm/risks resources	Conduct team		Less insurance claims or risk of insurance claims relating to workplace health and safety	

			Greater retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff Building resilience/strategies Self-reflection
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**From:** [Moyle, Brendan](#)  
**To:** [Vu, ThiTho](#)  
**Subject:** FW: OATSIA Risk Review Meeting Outcomes  
**Date:** Friday, 12 September 2025 9:44:20 AM  
**Attachments:** [OATSIA Risk Action Plan April 2025 \(Risk Review Update\).docx](#)  
[image001.png](#)

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OFFICIAL

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**From:** Moyle, Brendan  
**Sent:** Friday, 13 June 2025 10:27 AM  
**To:** Dolan, Fiona <Fiona.Dolan@act.gov.au>  
**Subject:** FW: OATSIA Risk Review Meeting Outcomes

As discussed. There has been no real response to this (again) other than the risks will be progressed and filtered as part of the Strategic Policy Risk Profile, then up to the next level.

My primary concern is that the unique and real risks that OATSIA faces get watered down with little to no response as other areas do not face the same level of work or risks. Our primary risks come from the following areas:

- Sheer volume of work that we are responsible, with authority, classifications and resources not matching what we are required to deliver.
- Lack of cultural capability and cultural responsiveness, and cultural safety in the broader CSD and ACTPS. This continues to be documented through internal and external reports and reviews, but there appears to be little to no action against it. I have attached the CMTEDD What is Cultural Load Matrix which was distributed across CSD in April 2024, and the CSD Reconciliation Statement from 2018 as reference against this (however this predates requirements identified in the ACT Agreement and the National Agreement and much has not been delivered).
- Conflicts of interest outside OATSIA, which may be underpinned by a lack of understanding and appreciation of the issues that OATSIA is working through. This has seen various bodies of work not progress to governance structures at times, which has severely compromised OATSIA and the ACTPS in delivering on key commitments. However, the risk of this sits on OATSIA as we are seen as the ones who have failed to deliver and often wheeled out to fix it, still without authority and resources.
- Community pressures as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community becomes more agitated with the ACTPS over various behaviours, including the lack of delivery on commitments made under the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement (signed in 2019) and the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (2020) – this should not diminish or dismiss where pockets of good practice occur.

The underpinning elements are not feeling valued or recognised, being used as the 'token' or 'scapegoat' for other business areas failure to deliver, policy and program advice being diminished or dismissed but then being required to salvage it when this creates issues, and lack of cultural capability and cultural safety (internal and external).

I hope that this helps inform you about the underlying issues facing OATSIA which is now compounding our ability to deliver significantly increased workload (both complexity and volume).

Cheers.

Brendan

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**From:** Moyle, Brendan  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 20 May 2025 2:55 PM  
**To:** Faaumu, Latu <[Latu.Faaumu@act.gov.au](mailto:Latu.Faaumu@act.gov.au)>; Wilson, Brian <[Brian.Wilson@act.gov.au](mailto:Brian.Wilson@act.gov.au)>; Sanderson, Mark <[Mark.Sanderson@act.gov.au](mailto:Mark.Sanderson@act.gov.au)>; Collins, Diane <[Diane.G.Collins@act.gov.au](mailto:Diane.G.Collins@act.gov.au)>; Gordon, Nerida <[Nerida.Gordon@act.gov.au](mailto:Nerida.Gordon@act.gov.au)>; Ingram, Melinda <[Melinda.Ingram@act.gov.au](mailto:Melinda.Ingram@act.gov.au)>; CSD, OATSIA Work allocation <[OATSIAWorkallocation@act.gov.au](mailto:OATSIAWorkallocation@act.gov.au)>; Vu, ThiTho <[ThiTho.Vu@act.gov.au](mailto:ThiTho.Vu@act.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** Higgisson, Emma <[Emma.Higgisson@act.gov.au](mailto:Emma.Higgisson@act.gov.au)>; CSD, Risk Management <[csd.riskmanagement@act.gov.au](mailto:csd.riskmanagement@act.gov.au)>; Constantine, Will <[Will.Constantine@act.gov.au](mailto:Will.Constantine@act.gov.au)>; Greenwood, Myfanwy <[Myfanwy.Greenwood@act.gov.au](mailto:Myfanwy.Greenwood@act.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: OATSIA Risk Review Meeting Outcomes

Hello Latu,

I thought that I would reach out and see what the next steps are regarding the development of risk mitigation approaches. My primary concern is that the ongoing escalation of the risks identified in the attached documents without an appropriate response since then apart from the cultural load matrix (attached) distributed across SES in early April 2024 which has no structural response to.

I would like to acknowledge that OATSIA had a fantastic session with Anne-Maree and Jennie on Friday which gives some pathway through, but I am concerned with the increasing pressures identified during the session with the leadership team, that we have limited response and not clear pathway forward in terms of how CSD will support manage these given that eight (8) are now rated extreme and five (5) high.

Cheers.

Brendan

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**From:** Moyle, Brendan  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 23 April 2025 11:28 AM  
**To:** Faaumu, Latu <[Latu.Faaumu@act.gov.au](mailto:Latu.Faaumu@act.gov.au)>; Wilson, Brian <[Brian.Wilson@act.gov.au](mailto:Brian.Wilson@act.gov.au)>; Sanderson, Mark <[Mark.Sanderson@act.gov.au](mailto:Mark.Sanderson@act.gov.au)>; Collins, Diane <[Diane.G.Collins@act.gov.au](mailto:Diane.G.Collins@act.gov.au)>; Gordon, Nerida <[Nerida.Gordon@act.gov.au](mailto:Nerida.Gordon@act.gov.au)>; Ingram, Melinda <[Melinda.Ingram@act.gov.au](mailto:Melinda.Ingram@act.gov.au)>; Bennett, Taylor <[Taylor.Bennett@act.gov.au](mailto:Taylor.Bennett@act.gov.au)>; Vu, ThiTho <[ThiTho.Vu@act.gov.au](mailto:ThiTho.Vu@act.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** Higgisson, Emma <[Emma.Higgisson@act.gov.au](mailto:Emma.Higgisson@act.gov.au)>; CSD, Risk Management <[csd.riskmanagement@act.gov.au](mailto:csd.riskmanagement@act.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: OATSIA Risk Review Meeting Outcomes

Thanks Latu,

Please find the updated Risk Action Plan which better reflects the discussion across the leadership team and the issues that have been identified.

I am not sure what to do with the OATSIA Branch Risk Profile though as you may need to update some of the controls, or identify where controls have been identified but can't be delivered.

Cheers.

Brendan

---

**From:** Faaumu, Latu <[Latu.Faaumu@act.gov.au](mailto:Latu.Faaumu@act.gov.au)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, 23 April 2025 9:40 AM

**To:** Moyle, Brendan <[Brendan.Moyle@act.gov.au](mailto:Brendan.Moyle@act.gov.au)>; Wilson, Brian <[Brian.Wilson@act.gov.au](mailto:Brian.Wilson@act.gov.au)>; Sanderson, Mark <[Mark.Sanderson@act.gov.au](mailto:Mark.Sanderson@act.gov.au)>; Collins, Diane <[Diane.G.Collins@act.gov.au](mailto:Diane.G.Collins@act.gov.au)>; Gordon, Nerida <[Nerida.Gordon@act.gov.au](mailto:Nerida.Gordon@act.gov.au)>; Ingram, Melinda <[Melinda.Ingram@act.gov.au](mailto:Melinda.Ingram@act.gov.au)>; Bennett, Taylor <[Taylor.Bennett@act.gov.au](mailto:Taylor.Bennett@act.gov.au)>; Vu, ThiTho <[ThiTho.Vu@act.gov.au](mailto:ThiTho.Vu@act.gov.au)>

**Cc:** Higgisson, Emma <[Emma.Higgisson@act.gov.au](mailto:Emma.Higgisson@act.gov.au)>; CSD, Risk Management <[csd.riskmanagement@act.gov.au](mailto:csd.riskmanagement@act.gov.au)>

**Subject:** OATSIA Risk Review Meeting Outcomes

OFFICIAL

Good morning all,

Thank you for your time last week. As discussed, I have updated OATSIA's Risk Action Plan (attached) and Risk Profile (attached) to reflect changes to the risk environment and the ability to implement further treatments.

I've also included some commentary regarding OATSIA not being provided external (to OATSIA) support and/or the authority to make decisions/implement controls to appropriately mitigate risks that are increasing in consequence and likelihood for the Branch. Please let me know if I've misrepresented anything or missed any key points.

As mentioned, I'll be developing some reporting (of sorts) about emerging risk themes across the Directorate and I will hopefully be able to share that with you all as a demonstration of RMBC working towards using the risk information collected to advocate for change/improvements for CSD.

Thanks again for your participation in the risk review meeting and previous Branch risk workshop, it's always a pleasure to chat with you all.

Warm regards,

Latu

**Latu Faaumu** (*she/her*)

A/g Director | Risk Management and Business Continuity

Regulation, Assurance and Quality

Email: [latu.faaumu@act.gov.au](mailto:latu.faaumu@act.gov.au) | [csd.riskmanagement@act.gov.au](mailto:csd.riskmanagement@act.gov.au)

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**I acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the ACT and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region. I acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.**

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Risk Reference	Risk	Current Controls	Risk Rating	Avoid/ Mitigate/Accept
2	Lack of funding for services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Setting parameters for funding (Grants) Writing concept brief</li> </ul>	<b>Extreme</b>	<b>Mitigate</b>
<b>Further Treatments</b> <i>(additional actions to be taken to mitigate the risk)</i>		<b>Responsible Action Officer</b> <i>(who will ensure this is implemented)</i>	<b>Date Implemented</b> <i>(the date the action will begin and/or take place)</i>	<b>Evidence of mitigation</b> <i>(how will you know the action worked, e.g., decrease in complaints)</i>
Explore seeking more funding to support grants – business case, redirection of funding		EBM	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding is spent</li> <li>Evaluation of community impact</li> </ul>
Seek access to Healing and Reconciliation Fund		EBM	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding is spent</li> <li>Evaluation of community impact</li> </ul>
<b>Risk Review Meeting Update (April 2025)</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further treatments are unable to be progressed due to repeated blocking of funds and the current financial environment within the ACT.</li> <li>OATSIA have a comparatively small amount of funding and lack the support from CSD to source additional funding in order to deliver their objectives.</li> <li>OATSIA is currently briefing the Minister to redirect funding to support two key priorities identified by the ACT Government including an Indigenous Language Centre for the ACT and to progress Truth Telling.</li> <li>Risk rating remains Extreme</li> </ul>				

Risk Reference	Risk	Current Controls	Risk Rating	Avoid/ Mitigate/Accept
3	Lack of staff capacity and/or capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<b>Extreme</b>	<b>Mitigate</b>
<b>Further Treatments</b> <i>(additional actions to be taken to mitigate the risk)</i>		<b>Responsible Action Officer</b> <i>(who will ensure this is implemented)</i>	<b>Date Implemented</b> <i>(the date the action will begin and/or take place)</i>	<b>Evidence of mitigation</b> <i>(how will you know the action worked, e.g., decrease in complaints)</i>
Training		EBM		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased staff capability</li> </ul>
Prioritising workloads		Manager	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased staff capacity</li> </ul>
Review internal process on individual PDPs		EBM		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased staff capability</li> </ul>
Increase funding and FTE		EBM DDG		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased staff capacity</li> <li>Increased staff capability</li> </ul>

