

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

Interrelate Limited and its membership acknowledge the traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander custodians of the Australian land on which it provides its services; we celebrate their ongoing culture and contribution to society; and respect their elders, both past and present.

We would like to acknowledge all Aboriginal and non – Aboriginal people who shared their knowledge, experience and stories that contributed to the development of this Strategy, and acknowledge those who will partner with us in the future to implement the initiatives contained in this Strategy.

The acronym ATSI has been used throughout this Strategy to refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

Message from the CEO

Interrelate has had a proud history of building strong and sustainable relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that are founded on mutual respect and a desire to work in partnership. Interrelate has worked diligently to achieve this desired outcome. It is with great pride that I am able to present Interrelate's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy. This Strategy supports Interrelate's commitment by dedicating resources to activities that will help close the gap in educational and employment outcomes for Aboriginal communities.

Interrelate's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff journey with families to facilitate healing, family safety, cultural awareness and community connection. Staff collaborate with community and services by sharing expertise through yarning and case management. Through the use of mentors, elders and community connections, our staff engage children, young people and families to celebrate traditional culture, engage in education, counselling and activities that increase the community's awareness of available supports.

Through this Strategy we aim to ensure that this workforce is expanded, enhanced and supported to deliver quality services in community on behalf of Interrelate.

Introduction

Interrelate is committed to the authentic inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) people in the life of Interrelate, and acknowledges the value of ATSI people to the Organisation.

In 2010, Interrelate undertook a process of consultation with staff, the Board of Interrelate and sought guidance from Reconciliation Australia to develop its Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2011 – 2015. In March 2011, the RAP Working Group was formed which consisted of staff and an external Aboriginal consultant. The Group developed organisational communication and consultative processes for the development of the RAP, and undertook a number of projects to raise awareness of the importance of the RAP in providing services to our communities.