	D-G Minister		
Access CMTEDD Capability Framework and program	EBM D-G		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased staff capacity</li> <li>Increased staff capability</li> </ul>
<b>Risk Review Meeting Update (April 2025)</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further treatment 1, where possible staff are provided the opportunity for additional training by investment from within OATSIA.</li> <li>Further treatment 2, has been attempted however prioritisation is not possible when the work to be delivered is all a priority and the Branch often deals with significant competing priorities linked to the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement, the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, national emerging issues and reviews/reports, and political pressure locally based on government commitments.</li> <li>Further treatment 3, has not been progressed as there is not available capacity due to the workload OATSIA is given.</li> <li>Further treatment 4, same as Risk 2.</li> <li>FTE allocations and staffing structures remains an issue as work has significantly increased over the last few years but the structure and resources have not been assessed against this. This is not an issue isolated to OATSIA and has been compounded by the current recruitment freeze and ACT Government financial position.</li> <li>Risk rating remains Extreme.</li> </ul>			

Risk Reference	Risk	Current Controls	Risk Rating	Avoid/ Mitigate/Accept
4	Unable to build and/or maintain stakeholder relationships (internal and external)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being proactive (regular engagements, being seen at events, engaging in the community)</li> <li>Conscious sharing of opportunities amongst candidates/community groups</li> </ul>	<b>Extreme</b>	<b>mitigate</b>
<b>Further Treatments</b> <i>(additional actions to be taken to mitigate the risk)</i>		<b>Responsible Action Officer</b> <i>(who will ensure this is implemented)</i>	<b>Date Implemented</b> <i>(the date the action will begin and/or take place)</i>	<b>Evidence of mitigation</b> <i>(how will you know the action worked, e.g., decrease in complaints)</i>

Alternative Officer to be involved in BAU (UNEC, ASTIED, ACTRC)	Registers secretariat and Director	ASAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide continuity to bodies and Branch</li> </ul>
Running EOI processes	General staff and networks	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being able to source new vendors</li> </ul>
Attending cultural events while being paid to represent OATSIA	Any Officer	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number and strength of relationships with community increase</li> <li>Reduced level of complaints</li> <li>Increased trust from community</li> </ul>

**Risk Review Meeting Update (April 2025)**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further treatments have been implemented.</li> <li>The risk of deteriorating and/or broke relationships with Community has increased significantly and as such has been escalated to Extreme. This is often due to actions outside of OATSIA control with at times OATSIA either not engaged or advice not taken. OATSIA have continued to be put in a position where they, as the front facing Branch with ongoing relationships with community for CSD and in many ways the ACT Government, are the ones who receive the full brunt of the repercussions and backlash from actions or perceived positions of other business areas and directorates.</li> <li>The relationship with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community is continuing to deteriorate based on concerns that have been raised by the community (leaders, individuals, groups and ACCOs) amid ongoing reports raising concerns that governments, including the ACT Government are not acting in accordance with or delivering on commitments made by the government. This is also intensified by tensions within the community, particularly where there are allegations or perceptions of favouritism which has increased since similar feedback was provided as part of the community consultation undertaken in 2022 for the Audit Report into the Implementation of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement.</li> <li>Risk rating has changed to Extreme.</li> </ul>
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Risk Reference	Risk	Current Controls	Risk Rating	Avoid/ Mitigate/Accept
5	Lack of access to timely, accurate and/or relevant information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set expectations</li> </ul>	<b>Extreme</b>	<b>Mitigate</b>
<b>Further Treatments</b> <i>(additional actions to be taken to mitigate the risk)</i>		<b>Responsible Action Officer</b> <i>(who will ensure this is implemented)</i>	<b>Date Implemented</b> <i>(the date the action will begin and/or take place)</i>	<b>Evidence of mitigation</b> <i>(how will you know the action worked, e.g., decrease in complaints)</i>

Accountability of data and information custodians	SBC IDC	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Committee updates</li> </ul>
Seek to increase resourcing (financial and FTE)	SBC	ASAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Committee updates</li> </ul>
<b>Risk Review Meeting Update (April 2025)</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There has been some buy-in from CMTEDD with regards to the development of the Data Policy Partnership under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, this will be ongoing work.</li> <li>OATSIA continues to build overarching communication processes across all Policy Partnerships to support all parties as this was missing prior to 2024.</li> <li>Cooperation within CSD and across some areas of the ACTPS is lacking and it is difficult to get data/information that is timely, accurate and/or relevant. As a result, OATSIA must make do with what is provided and make adjustments after reports are made. This significantly impacts OATSIA's workload as administrative processes and resources are required to chase down additional information repeatedly for national and ACT reporting, with a lack of clear authorising environment meaning that OATSIA is unable to require areas to deliver information as required.</li> <li>The lack of systems and authority/governance to support OATSIA to access information/data compounds this risk. Reporting against the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement and some parts of the National Agreement highlight some directorates inability or resistance to reporting on agreed indicators.</li> <li>The lack of data and lack of quality in data remains an ongoing issue that OATSIA has raised and previously briefed the IDC and SBC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs on, with the Elected Body raising concerns about the lack of appropriate data in the 2023 and 2024 public hearings.</li> <li>Risk rating remains Extreme.</li> </ul>			

Risk Reference	Risk	Current Controls		Risk Rating	Avoid/ Mitigate/Accept
6	Our staff are exposed to and/or experience occupational violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Debriefing</li> <li>Internal OATSIA staff support</li> </ul>		<b>High</b>	<b>Mitigate</b>
<b>Further Treatments</b> <i>(additional actions to be taken to mitigate the risk)</i>		<b>Responsible Action Officer</b> <i>(who will ensure this is implemented)</i>	<b>Date Implemented</b> <i>(the date the action will begin and/or take place)</i>	<b>Evidence of mitigation</b> <i>(how will you know the action worked, e.g., decrease in complaints)</i>	
Removed/confidentiality on brief papers to alleviate the external/home factor		Senior management	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove or replace the "action officer" on briefs</li> </ul>	

Debriefing to occur after stakeholder meetings to help staff talk about occurrences in the meetings	Senior Staff Staff attending	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fewer sick days</li> <li>Less time off work</li> <li>Documented instances</li> <li>Staff movements</li> </ul>
<b>Risk Review Meeting Update (April 2025)</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further treatments implemented within OATSIA, there is no system or structure across CSD to support further treatments from outside of OATSIA.</li> <li>OATSIA has continued to put measures in place to support team debriefing and cohesion during intense issues and high workloads, however this is a consistent environment within OATSIA. OATSIA has continued to brief and request support from CSD business areas to address this issue throughout 2023, 2024 and 2025 noting that many of the required actions and treatments sit outside OATSIA's control or business functions, and align to CSD and the ACTPS' stated approaches to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment.</li> <li>Risk rating remains High</li> </ul>			

Risk Reference	Risk	Current Controls		Risk Rating	Avoid/ Mitigate/Accept
7	Breach of data privacy and/or confidentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education to improve awareness</li> </ul>		High	Mitigate
<b>Further Treatments</b> <i>(additional actions to be taken to mitigate the risk)</i>		<b>Responsible Action Officer</b> <i>(who will ensure this is implemented)</i>	<b>Date Implemented</b> <i>(the date the action will begin and/or take place)</i>	<b>Evidence of mitigation</b> <i>(how will you know the action worked, e.g., decrease in complaints)</i>	
Tools and connections, better data systems		Mark	Incremental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>External Audit</li> </ul>	
<b>Risk Review Meeting Update (April 2025)</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OATSIA doesn't have a large exposure to this risk, there are processes in place to protect data. OATSIA also sources information that can be shared so the "sharing/breach" of information would not be a risk.</li> <li>Training and/or more education about TRIM and its use would be beneficial.</li> <li>Risk rating remains High.</li> </ul>					

Risk Reference	Risk	Current Controls		Risk Rating	Avoid/ Mitigate/Accept
8	Insufficient project management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of "Teams Projects"</li> <li>Project plans</li> </ul>		High	Mitigate

<b>Further Treatments</b> <i>(additional actions to be taken to mitigate the risk)</i>	<b>Responsible Action Officer</b> <i>(who will ensure this is implemented)</i>	<b>Date Implemented</b> <i>(the date the action will begin and/or take place)</i>	<b>Evidence of mitigation</b> <i>(how will you know the action worked, e.g., decrease in complaints)</i>
Training and development	EBM EGM	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Higher level outputs</li> <li>Reduced time management</li> </ul>
Developing project plans	Director	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further treatments not fully implemented.</li> <li>Due to limited time and resourcing along with ongoing high pressure workloads, OATSIA are unable to document processes for project management (e.g., SOPs, project plans). Work progresses on the development of these where possible and resources and timing permit – for example the Reconciliation Day Event which did not have any information prior to 2024.</li> <li>Risk rating remains High</li> </ul>			

<b>Risk Reference</b>	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Current Controls</b>	<b>Risk Rating</b>	<b>Avoid/Mitigate/Accept</b>
9	Unable to meet legislative requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeking advice from SMEs</li> <li>Multiple briefings</li> </ul>	<b>High</b>	<b>Mitigate</b>
<b>Further Treatments</b> <i>(additional actions to be taken to mitigate the risk)</i>		<b>Responsible Action Officer</b> <i>(who will ensure this is implemented)</i>	<b>Date Implemented</b> <i>(the date the action will begin and/or take place)</i>	<b>Evidence of mitigation</b> <i>(how will you know the action worked, e.g., decrease in complaints)</i>
Effective engagement with Executive		BM Directors	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased ability to meet legislative requirements</li> </ul>
Increased resourcing (as per Risk 3)		ERC	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased ability to meet legislative requirements</li> </ul>
Increased authority and support for OATSIA Executive		Senior Executive	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased ability to meet legislative requirements</li> </ul>
<b>Risk Review Meeting Update (April 2025)</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further treatments have not been fully implemented. OATSIA continues to brief on legislative requirements and legal issues.</li> <li>OATSIA continues to engage with Executive both verbally and through briefing processes noting the expertise required to understand and respond to many of the issues that are identified within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs space.</li> <li>This risk relies on people and processes (outside of OATSIA) rather than processes to be mitigated effectively at this point.</li> </ul>				

- Risk rating remains High

Risk Reference	Risk	Current Controls		Risk Rating	Avoid/ Mitigate/Accept
10	Loss of corporate and cultural knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TRIM</li> </ul>		High	Mitigate
<b>Further Treatments</b> <i>(additional actions to be taken to mitigate the risk)</i>		<b>Responsible Action Officer</b> <i>(who will ensure this is implemented)</i>	<b>Date Implemented</b> <i>(the date the action will begin and/or take place)</i>	<b>Evidence of mitigation</b> <i>(how will you know the action worked, e.g., decrease in complaints)</i>	
Staff development and training cross pollination of knowledge		OATSIA Staff	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Branch survey</li> <li>• Branch discussions and standup</li> </ul>	
Staff recruitment		OATSIA Executive	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback form Executive and Minister's Office</li> </ul>	
Funding for more staff and staff development – as per Risk 3		ERC	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback form Executive and Minister's Office</li> </ul>	
<b>Risk Review Meeting Update (April 2025)</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further treatments have not been implemented. The recruitment pause impacts the ability to manage temp staff arrangements.</li> <li>• Ongoing extreme workloads, lack of authorising environment to deliver on government positions and commitments, and high to extreme cultural load continue to put pressure on OATSIA staff. This and the lack of appropriate supports and at times a lack of understanding or appreciation of the issues OATSIA is facing, along with questionable cultural capability and responsiveness of some staff responsible for supports means that many staff are seeing leaving OATSIA and the ACTPS as the only option. This continues the rating as high as this will result in a significant loss of corporate and cultural knowledge, community connections and cultural capability, and expertise in a highly specialised policy and program area.</li> <li>• Risk rating remains High</li> </ul>					

Risk Reference	Risk	Current Controls	Risk Rating	Avoid/ Mitigate/Accept
11	Systems and processes are not fit for purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	Extreme	Mitigate

<b>Further Treatments</b> <i>(additional actions to be taken to mitigate the risk)</i>	<b>Responsible Action Officer</b> <i>(who will ensure this is implemented)</i>	<b>Date Implemented</b> <i>(the date the action will begin and/or take place)</i>	<b>Evidence of mitigation</b> <i>(how will you know the action worked, e.g., decrease in complaints)</i>
Explore Community co-design	OATISIA ATSEIB		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comparison to community outcomes and outputs</li> </ul>
Change systems when possible <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need buy-in and risk appetite with other areas</li> <li>Negotiate and educate</li> </ul>	Exec Leadership Cross Directorate OATISIA		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level of community engagement increased</li> <li>Performance against CTG Agenda</li> </ul>
<b>Risk Review Meeting Update (April 2025)</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further treatments cannot be implemented. The authority for OATISIA to make and implement decisions has not been provided. This has seen work progress and then stop due to the lack of support from other business areas and directorates, regardless of executive approval, and at times SBC approval and government positions.</li> <li>The lack of resources against the volume and complexity of work continue to place pressures on staffing structures, which is further complicated when work is stopped due to the issues noted above then has to be restarted.</li> <li>This risk relies on people (outside of OATISIA) rather than processes to be mitigated effectively at this point.</li> <li>Risk rating remains Extreme</li> </ul>			

<b>Risk Reference</b>	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Current Controls</b>	<b>Risk Rating</b>	<b>Avoid/ Mitigate/Accept</b>
<b>12</b>	Misalignment between stakeholders (bias and racism, lack of shared understanding)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information briefs</li> </ul>	<b>Extreme</b>	<b>Mitigate</b>
<b>Further Treatments</b> <i>(additional actions to be taken to mitigate the risk)</i>		<b>Responsible Action Officer</b> <i>(who will ensure this is implemented)</i>	<b>Date Implemented</b> <i>(the date the action will begin and/or take place)</i>	<b>Evidence of mitigation</b> <i>(how will you know the action worked, e.g., decrease in complaints)</i>
Mandatory cultural competency training – tried to activate has been shut down – it’s a commitment under		EBM	June 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Execs have greater understanding and support of First Nations staff</li> <li>Reports showing participation increase</li> <li>Attend contemporary educational events</li> </ul>

### Risk Review Meeting Update (April 2025)

- Further treatment was attempted by OATSIA, but it wasn't full supported/endorsed to be able to implement (outside of OATSIA).
- Aboriginal staff do not feel trusted or recognised for their capabilities outside of their connect to the Aboriginal Community and subject matter. As a result, Aboriginal staff are undermined and/or their contributions are diminished as they continue to be second guessed.
- There remains an ongoing concerns about the lack of cultural capability and competence within some business areas and directorates that OATSIA is required to engage with, often demonstrated through unconscious bias, repeated inappropriate and culturally insensitive comments, and apparent doubting of expert advice provided by staff with extensive experience.
- This is further compounded by the lack of systems or structures that have actively supported the building of cultural capability in line with commitments under the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement and the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, with the lack of compliance for this often defended by non-Indigenous staff in front of Aboriginal staff further raising concerns about a lack of cultural safety.
- Cultural safety under the National Agreement is defined as about overcoming the power imbalances of places, people and policies that occur between the majority non-Indigenous position and the minority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person so that there is no assault, challenge or denial of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person's identity, of who they are and what they need. Cultural safety is met through actions from the majority position which recognise, respect, and nurture the unique cultural identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Only the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person who is recipient of a service or interaction can determine whether it is culturally safe.
- Risk rating remains Extreme

Risk Reference	Risk	Current Controls		Risk Rating	Avoid/ Mitigate/Accept
13	Conflicts of interest (government)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COI declarations</li> <li>• Consultation with others for collective decision making</li> </ul>		<b>Extreme</b>	<b>Mitigate</b>
<b>Further Treatments</b> <i>(additional actions to be taken to mitigate the risk)</i>		<b>Responsible Action Officer</b> <i>(who will ensure this is implemented)</i>	<b>Date Implemented</b> <i>(the date the action will begin and/or take place)</i>	<b>Evidence of mitigation</b> <i>(how will you know the action worked, e.g., decrease in complaints)</i>	
Enforcing existing policies		All		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in cultural bias</li> </ul>	
Risk Review Meeting Update (April 2025)					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internally OATSIA manage their conflicts of interest well.</li> </ul>					

- More broadly, CSD are impacted by conflicts of interest, their own or others, which influence how decisions are being made. This then goes on to impact the work of OATSIA as work in line with government directions or commitments has not been supported due to perceived conflicts.
- There is an unfair influence because of OATSIA's position as part of CSD, as well as a lack of authority for OATSIA to make decisions instead of Executive.
- Risk rating remains Extreme

Risk Reference	Risk	Current Controls		Risk Rating	Avoid/ Mitigate/Accept
14	Our staff are exposed to and/or experience psychological/psychosocial harm (inclusive of cultural load)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sub-Team meetings to check in and build rapport and trust</li> <li>• Informal chats</li> <li>• Cultural supervision</li> </ul>		Extreme	Mitigate
<b>Further Treatments</b> <i>(additional actions to be taken to mitigate the risk)</i>		<b>Responsible Action Officer</b> <i>(who will ensure this is implemented)</i>	<b>Date Implemented</b> <i>(the date the action will begin and/or take place)</i>	<b>Evidence of mitigation</b> <i>(how will you know the action worked, e.g., decrease in complaints)</i>	
Managing harm/risks resources		Conduct team		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less insurance claims</li> <li>• Building resilience/strategies</li> <li>• Self-reflection</li> </ul>	
<b>Risk Review Meeting Update (April 2025)</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further treatments for this risk are beyond the control of OATSIA. OATSIA continue to report, manage and mitigate as much as they can, however when escalated the information they provide to PCC is not followed up on. The authorising environment is not within OATSIA so they are limited/restricted by what they can do to further support their team.</li> <li>• This continues to increase significantly due to internal and external pressures, with OATSIA wearing the brunt of expectations for failure to deliver on government commitments outside of staff control yet then being directed to support other business areas and directorates respond to reports and community concerns about real or perceived failures.</li> <li>• The pressure to deliver aligns with the ACT Government's commitments under the Cultural Integrity Core Focus Area and Priority Reform Three (National Agreement) transformation elements including identify and eliminate institutional racism, discrimination and unconscious bias; embed and practice meaningful cultural safety; and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.</li> <li>• OATSIA has continued to ask for support verbally and in writing during 2023, 2024 and 2025 but supports have not been provided yet.</li> <li>• More needs to be done to support staff who already identify that the consequence of this risk is catastrophic.</li> </ul>					

- Risk rating remains Extreme

**From:** [Moyle, Brendan](#)  
**To:** [Vu, ThiTho](#)  
**Subject:** FW: DRAFT - psychosocial risk assessment  
**Date:** Friday, 12 September 2025 9:42:55 AM  
**Attachments:** [CSD-HR-SW-009 Risk Assessment Form - meeting with Brendan Moyle 20250107.docx](#)  
[Draft Cultural Care Plans for your feedback .msg](#)

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OFFICIAL: Sensitive - Personal Privacy

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**From:** Moyle, Brendan  
**Sent:** Friday, 10 January 2025 2:35 PM  
**To:** Greenwood, Myfanwy <Myfanwy.Greenwood@act.gov.au>  
**Cc:** Armstrong, Jennie <Jennie.Armstrong@act.gov.au>; CSD, OATSIA Work allocation <OATSIAWorkallocation@act.gov.au>; George, Natalee <Natalee.George@act.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: DRAFT - psychosocial risk assessment

Thanks Myfanwy,

I have added some additional examples and many comments against the proposed document. My primary concern is that the risk mitigation strategies really have no tangible delivery or accountability. The ones referred to and include:

- The risks didn't capture all of the risks. I have made some additions to this to better capture these things.
- The risk mitigation strategies are not strategies or are not culturally appropriate.
  - The citing of the Cultural Load Matrix offers no benefit without strategies to implement the supports/responses identified in that matrix. To date, CSD has not offered much if any supports in line with those. I personally have only really received support from the Cultural Transformation Branch in relation to the impact of cultural load.
  - EAP is not culturally appropriate as identified by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. The work from Nova and I was developed to address this gap.
  - Yarning Brew is a staff networking mechanism not as a risk strategy to deal with Cultural Load. It cannot be used to address cultural load as it has no structural response. If you read the Cultural Load Matrix it clearly articulates key responses based on the level of cultural load. These are not systemised, and this is something that needs to happen given that OATSIA deals with cultural load in the Extreme range.
- Further clarity is required on accountability given I have continued to raise these issues over almost two years which has largely fallen on deaf ears. When I have tried to escalate issues or raise them with the appropriate business areas I often fail to get any response, told that there is nothing that can be done (regardless where at times I have identified significant WHS and community politics), or I have been told to follow processes that are not relevant or applicable to the cultural construct of what my staff and I have been confronted with.
- While the document now somewhat identifies some of the key risks, it does not include

any formulated strategies to address them. Until CSD has clear frameworks and responses to them, the risks will not be mitigated.

I have attached an email from Nat George (and CC'd her in) in which she has sent me a draft cultural care plan which more effectively maps these things out. However, without clear accountability and systems based responses embedded within CSD's structure the issues will not change.

Cheers.

Brendan

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**From:** Greenwood, Myfanwy <[Myfanwy.Greenwood@act.gov.au](mailto:Myfanwy.Greenwood@act.gov.au)>

**Sent:** Thursday, 9 January 2025 3:36 PM

**To:** Moyle, Brendan <[Brendan.Moyle@act.gov.au](mailto:Brendan.Moyle@act.gov.au)>

**Cc:** Armstrong, Jennie <[Jennie.Armstrong@act.gov.au](mailto:Jennie.Armstrong@act.gov.au)>

**Subject:** DRAFT - psychosocial risk assessment

OFFICIAL: Sensitive - Personal Privacy

Hi Brendan

Thanks for your time on Tuesday. I have captured what I took from the conversation and have added this into the attached draft risk assessment. I have also added in some additional information regarding current controls. However, I would appreciate you reviewing and adding in any additional information that we didn't get to cover or amend anything you believe hasn't been captured correctly.

I have deliberately left the risk ratings blank at this stage, as I would like to focus on the detail of the risks/hazards. Once you are satisfied with the detail, I will then work through the risk ratings.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to me.

Regards

Myfanwy Greenwood (she/her) | Executive Branch Manager - People, Capability and Culture

Community Services Directorate | **ACT Government**

**Phone 02 6205 8496** Level 3, 220 London Circuit, Canberra City | GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601 |

*I acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the ACT and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region. I acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.*

## Hazard and workplace details

<b>Risk assessment number:</b> Business unit name/year/consecutive number		<b>Date of Assessment:</b>	7 January 2025
<b>Subject of assessment:</b>	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff/OATSIA		
<b>Description of the area where the activity is performed:</b>			
<b>Is this a generic risk assessment?</b>	No		
<b>Is this a review of an existing risk assessment?</b> If so what was the date of the last risk assessment?	No		
<b>Context:</b> Describe the context in which the <u>task, function, or activity</u> is being undertaken and any factors that have a bearing on the likelihood or consequence of potential harms to people. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When is the activity undertaken? (date/time)</li> <li>• Is it part of a larger task or function?</li> <li>• Are there environmental factors (such as extreme heat or visibility issues)?</li> <li>• Is the activity undertaken in teams?</li> <li>• Are there distractions or other demands that occur during the activity (for example it occurs in a public place)</li> </ul>			
<b>Name or names of people undertaking the risk assessment and their roles in the workplace</b> (For example, supervisor, operator, health and safety advisor)	Brendan Moyle, Executive Branch Manager OATSIA Jennie Armstrong, Executive Group Manager Corporate Myfanwy Greenwood, Executive Branch Manager PCC		
<b>Business unit/s to which the risk assessment applies:</b>	OATSIA		
<b>Additional stakeholder consulted:</b>	TBC		
<b>Name of Health and Safety Representative consulted:</b>	TBC		

## Step 1 – Risk assessment

Category of risk <sup>1</sup>  Refer to the ACTIA Risk Matrix	Description of hazard	Impact/Outcome  What will be the outcome or effect, if what can happen does happen?  What will be the Impact on the business objectives. Impact from the event happening. (Consequence)	Risk Owner  The officer responsible for managing the risk	Hierarchy of Control considered*	List the risk control(s) (preferably in the order of hierarchy) for the hazard	Risk Rating			Further Treatment Required? (Y/N)  If Yes, proceed to step 2
						Likelihood	Consequence	Level of Risk? (Low, Medium, High, Extreme )	
Choose an item.	Occupational Violence. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aggression directed towards staff</li> <li>CSD Business processes not being culturally capable increasing risks of aggression and violence.</li> <li>Cultural and lateral violence in community.</li> <li>Unconscious bias and micro-aggressions in CSCD and ACTPS processes and behaviours.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff leaving CSD and ACTPS</li> <li>Psychological injury (workers' compensation)</li> <li>Physical assault</li> <li>Psychosocial and cultural distress impacting staff wellbeing and workforce capability.</li> <li>Loss of skills, experience and connections required to deliver on required functions.</li> <li>Inability of OATSIA, CSD and the ACTPS to deliver on government requirements and commitments.</li> </ul>		Choose an item.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Critical Incident Policy and Procedure</li> <li>Workplace Protection Orders Procedure</li> <li>EAP (wellbeing)</li> <li>Cultural Load – Guide for managers and supervisors</li> </ul>				Yes

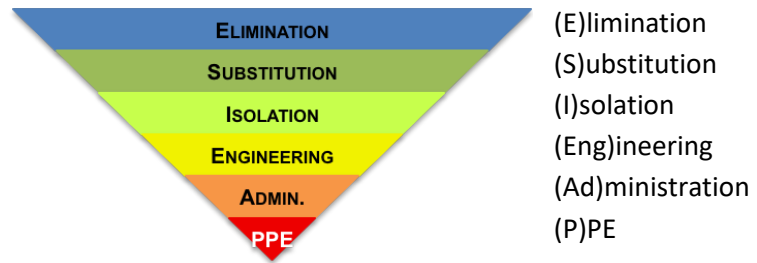
<sup>1</sup> Business operations, Service delivery, Compliance/regulation, Cultural & heritage, Financial, Natural environment, People injures (physical & psychological), Reputation & image, Emergency/disaster management (social impact), Emergency/disaster management (community/people impact).

Category of risk <sup>1</sup>  Refer to the ACTIA Risk Matrix	Description of hazard	Impact/Outcome  What will be the outcome or effect, if what can happen does happen?  What will be the Impact on the business objectives. Impact from the event happening. (Consequence)	Risk Owner  The officer responsible for managing the risk	Hierarchy of Control considered*	List the risk control(s) (preferably in the order of hierarchy) for the hazard	Risk Rating  Rating with controls in place			Further Treatment Required? (Y/N)  If Yes, proceed to step 2
						Likelihood	Consequence	Level of Risk? (Low, Medium, High, Extreme)	
Choose an item.	<p>Psychosocial risk/harm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resourcing</li> <li>Authorising environment</li> <li>Those with the authority to make decisions/take action, do not act.</li> <li>Lack of supports (psychological and cultural)</li> <li>Feelings of being attacked, ignored and undermined</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff leaving CSD and ACTPS</li> <li>Psychological injury (workers' compensation)</li> <li>Loss of skills, experience and connections required to deliver on required functions.</li> <li>Inability of OATSIA, CSD and the ACTPS to deliver on government requirements and commitments.</li> </ul>		Choose an item.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Critical Incident Policy and Procedure</li> <li>Workplace Protection Orders Procedure</li> <li>Cultural Load – Guide for managers and supervisors</li> <li>Yarning Brew</li> <li>EAP (wellbeing)</li> <li>Early intervention support</li> </ul>				Yes
Choose an item.	<p>Cultural load</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff being asked for advice on Indigenous matters outside the context of their role</li> <li>Staff having to intervene to support the broader ACTPS manage complex engagements and issues regarding the Aboriginal and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff leaving CSD and ACTPS</li> <li>Psychological injury (workers' compensation)</li> <li>Loss of skills, experience and connections required to deliver on required functions.</li> <li>Inability of OATSIA, CSD and the ACTPS to deliver on government requirements and commitments.</li> </ul>		Choose an item.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural Load – Guide for managers and supervisors</li> <li>Yarning Brew</li> <li>EAP (wellbeing)</li> <li>Early intervention support</li> </ul>				Yes



Category of risk <sup>1</sup>  Refer to the ACTIA Risk Matrix	Description of hazard	Impact/Outcome  What will be the outcome or effect, if what can happen does happen?  What will be the Impact on the business objectives. Impact from the event happening. (Consequence)	Risk Owner  The officer responsible for managing the risk	Hierarchy of Control considered*	List the risk control(s) (preferably in the order of hierarchy) for the hazard	Risk Rating			Further Treatment Required? (Y/N)  If Yes, proceed to step 2
						Likelihood	Consequence	Level of Risk? (Low, Medium, High, Extreme)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community tensions</li> <li>Deaths within community – familial connections</li> <li>Feeling unsafe within community</li> <li>Lack of support from CSD and the ACTPS in managing cultural load (this increases where requests are made and not actioned)</li> </ul>								
Choose an item.				Choose an item.					
Choose an item.				Choose an item.					
Choose an item.				Choose an item.					
Choose an item.				Choose an item.					

\*Hierarchy of controls (in order of effectiveness). Use codes () in the column



## Step 2 – Further Treatment Control

What further controls are required? The person or people undertaking the risk assessment should recommend the risk controls to be implemented and obtain the approval of the responsible manager/s	Implementation tracking		
	Action by (Name)	Due date	Date completed (may be a hand written notation)
Cultural supervision			
Culturally specific wrap around wellbeing supports			
Senior Leaders acknowledge the unique impacts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff			

## Step 3 - Approval

Risk assessment completed by:
Name:
Signature:
Date:

Risk assessment approved by <sup>2</sup> :
Name:
Signature:
Date:

<sup>2</sup> Refer to the CSD-HR-SW-006 Risk Management Guideline for information on the manager level approval required for a risk assessment. Workplace managers can approve a risk assessment where risks are identified as low or medium. Risks rated as high or extreme must be approved by an executive member.

## Analyse the risks - ACTIA Risk Matrix

Consequence of risk in the most normal form						
Category of Risk	Contextual definition	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
<b>Business Operations</b>	Achievement of strategic and operational business objectives	Minor errors in systems or processes requiring corrective action and/or minor delay without impact on overall schedule and/or insignificant impact on business outcomes and strategic objectives.	Services (including those of providers) do not fully meet needs and/or minor impact on business outcomes and strategic objectives and/or subsidiary services experience minor disruptions.	One or more key accountability requirements not met and /or inconvenient but not client welfare threatening and/or moderate impact on business outcomes and strategic objectives and/or a number of objectives not met, minor or subsidiary services impaired.	Significant impact on business and / or strategic objectives and/or strategies not consistent with Government's agenda and/or trends show service is degraded and/or key service delivery impaired.	Strategic business outcomes/ processes fail, control infrastructure failure, critical business objectives not met.
<b>Service Delivery</b>	Delivery of functions of the business/branch/ entity depending on their classification as essential/critical or not	No loss of an essential/critical service and/or loss of, or interruption to, non critical /non-core services up to 3 days.	Loss of an essential/critical service for less than 4 hours and/or loss of, or interruption to, non critical /non-core services for 3 - 5 days.	Loss of one or more essential/critical services for more than 4 hours and up to 3 days, and/or loss of, or disruption to, non critical / non-core services for up to 10 days.	Loss of one or more essential/critical services for more than 3 days and up to 4 or more weeks, and/or loss of part of an essential service that is high risk (life based) and/or disruption to non-critical services over subsequent weeks.	Loss of one or more essential/critical services for more than 4 weeks that continues for months and/or loss of an essential service that is high risk (life based) and/or disruption to non-critical services over subsequent months.
<b>Compliance/ Regulation</b>	Non compliance with legislation, regulation, policy or procedure (including conflicts of interest), and the associated consequences to operations	Non-compliance with policies, procedures & guidelines and standard operating procedures which are not legislated or regulated.	Numerous instances of non-compliance with work policy and standard operating procedures which are not legislated or regulated.	Non-compliance with work policy and standard operating procedures which are regulated or legislated.	Restriction of business operations by regulator due to non-compliance with relevant guidelines and / or significant non-compliance with policy and procedures which threaten business delivery.	Operations shut down by regulator for failing to comply with relevant guidelines / legislation and /or significant non-compliance with internal procedures which could result in failure to provide business outcomes and service delivery.
<b>Cultural &amp; Heritage</b>	Damage or adverse outcomes to items or places of cultural or heritage value	Consists of, but is not limited to, repairable damage or no impact to the heritage place or object and/or Unauthorised conduct to the heritage place or object, including Aboriginal places and object. The conduct has no or repairable impact.	Consists of, but is not limited to, repairable damage to the heritage places or object and/or Unauthorised conduct that diminishes the heritage significance of the place or object, including Aboriginal places and objects. The conduct has minor repairable adverse heritage impact.	Consists of, but not limited to, repairable or irreparable damage to the heritage place or object and/or Unauthorised conduct that diminishes the heritage significance of the place or object, including Aboriginal places and objects. The conduct may or may not have an acceptable heritage impact.	Consists of, but not limited to, significant, or irreparable damage, or total loss of the heritage place or object and/or Unauthorised conduct, including negligent conduct, that diminishes the heritage significance of the place or object, including Aboriginal places and objects. The conduct has an unacceptable heritage impact.	Consists of, but not limited to, permanent or irreparable damage, or total loss of the heritage place or object and/or Unauthorised conduct, including reckless conduct, that diminishes the heritage significance of the place or object, including Aboriginal places and objects. The conduct has an unacceptable heritage impact.

Category of Risk	Contextual definition	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
<b>Financial</b>	Financial losses from the project or entity represented as either a percentage of the project/entity budget or a dollar amount, which ever is the greater	1% of Project / Entity Budget or <\$5K	2.5% of Project / Entity Budget or <\$50K	> 5% of Project / Entity Budget or <\$500K	> 10% of Project / Entity Budget or <\$5M	>25% of Project / Entity Budget or >\$5M
<b>Information &amp; Records Management</b>	Access to and security of information and records that enable the conduct of business and provision of services	A product or service which services up to 10% of the workforce or impacts a small number of the community in a minor way and/or System breach to business administration system with no personal or classified information stored.	A product or service which services 10 - 30% of the workforce or impacts a small number of the community in a moderate way and/or System breach to business administration system with some identifiable information but non-client threatening (data access known).	A product or service which services 30-70% of the workforce or impacts a moderate number of the community in a moderate way and/or System breach to business administration system with some identifiable information but non-client threatening (data access unknown).	A product or service which services greater than 70% of the workforce or impacts a small to moderate number of the community in a major way and/or Systems breach to business administration system with identifiable/classified information stored but non-client welfare threatening.	A product or service which services 100% of the workforce or impacts a moderate or substantial number of the community in a major way and/or total loss of confidence in data/record integrity and/or Systems breach to Government or business critical systems with client and/or business welfare threatened.
<b>Natural Environment</b>	Adverse outcomes for the natural environment	Environmental harm to an ecosystem and species is limited to a localised area with rapid recovery without effort.	Minimal environmental harm to an ecosystem and species recognised at the local or regional level and/or Localised but minor instances of environmental harm that can be reversed with minimal efforts.	Moderate environmental harm to an ecosystem and species recognised at the state level and/or Semi-permanent loss of environmental value and risk of continuing environmental harm.	Major environmental harm to an ecosystem and species recognised at the national level and/or Loss or impairment to an ecosystem or species recognised at the state or regional level and/or Difficulty recovering from environment damage and stemming ongoing environmental harm.	Severe Damage and/or significant loss and/ or impairment and/or Permanent destruction of an ecosystem or species recognised at the local, regional, state or national level and/or Permanent and widespread loss of environmental value and progressive irrecoverable environmental harm.

Category of Risk	Contextual definition	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
<b>People Injuries (physical &amp; psychological)</b>	<p>Direct physical and psychological injuries to people (staff, contractors, customers) arising from the risk occurring.</p> <p>The impact to people arising from Natural Disaster related events is covered under the Emergency / Disaster Management categories</p>	No injury or treatment required.	<p>Injury which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>requires treatment (not hospitalisation); and/or</li> <li>impacts capacity to work for a period of one week or less; and/or</li> <li>multiple people sustain injury/ies not requiring treatment.</li> </ul>	<p>Injury which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>requires hospitalisation; and/or</li> <li>impacts on capacity to work for a period of greater than one week; and/or</li> <li>multiple people sustain injury/ies which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>require treatment</li> <li>Impact their capacity to work for a period of one week or less.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Single injury which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is life-threatening (including loss of limbs); and/or</li> <li>results in permanent disability; and /or</li> <li>results in permanent (partial or total) impact on capacity to work; and /or</li> <li>multiple people sustain injury/ies which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>require hospitalisation</li> <li>Impact their capacity to work for greater than one week.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Death and/or multiple injury/ies which result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>permanent impact on capacity to work; and/or</li> <li>permanent disability.</li> </ul>
<b>Reputation &amp; Image</b>	Observable measures of how the risk may impact the reputation or image of the ACT Government	Internal review and/or minor dissatisfaction across a small number of demographic groups or stakeholders.	Scrutiny required by internal committees or internal audit to prevent escalation and/or moderate dissatisfaction across a small number demographic groups or several stakeholders.	Local media scrutiny (1 week) and/or scrutiny required by external committees or ACT Auditor General's Office, or inquest, etc and/or dissatisfaction across a few demographic groups or multiple stakeholders.	Intense public, political and national media scrutiny (1 week) and/or Minister / Chief Minister involvement and/or dissatisfaction across a large range of demographic groups and stakeholders.	Adverse finding from Assembly inquiry or Commission of inquiry or sustained adverse international media and/or loss of public confidence in Government or Public Service forcing changes to the machinery of Government.
<b>Emergency / Disaster Management (social impact)</b>	Measures of the social impact to the ACT arising from emergencies (eg bushfire, flood, storm damage etc)	The community's social connectedness is disrupted, such that the reprioritisation and / or reallocation of existing resources is required to return the community to functioning effectively, with no permanent dispersal.	The community's social connectedness is disrupted, such that community requires some external resources to return the community to functioning effectively, with no permanent dispersal.	The community's social connectedness is disrupted, such that community requires significant external resources to return the community to functioning effectively, with some permanent dispersal.	The community's social connectedness is significantly disrupted, such that extraordinary external resources are required to return the community to functioning effectively, with significant permanent dispersal.	The community's social connectedness is irreparably disrupted, such that the community ceases to function effectively, breaks down and disperses in its entirety.
<b>Emergency / Disaster Management (community / people impact)</b>	Outcomes on the community or people of the ACT arising from emergencies (eg bushfire, flood, storm damage etc).	Minor injuries to 10 or less people.	Less than 4 serious injuries, or more than 10 minor injuries directly from the emergency.	Less than 4 deaths or critical injuries with long-term or permanent incapacitation, directly from the emergency, or more than 4 serious injuries.	4 – 40 deaths or critical injuries with long-term or permanent incapacitation, directly from the emergency, or more than 40 serious injuries.	More than 40 deaths or critical injuries with long-term or permanent incapacitation, directly from the emergency.

## Risk Assessment Matrix<sup>3</sup>

Historical frequency (Expectation)		Matrix	Insignificant 1	Minor 2	Moderate 3	Major 4	Catastrophic 5	Priority	Authority for continued tolerance of risk	Suggested timing of treatment
Likelihood	Occur on most occurrences of the activity >1 in 10	(Expected to happen this time)	Almost certain 5	Medium	High	High	Extreme	Extreme	EXT	Director-General  Short term – normally within one month**  Detailed action plan required
	Occurs on some occurrences of the activity 1 in 10 - 100	(Expected to occur on one of the next few occasions)	Likely 4	Medium	Medium	High	High	Extreme	High	Senior Executive  Medium term – normally within three months  Needs senior management attention
	Infrequently occurs here 1 in 100 – 1,000	(Could occur at some time in the future. Would not be a surprise if it occurred)	Possible 3	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme	Medium	Managers  Normally within 1 year  Specify management responsibility
	Has never occurred here 1 in 1,000 – 10,000	(Might occur but unlikely. Would be surprised if it occurred)	Unlikely 2	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High	Low	All staff  Ongoing control as part of a management system  Manage by routine procedures
	Has never occurred here but may have/has occurred somewhere. 1 in 10,000 – 100,000	(Might occur, but only in exceptional circumstances. Would be very surprised if occurred)	Rare 1	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High		

<sup>3</sup> This matrix is based on the ACTIA Risk Register and lists the people impact. Where risk assessments wish to consider other impacts the ACTIA risk matrix should be consulted.

## Purpose

This Work Health and Safety (WHS) Risk Assessment form:

- supports the WHS Risk Management Guideline and the CSD WHS Risk Registers process
- should be completed with the workers undertaking the task
- may be completed by hand or in electronic form.

### Notes:

Please complete a new risk assessment where new equipment, hazardous substances or procedures, are applied that lead to a new hazard.

This risk assessment form should NOT be used when:

- a risk can be quickly assessed, and risk controls implemented immediately
- a generic CSD risk assessment has been undertaken that is appropriate for the same hazard<sup>4</sup>
- there is a hazard specific risk assessment form that is appropriate for the task (such as a manual handling hazard or an item of plant and equipment).

This form will commonly be used for risk assessments undertaken by teams or involving health and safety advisors.

## Document Information

<b>Document ID:</b>	<b>Title:</b>	
CSD-HR-SW-009	Risk Assessment	
<b>REVISION</b>	<b>DOCUMENT OWNER</b>	<b>DATE PREPARED</b>
2.0	Safety and Wellbeing team	August 2023
<b>TYPE</b>	<b>APPROVED BY</b>	<b>REVIEW DATE</b>
Form	Director, Safety and Wellbeing	August 2025

### DATE APPROVED

21 August 2023



Bec Smith

Director, Safety and Wellbeing

<sup>4</sup> Generic risk assessments can be used where the hazard is sufficiently similar and doing a separate risk assessment would not achieve a better result. The Safety and Wellbeing team and the Safety Management System has information about generic risk assessments.

**From:** [George, Natalee](#)  
**To:** [Moyle, Brendan](#)  
**Subject:** Draft Cultural Care Plans for your feedback  
**Date:** Friday, 13 December 2024 3:29:13 PM  
**Attachments:** [Team Cultural Care Plan DRAFT.docx](#)  
[Individual Cultural Safety Care Plan DRAFT.docx](#)

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OFFICIAL

Hi Brendan

Further to our regular conversations about cultural safety in the workplace for mob, the team have made some tangible progress in documenting a cultural safety plan, both for individuals and a team/branch approach.

Through routine connections across the ACTPS the CTB is increasingly engaged in interpersonal and systemic racism incidents, including where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are feeling culturally unsafe, or experience high cultural load. It is clear that we need a direct approach to alleviate these instances, and cannot wait for a broader framework/strategy (which once delivered should then support this localised implementation)

The attached are early working drafts of an individual care plan, and two that relate to an enabling team/branch approach. The intent being that individuals complete their plan, and it feeds the branch plan which is then scheduled and implemented over a 12-month period. These are still under development, and the team are considering a further quality assurance in the new year through an external provider with relevant expertise along with feedback from staff.

Over the past few months, the team have been informally engaged with Chris Simpson and his team about their cultural safety experience, with them reaching out to us for further support and to collaborate on a way forward. We are taking this opportunity to test these cultural safety plans with ASD, before sharing more broadly.

Sharing with you for early visibility and thoughts, and similar to our engagement with ASD, we are happy to partner with OATSIA to pilot a finalised version of the templates and facilitated conversations.

We look forward to working with OATSIA to pilot these if you think that it would be something your staff would be interested in.

Thanks

**Natalee George (she/her)**  
Executive Branch Manager

**Cultural Transformation Branch**

**Office for Industrial Relations and Workforce Strategy**

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD) | ACT Government  
Level 5, 220 London Circuit, Canberra City ACT 2601 | [www.act.gov.au](http://www.act.gov.au)

E: [natalee.george@act.gov.au](mailto:natalee.george@act.gov.au) M: Sched 2.2 (a)(i) FOI Act 2016



## What is Cultural Safety in Teams?

Cultural safety involves creating environments where individual cultural identities and experiences are respected and valued. This concept is crucial during both internal and external engagement to ensure interactions are inclusive and safe.

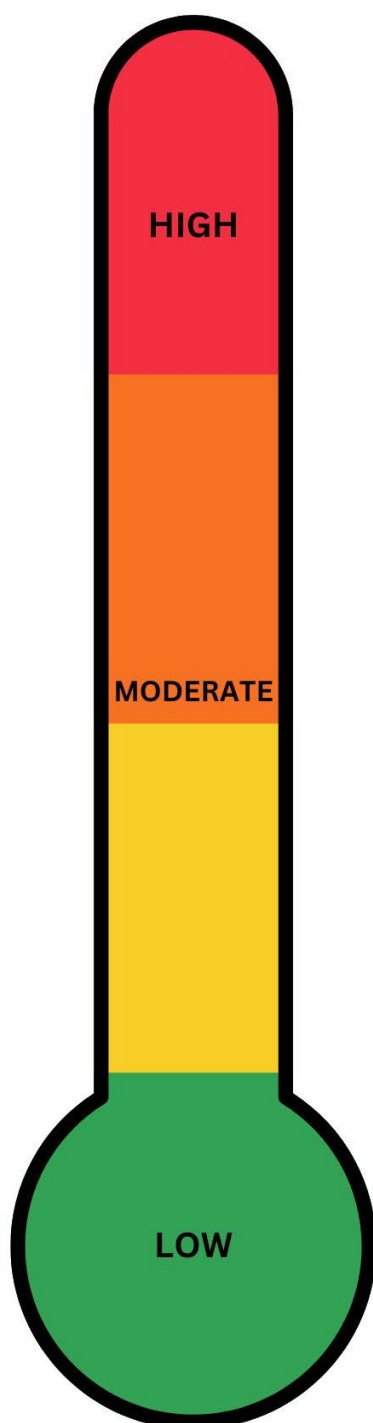
Preventative measures are always the most effective in keeping cultural load at manageable levels. By investing in prevention, you invest in your team's wellbeing. It is expected that staff working in roles that care for or respond to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters will experience some form of cultural load; however, it is not expected that an individual or team should operate in a state of prolonged high cultural load. To monitor the cultural load of your team, complete this Team Cultural Care Plan.

Managers play a pivotal role in maintaining a culturally safe environment for their teams. To effectively manage cultural load, it is essential to focus on three levels of response: prevention, pro-action, and reaction.

- Prevention is the cornerstone of our approach, aiming to keep cultural load at low, manageable levels. Managers should prioritise preventative measures such as regular training, routine check-ins, cultural supervision, and succession planning. These proactive steps ensure that the team is well-prepared, reducing the likelihood of high cultural load.
- In addition to prevention, managers should also be proactive in identifying early signs of cultural load and addressing them promptly. This includes fostering open communication, providing support, and making necessary adjustments to workloads and responsibilities.
- When cultural load does escalate, a reactive approach is necessary. Managers must be equipped to respond effectively, offering immediate support and resources to alleviate the pressure on their team members.

Key elements include:

1. **Respect and Understanding:** Recognising the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories and respecting their unique cultural experiences and beliefs.
2. **Addressing Power Imbalances:** Actively working to eliminate interpersonal and systemic power imbalances, racism, and discrimination that may affect interactions.
3. **Self-Determination:** Supporting the self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by involving them in decision-making processes and sharing power and resources.
4. **Ongoing Learning:** Committing to continuous learning and unlearning to address unconscious biases and improve cultural competence.



#### Reactive

- De-briefing (external/internal)
- Off-line team/members as required
- Enact individual Care Plans
- Reassignment of workload/priorities
- Set timeframes for reassessment

#### Proactive

- Trauma exposure training
- On Country sessions De-briefing
- Re-asses taskings/workloads/priorities
- Review in with Individual Care Plans
- Cultural safety risk assessments for engagements
- Reviewing/changing processes as needed

#### Prevention

- Trauma exposure training
- On Country sessions
- Regular check-ins (cultural load and wellbeing)
- Cultural supervision
- Managing conflicts and sensitivities
- Succession planning

## Team Cultural Care Plan

[Community Services Directorate] acknowledges the critical importance of delivering culturally sensitive and personalised care in the management of cultural load. Team Cultural Care plans provide comprehensive guidance on maintaining a well and balanced team ecosystem. These plans establish clear expectations for culturally safe engagement and ensure that all interactions are mutually respectful and productive.

Team Care Plans can be completed by the residing manager, as a general guide to the overall wellbeing of the team in the interest of managing cultural load.

Team Details			Work Plan		
Team Members:	Name	Care Plan	Priorities	Lead	Cultural Load
	1.	<i>YES/No</i>	1.		
	2.		2.		LOW
	3.		3.		MODERATE
	4.		4.		HIGH
	5.		5.		

**What are the challenges or barriers your team is facing:**

Challenges or barriers:
1.
2.
3.
4.

**What are your corresponding actions to support your team through the challenges or barriers?**

1.
2.
3.
4.

**Expected timeframe for working through the challenge or barrier:**

1.
2.
3.
4.

## What is Cultural Safety?

Cultural safety is about overcoming the power imbalances of places, people and policies that occur between the majority non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander position and the minority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person so that there is no assault, challenge or denial of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person's identity, of who they are and what they need.

Cultural safety is met through actions from the majority position which recognise, respect, and nurture the unique cultural identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Only the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person who is recipient of a service or interaction can determine whether it is culturally safe.

### Key Principles of Cultural Safety

**Respect:** Acknowledge and honour the cultural identities and practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

**Awareness:** Understand your own cultural biases and how they may affect your interactions.

**Communication:** Engage in open, respectful dialogue about cultural needs.

**Collaboration:** Work together to provide culturally appropriate support.

**Advocacy:** Support individuals in navigating systems and advocate for their cultural needs.

### Individual Cultural Care Plan

Staff are encouraged to work through the form either individually or with their manager. By completing this to the best of your self-knowledge, those in your support circle (managers, selected colleagues, and support people) can be prepared to assist you in a way that you have designed, should you need it. By helping others understand your cultural background, sensitivities, and preferred remedies for debrief and recovery, this approach ensures self-determination and inclusive care practices.

### Steps to Implement a Cultural Care Plan

**Assessment:** Staff are supported to set aside time to complete the form. Making time with a manager will help them to understand your specific needs during times of high cultural load.

**Planning:** Develop a plan that incorporates the individual's cultural preferences and needs. Set goals that are culturally appropriate and achievable.

**Implementation:** Provide support that aligns with the cultural safety principles. Ensure all team members are aware of and respect the cultural safety plan.

**Evaluation:** Regularly review and adjust the plan based on feedback from the individual. Assess the effectiveness of the plan in meeting cultural needs.

### Tips for Team Members

**Educate Yourself:** Proactive learning of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and practices.

**Build Trust:** Establish a trusting relationship by showing genuine interest in cultural backgrounds.

**Be Flexible:** Adapt your practices to meet the cultural needs of individuals.

**Seek Feedback:** Encourage individuals to share experiences and suggest for improving cultural safety.

## Individual Cultural Care Plan

[Community Services Directorate] recognises the importance of providing culturally sensitive and personalised care, including managing cultural load. This form is designed to help your chosen support people to understand your unique cultural background, preferences, and needs. By sharing this information, you enable those around you to better support you and ensure that your cultural values and needs are cared for and maintained.

Individual details		Role details:	
Name:		Role:	
Pronouns:		Manager:	
Mob:		Team:	
Support person:		Branch:	

**Cultural load** refers to the often unseen, extra workload that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people face at work. This includes responsibilities like educating non- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues about cultures, representing cultural perspectives, and leading cultural events.

Beyond work, it also involves cultural and community duties, such as caring for family, participating in local councils or boards, and supporting or participating in significant and often challenging community matters. These tasks are demanding and often go unrecognised or uncompensated in their professional roles.

### Cultural load and what it feels like to you?

What does it look like when you are experiencing <b>HIGH</b> cultural load?
<p><i>Some examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I experience physical or emotional responses, such as headaches, nausea or impact to appetite</i></li> <li>• <i>I become withdraw</i></li> <li>• <i>I feel teary</i></li> <li>• <i>I become easily agitated</i></li> </ul>

### How can my nominated support people help?

When I am experiencing <b>HIGH</b> cultural load, I need:
<p><i>Some examples might include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>People around me</i></li> <li>• <i>Time on my own</i></li> <li>• <i>Regular check-ins with my manager</i></li> <li>• <i>External independent de-briefing</i></li> <li>• <i>Leave from work</i></li> </ul>

<b>When I am experiencing <b>HIGH</b> cultural load, I need my manager to:</b>
<p><i>Some examples might include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Put regular check-ins in my calendar</i></li> <li>• <i>Help me assess my workload</i></li> </ul>

### What can happen if an incident occurs?

<b>In the event of an incident where I am impacted:</b>	
My manager can contact my support person	Name: Ph: 04XX XXX XXX
My manager can contact me out of hours to check on my wellbeing	Ph: 04XX XXX XXX
My manager can advocate on my behalf with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>HR enquiries or escalations</i></li> <li>• <i>approving support resources</i></li> </ul>

### What are your preferred time frames for recovery and restoration?

<b>Time frame and schedule to reduce cultural load:</b>	
Initial meeting – 00/00/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Discuss the staff member's current workload and cultural load.</i></li> <li>• <i>Identify specific stressors and immediate needs.</i></li> <li>• <i>Offer immediate support, such as flexible working hours or temporary workload adjustments.</i></li> </ul>
Resources and Supports - 00/00/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Provide access to resources like counselling services, cultural advisors, or peer support groups.</i></li> <li>• <i>Ensure the staff member knows how to access these resources.</i></li> </ul>
Ongoing Support and Monitoring - 00/00/2025	<p><i>Regular Check-ins</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Schedule regular check-ins (e.g., twice a week) to monitor their progress and adjust support as needed.</i></li> <li>• <i>Encourage open communication about their workload and cultural challenges.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Workload Management</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Gradually reassign or delegate tasks to reduce their workload.</i></li> <li>• <i>Prioritise tasks to focus on the most critical ones.</i></li> </ul>
Gradual transition - 00/00/2025	<p><i>Reduced Check-ins</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Move to weekly check-ins as the staff member begins to manage their workload more independently.</i></li> <li>• <i>Continue to offer support and resources as needed.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Feedback and Adjustment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Collect feedback from the staff member about the support provided and make necessary adjustments.</i></li> <li>• <i>Encourage them to share any ongoing challenges.</i></li> </ul>
Evaluation and forward planning - 00/00/2025	<p><i>Final Evaluation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Conduct a final evaluation meeting to assess the overall impact of the support provided.</i></li> <li>• <i>Discuss any remaining concerns and plan for long-term support if needed.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Long-term Strategies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Develop long-term strategies to prevent high cultural load in the future, such as regular cultural competence training and promoting a supportive work environment.</i></li> </ul>

What does your restoration plan look like?

Time frame and schedule to reduce cultural load:	
What are my proactive actions to reduce my cultural load	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>De-briefing (internal/external/EAP)</i></li> <li>• <i>Managing hours and disconnecting after hours</i></li> <li>• <i>Hobbies and family balance</i></li> <li>• <i>Journalling</i></li> </ul>
What are my managers proactive actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Approve support sessions</i></li> <li>• <i>Support workload</i></li> <li>• <i>Approve leave</i></li> <li>• <i>Check in on my wellbeing as mutually agreed</i></li> </ul>

Important points to note:
<p><i>Some examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Any cultural practices you would like known</i></li> <li>• <i>Any conflicts or sensitivities (cultural, community ect...)</i></li> <li>• <i>Things you value</i></li> </ul>

**Contact particulars in case required**

Mobile:	
Address:	
Preferred in office workdays:	
Preferred remote workdays:	

Team

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Triggers

THree collums

Trigge preventative trauma training, on country, destress and deload front load preventative

Response

Recovery

reflection

## Cultural Safety in the ACT Public Service

### Talking points

- The ACT Government is committed to working in genuine partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to promote self-determination and actively work to close the gap.
- This includes continuing to implement the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028 and the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, delivering the policies and services across government identified as being most important for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
- A core area of the Agreement is cultural integrity. The ACT Government is committed to fostering cultural integrity and supporting the aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including in the ACTPS workforce. This includes through embedding and practicing meaningful cultural safety.
- A number of ACTPS initiatives which align with Agreements have already been implemented, these include;
  - cultural load matrix to assist managers and supervisors to manage the load borne by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the workplace;
  - developing strong First Nations cultural capability within our workforce; and
  - establishing the Yarning Brew to bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from across the ACTPS together to share experiences and support each other.
- The Health and Community Services Directorate is also actively working towards improving cultural safety for its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. Key activities include;
  - embedding cultural safety into its core learning, leadership development, and workforce strategies;
  - delivering staff training targeted at strengthening cultural awareness;
  - prioritising culturally safe practices in Health and Community Services Directorate strategic frameworks; and
  - implementing cultural safety plans for staff.
- In response to the Inquiry Hearing on 9 October 2025, the Health and Community Services Directorate will engage a third party culturally sensitive advisor to undertake a Cultural Safety Review. This review will identify the organisational drivers of psychological risk that impact the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in the directorate.

- The Terms of Reference have been developed in close consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

### Background Information

- On 9 October 2025, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Administration held hearings as part of its inquiry into a private member's bill: the Public Sector (Closing the Gap) Legislation Amendment Bill 2025.
- The Committee heard from several witnesses in relation to the bill. At the hearing a member of the Senior Executive, in response to a question put to them by a member of the Committee, advised that they did not feel culturally safe in the workplace.
- A range of Service wide initiatives have been led by the Cultural Transformation Branch, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD) to improve cultural safety across the ACTPS. Individual Directorates are also progressing directorate led initiatives.

### Health and Community Services Directorate

- The Health and Community Services Directorate (HCSD) has a number of strategic frameworks that align with Priority Reform Area 3 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap: Transforming Government Organisations. This priority calls on governments to identify and eliminate systemic and structural barriers that prevent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from thriving in public institutions. These include:
  - The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Attraction, Retention and Development Plan 2024-2026 which focuses on employment, career progression, cultural safety to develop a workforce reflective of community HCSD serves.
  - The Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy 2024-2027 which aims to develop an inclusive culture, belonging and equity.

### Cultural Safety Review

- HCSD has commenced the process to procure a culturally aware, trauma informed Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander consultant to undertake a work health and safety (WHS) psychosocial risk assessment, with a specific focus on identifying and addressing organisational-level psychosocial risks impacting Aboriginal and Torres Strait staff.
- The contractor will:
  - Undertake a desktop review and analysis of existing documentation.
  - Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff to understand the psychosocial hazard profile and control measures of culturally specific and relevant risks such as cultural and colonial load, systemic racism and institutional bias, cultural isolation, and breach of Cultural Authority (i.e. unsafe decision-making processes).



- Engage with Executive, management and unions to explore work design, review current consultation mechanisms.
- Provide a final report that consider the 14 Psychosocial hazards in the Managing Psychosocial Hazards Code of Practice. Recommendations will be grounded in feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island staff.



## Cultural Safety in the ACTPS

### Talking points

- The ACT Government is committed to working in genuine partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to promote self-determination and actively work to close the gap.
- This includes continuing to implement the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028 and the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, delivering the policies and services across government identified as being most important for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
- Priority reform three in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap agreement is about transforming government organisations to make them culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.
- The ACT Government is committed to making our organisations and the services we fund culturally safe and supporting the aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including in the ACTPS workforce. This includes through embedding and practicing meaningful cultural safety practices.
- A number of ACTPS initiatives lead by the CMTEDD which align with Agreements have already been implemented, these include;
  - cultural load matrix to assist managers and supervisors manage the load borne by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the workplace;
  - developing strong First Nations cultural capability within our workforce; and
  - establishing the Yarning Brew to bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from across the ACTPS together to share experiences and support each other.

### Health and Community Services Directorate

- In July 2025, the former Health and Community Services Directorates were brought together.
- In 2025-26, HSCD is working to align the programs and activities of previous directorates that were aimed at strengthening cultural safety and addressing Closing the Gap Priority Reform Three. This is particularly focused on strengthening existing initiatives that support the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, who represented 5.2% of the workforce as at the pay period ending 24 September 2025 and includes:
  - embedding cultural safety into our core learning, leadership development and workforce strategies;
  - continuing to deliver staff training targeted at strengthening cultural capability, eliminating racism and strengthening cultural safety;

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Lead Directorate:	Health and Community Services	
TRIM Ref:	DBC-25/1084/6-002	

- prioritising culturally safe practices in Health and Community Services Directorate strategic frameworks, and business processes; and
- implementing individualised cultural safety plans for staff.

### Current Activities

- The Health and Community Services Directorate also has a number of initiatives currently in progress to improve cultural safety these include:
  - Undertaking a Cultural Safety Review through an independent, culturally competent advisor to conduct a psychosocial risk assessment. The assessment will focus on identifying factors that contribute to psychological risk, with the aim of enhancing the wellbeing and cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.
  - Identifying and creating spaces for Aboriginal staff across sites of HCSD that provide safe place for Aboriginal staff to go, work or meet.
  - Scheduled and regular ongoing meetings/yarning circles with staff that are embedded into DG/DDG calendars.
  - Establishing HCSD Executive subcommittee to monitor progress of agreed initiatives.
- HCSD Employees also recently participated in NAIDOC Week events, including the First Australians Tour at the National Museum of Australia and video presentations from Aunty Maddie McGrady and Joe Flick.

### **Key information**

#### Previous ACTHD activities

- In 2024-25 the previous ACT Health Directorate Executive Board endorsed a commitment to cultural integrity for consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff who had not been directly involved in its development. This statement and similar artifacts in from the Community Services Directorate, now need to be brought together in a meaningful way for HSCD.
- The ACTHD commitment statement was drafted by a reference group of staff from across the organisation, with the aim of laying the foundation for actions to strengthen cultural integrity, improve cultural safety and eliminate racism. It specifically committed to realising the commitment by:
  - *Being culturally safe and responsive* – foster environments free from racism and discrimination, beginning with cultural safety training for every person in ACT Health.
  - *Being inclusive and supportive learning culture* – promote cultural integrity and create a culture that encourages curious, authentic and constructive conversations to build trust and understanding. A safe environment where shared learning can happen will grow collective understanding and lead to better innovation and improved outcomes.

- *Embedding cultural integrity in our systems and processes* – integrate what we do so that it reaches all parts of our organisation and the organisations we fund, for example through funding instruments, recruitment and retention, performance and development and business planning.
- *Being respectful and meaningful engagement and partnerships* – walk alongside and work alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and Communities in the ACT and region to strengthen health and well-being and eliminate racism.
- This built on work previously done June 2022 (completed in 2023) by Indigenous firm, MurriMatters, to undertake a series of engagements with its staff aimed at strengthening the cultural integrity of the agency

#### Previous CSD Activities

- CSD employees undertook a range of cross-cultural training programs designed to build cultural awareness, and role-based training specific to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Role based training was enhanced through experiential learning designed to enrich cultural awareness, strengthen team connections, and empower staff to engage more respectfully and meaningfully with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and communities.
- In November 2024, the former CSD hosted a Yarning Circle to foster connection, open dialogue, and relationship building among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in a culturally safe environment. The session, facilitated by Dr Karen Demmery, provided a supportive space for cultural sharing, self-care practices, and resilience building strategies.
- CSD distributed clear and accessible resources to all staff on inclusive recruitment practices. These factsheets provide practical guidance for identifying and removing barriers faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates throughout each stage of the recruitment process.

#### Training Statistics 2024/25

Program	Participation 2024-25	Notes
<b>Community Services Directorate</b>		
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Awareness e-Learning	290 staff (including 6 executives)	Core learning - Mandatory for all staff

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Program	Participation 2024-25	Notes
<b>Community Services Directorate</b>		
Ngunnawal Language Training	17 staff (including 4 executives)	Delivered by local provider
<u><i>Child Youth Families (CYF-CSD) - specific training</i></u>	10 participants	Delivered by the national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) Child Placement Principles	15 – 65 participants per session	Delivered by local providers and CYF Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.
CYF Cultural Development Program (6 sessions)		
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Young People Policy and Procedure (Bimberi Youth Detention Facility-CSD)	14 participants	
<b>ACT Health Directorate</b>		
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Awareness e-Learning	182 staff	Core learning for all staff
Cultural Awareness Training, face to face workshops	40 staff	Designed and delivered by a local Aboriginal owned and run organisation.
Garma Festival 2024	2 staff	Australia's largest Indigenous cultural gathering, held annually over four days in early August in northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory

## Background information

### Health and Community Services Directorate

- The Health and Community Services Directorate (HCSD) has several strategic frameworks that align with Priority Reform Area 3 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap:

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Transforming Government Organisations. This priority calls on governments to identify and eliminate systemic and structural barriers that prevent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from thriving in public institutions. These include:

- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Attraction, Retention and Development Plan 2024-2026 which focuses on employment, career progression, cultural safety to develop a workforce reflective of community HCSD serves.
- The Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy 2024-2027 which aims to develop an inclusive culture, belonging and equity.

#### Cultural Safety Review

- HCSD has commenced the process to procure a culturally aware, trauma informed Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander consultant to undertake a work health and safety (WHS) psychosocial risk assessment, with a specific focus on identifying and addressing organisational-level psychosocial risks impacting Aboriginal and Torres Strait staff.
- The contractor will:
  - Undertake a desktop review and analysis of existing documentation.
  - Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff to understand the psychosocial hazard profile and control measures of culturally specific and relevant risks such as cultural and colonial load, systemic racism and institutional bias, cultural isolation, and breach of Cultural Authority (i.e. unsafe decision-making processes).
  - Engage with Executive, management and unions to explore work design, review current consultation mechanisms.
  - Provide a final report that consider the 14 Psychosocial hazards in the Managing Psychosocial Hazards Code of Practice. Recommendations will be grounded in feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island staff.

# Cultural Safety in the ACTPS

## Talking points

- The ACT Government is committed to working in genuine partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to promote self-determination and actively work to close the gap.
- This includes continuing to implement the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028 and the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, delivering the policies and services across government identified as being most important for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
- Priority reform three in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap agreement is about transforming government organisations to make them culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.
- The ACT Government is committed to making our organisations and the services we fund culturally safe and supporting the aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including in the ACTPS workforce. This includes through embedding and practicing meaningful cultural safety practices.
- A number of ACTPS initiatives lead by the CMTEED which align with Agreements have already been implemented, these include;
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  - developing strong First Nations cultural capability within our workforce; and
  - establishing the Yarning Brew to bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from across the ACTPS together to share experiences and support each other.

### Health and Community Services Directorate

- In July 2025, the former Health and Community Services Directorates were brought together.
- In 2025-26, HSCD is working to align the programs and activities of previous directorates that were aimed at strengthening cultural safety and addressing Closing the Gap Priority Reform Three. This is particularly focused on strengthening existing initiatives that support the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, who represented 5.2% of the workforce as at the pay period ending 24 September 2025 and includes:
  - embedding cultural safety into our core learning, leadership development and workforce strategies;
  - continuing to deliver staff training targeted at strengthening cultural capability, eliminating racism and strengthening cultural safety;
  - prioritising culturally safe practices in Health and Community Services Directorate strategic frameworks, and business processes; and
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Ext: Teams

Lead Directorate: Health and Community Services

TRIM Ref: DBC-25/1084/2/1-005

### Current Activities

- The Health and Community Services Directorate also has a number of initiatives currently in progress to improve cultural safety these include:
  - Undertaking a Cultural Safety Review through an independent, culturally competent advisor to conduct a psychosocial risk assessment. The assessment will focus on identifying factors that contribute to psychological risk, with the aim of enhancing the wellbeing and cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.
  - Identifying and creating spaces for Aboriginal staff across sites of HCSD that provide safe place for Aboriginal staff to go, work or meet.
  - Scheduled and regular ongoing meetings/yarning circles with staff that are embedded into DG/DDG calendars.
  - Establishing HCSD Executive subcommittee to monitor progress of agreed initiatives.
- HCSD Employees also recently participated in NAIDOC Week events, including the First Australians Tour at the National Museum of Australia and video presentations from Aunty Maddie McGrady and Joe Flick.

## Key information

### Previous ACTHD activities

- In 2024-25 the previous ACT Health Directorate Executive Board endorsed a commitment to cultural integrity for consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff who had not been directly involved in its development. This statement and similar artifacts in from the Community Services Directorate, now need to be brought together in a meaningful way for HCSD.
- The ACTHD commitment statement was drafted by a reference group of staff from across the organisation, with the aim of laying the foundation for actions to strengthen cultural integrity, improve cultural safety and eliminate racism. It specifically committed to realising the commitment by:
  - *Being culturally safe and responsive* - foster environments free from racism and discrimination, beginning with cultural safety training for every person in ACT Health.
  - *Being inclusive and supportive learning culture* - promote cultural integrity and create a culture that encourages curious, authentic and constructive conversations to build trust and understanding. A safe environment where shared learning can happen will grow collective understanding and lead to better innovation and improved outcomes.
  - *Embedding cultural integrity in our systems and processes* – integrate what we do so that it reaches all parts of our organisation and the organisations we fund, for example through funding instruments, recruitment and retention, performance and development and business planning.
  - *Being respectful and meaningful engagement and partnerships* – walk alongside and work alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and Communities in the ACT and region to strengthen health and well-being and eliminate racism.
- This built on work previously done June 2022 (completed in 2023) by Indigenous firm, MurriMatters, to undertake a series of engagements with its staff aimed at strengthening the cultural integrity of the agency

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### Previous CSD Activities

- CSD employees undertook a range of cross-cultural training programs designed to build cultural awareness, and role-based training specific to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Role based training was enhanced through experiential learning designed to enrich cultural awareness, strengthen team connections, and empower staff to engage more respectfully and meaningfully with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and communities.
- In November 2024, the former CSD hosted a Yarning Circle to foster connection, open dialogue, and relationship building among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in a culturally safe environment. The session, facilitated by Dr Karen Demmery, provided a supportive space for cultural sharing, self-care practices, and resilience building strategies.
- CSD distributed clear and accessible resources to all staff on inclusive recruitment practices. These factsheets provide practical guidance for identifying and removing barriers faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates throughout each stage of the recruitment process.

### Training Statistics 2024/25

Program	Participation 2024-25	Notes
<b>Community Services Directorate</b>		
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Awareness e-Learning	290 staff (including 6 executives)	Core learning - Mandatory for all staff
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Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Young People Policy and Procedure (Bimberi Youth Detention Facility- CSD)	14 participants	

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ACT Health Directorate		
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Awareness e-Learning	182 staff	Core learning for all staff
Cultural Awareness Training, face to face workshops	40 staff	Designed and delivered by a local Aboriginal owned and run organisation.
Garma Festival 2024	2 staff	Australia's largest Indigenous cultural gathering, held annually over four days in early August in northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory

## Background information

### Health and Community Services Directorate

- The Health and Community Services Directorate (HCS D) has several strategic frameworks that align with Priority Reform Area 3 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap: Transforming Government Organisations. This priority calls on governments to identify and eliminate systemic and structural barriers that prevent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from thriving in public institutions. These include:
  - The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Attraction, Retention and Development Plan 2024-2026 which focuses on employment, career progression, cultural safety to develop a workforce reflective of community HCS D serves.
  - The Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy 2024-2027 which aims to develop an inclusive culture, belonging and equity.

### Cultural Safety Review

- HCS D has commenced the process to procure a culturally aware, trauma informed Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander consultant to undertake a work health and safety (WHS) psychosocial risk assessment, with a specific focus on identifying and addressing organisational-level psychosocial risks impacting Aboriginal and Torres Strait staff.
- The contractor will:
  - Undertake a desktop review and analysis of existing documentation.
  - Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff to understand the psychosocial hazard profile and control measures of culturally specific and relevant risks such as cultural and colonial load, systemic racism and institutional bias, cultural isolation, and breach of Cultural Authority (i.e. unsafe decision-making processes).
  - Engage with Executive, management and unions to explore work design, review current consultation mechanisms.
  - Provide a final report that consider the 14 Psychosocial hazards in the Managing Psychosocial Hazards Code of Practice. Recommendations will be grounded in feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island staff.

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# Cultural Safety in the ACTPS

## Talking points

- The ACT Government is committed to working in genuine partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to promote self-determination and actively work to close the gap.
- This includes continuing to implement the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028 and the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, delivering the policies and services across government identified as being most important for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
- Priority reform three in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap agreement is about transforming government organisations to make them culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.
- The ACT Government is committed to making our organisations and the services we fund culturally safe and supporting the aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including in the ACTPS workforce. This includes through embedding and practicing meaningful cultural safety practices.
- A number of ACTPS initiatives lead by the CMTEDD which align with Agreements have already been implemented, these include;
  - cultural load matrix to assist managers and supervisors manage the load borne by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the workplace;
  - developing strong First Nations cultural capability within our workforce; and
  - establishing the Yarning Brew to bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from across the ACTPS together to share experiences and support each other.

### Health and Community Services Directorate

- In July 2025, the former Health and Community Services Directorates were brought together.
- In 2025-26, HSCD is working to align the programs and activities of previous directorates that were aimed at strengthening cultural safety and addressing Closing the Gap Priority Reform Three. This is particularly focused on strengthening existing initiatives that support the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, who represented 5.2% of the workforce as at the pay period ending 24 September 2025 and includes:
  - embedding cultural safety into our core learning, leadership development and workforce strategies;
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Contact Officer name: Daniel Riley

Ext: Teams

Lead Directorate: Health and Community Services

TRIM Ref: DBC-25/1084/4/2-001

### Current Activities

- The Health and Community Services Directorate also has a number of initiatives currently in progress to improve cultural safety these include:
  - Undertaking a Cultural Safety Review through an independent, culturally competent advisor to conduct a psychosocial risk assessment. The assessment will focus on identifying factors that contribute to psychological risk, with the aim of enhancing the wellbeing and cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.
  - Identifying and creating spaces for Aboriginal staff across sites of HCSD that provide safe place for Aboriginal staff to go, work or meet.
  - Scheduled and regular ongoing meetings/yarning circles with staff that are embedded into DG/DDG calendars.
  - Establishing HCSD Executive subcommittee to monitor progress of agreed initiatives.
- HCSD Employees also recently participated in NAIDOC Week events, including the First Australians Tour at the National Museum of Australia and video presentations from Aunty Maddie McGrady and Joe Flick.

## Key information

### Previous ACTHD activities

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### Training Statistics 2024/25

Program	Participation 2024-25	Notes
<b>Community Services Directorate</b>		
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Ext: Teams

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ACT Health Directorate		
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## Background information

### Health and Community Services Directorate

- The Health and Community Services Directorate (HCS D) has several strategic frameworks that align with Priority Reform Area 3 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap: Transforming Government Organisations. This priority calls on governments to identify and eliminate systemic and structural barriers that prevent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from thriving in public institutions. These include:
  - The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Attraction, Retention and Development Plan 2024-2026 which focuses on employment, career progression, cultural safety to develop a workforce reflective of community HCS D serves.
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### Cultural Safety Review

- HCS D has commenced the process to procure a culturally aware, trauma informed Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander consultant to undertake a work health and safety (WHS) psychosocial risk assessment, with a specific focus on identifying and addressing organisational-level psychosocial risks impacting Aboriginal and Torres Strait staff.
- The contractor will:
  - Undertake a desktop review and analysis of existing documentation.
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  - Engage with Executive, management and unions to explore work design, review current consultation mechanisms.
  - Provide a final report that consider the 14 Psychosocial hazards in the Managing Psychosocial Hazards Code of Practice. Recommendations will be grounded in feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island staff.

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# Cultural Safety in the ACTPS

## Talking points

- The ACT Government is committed to working in genuine partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to promote self-determination and actively work to close the gap.
- This includes continuing to implement the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028 and the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, delivering the policies and services across government identified as being most important for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
- Priority reform three in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap agreement is about transforming government organisations to make them culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.
- The ACT Government is committed to making our organisations and the services we fund culturally safe and supporting the aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including in the ACTPS workforce. This includes through embedding and practicing meaningful cultural safety practices.
- A number of ACTPS initiatives lead by the CMTEDD which align with Agreements have already been implemented, these include;
  - cultural load matrix to assist managers and supervisors manage the load borne by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the workplace;
  - developing strong First Nations cultural capability within our workforce; and
  - establishing the Yarning Brew to bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from across the ACTPS together to share experiences and support each other.

### Health and Community Services Directorate

- In July 2025, the former Health and Community Services Directorates were brought together.
- In 2025-26, HSCD is working to align the programs and activities of previous directorates that were aimed at strengthening cultural safety and addressing Closing the Gap Priority Reform Three. This is particularly focused on strengthening existing initiatives that support the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, who represented 5.2% of the workforce as at the pay period ending 24 September 2025 and includes:
  - embedding cultural safety into our core learning, leadership development and workforce strategies;
  - continuing to deliver staff training targeted at strengthening cultural capability, eliminating racism and strengthening cultural safety;
  - prioritising culturally safe practices in Health and Community Services Directorate strategic frameworks, and business processes; and
  - implementing individualised cultural safety plans for staff.

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### Current Activities

- The Health and Community Services Directorate also has a number of initiatives currently in progress to improve cultural safety these include:
  - Undertaking a Cultural Safety Review through an independent, culturally competent advisor to conduct a psychosocial risk assessment. The assessment will focus on identifying factors that contribute to psychological risk, with the aim of enhancing the wellbeing and cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.
  - Identifying and creating spaces for Aboriginal staff across sites of HCSD that provide safe place for Aboriginal staff to go, work or meet.
  - Scheduled and regular ongoing meetings/yarning circles with staff that are embedded into DG/DDG calendars.
  - Establishing HCSD Executive subcommittee to monitor progress of agreed initiatives.
- HCSD Employees also recently participated in NAIDOC Week events, including the First Australians Tour at the National Museum of Australia and video presentations from Aunty Maddie McGrady and Joe Flick.

## Key information

### Previous ACTHD activities

- In 2024-25 the previous ACT Health Directorate Executive Board endorsed a commitment to cultural integrity for consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff who had not been directly involved in its development. This statement and similar artifacts in from the Community Services Directorate, now need to be brought together in a meaningful way for HCSD.
- The ACTHD commitment statement was drafted by a reference group of staff from across the organisation, with the aim of laying the foundation for actions to strengthen cultural integrity, improve cultural safety and eliminate racism. It specifically committed to realising the commitment by:
  - *Being culturally safe and responsive* - foster environments free from racism and discrimination, beginning with cultural safety training for every person in ACT Health.
  - *Being inclusive and supportive learning culture* - promote cultural integrity and create a culture that encourages curious, authentic and constructive conversations to build trust and understanding. A safe environment where shared learning can happen will grow collective understanding and lead to better innovation and improved outcomes.
  - *Embedding cultural integrity in our systems and processes* – integrate what we do so that it reaches all parts of our organisation and the organisations we fund, for example through funding instruments, recruitment and retention, performance and development and business planning.
  - *Being respectful and meaningful engagement and partnerships* – walk alongside and work alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and Communities in the ACT and region to strengthen health and well-being and eliminate racism.
- This built on work previously done June 2022 (completed in 2023) by Indigenous firm, MurriMatters, to undertake a series of engagements with its staff aimed at strengthening the cultural integrity of the agency

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### Previous CSD Activities

- CSD employees undertook a range of cross-cultural training programs designed to build cultural awareness, and role-based training specific to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Role based training was enhanced through experiential learning designed to enrich cultural awareness, strengthen team connections, and empower staff to engage more respectfully and meaningfully with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and communities.
- In November 2024, the former CSD hosted a Yarning Circle to foster connection, open dialogue, and relationship building among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in a culturally safe environment. The session, facilitated by Dr Karen Demmery, provided a supportive space for cultural sharing, self-care practices, and resilience building strategies.
- CSD distributed clear and accessible resources to all staff on inclusive recruitment practices. These factsheets provide practical guidance for identifying and removing barriers faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates throughout each stage of the recruitment process.

### Training Statistics 2024/25

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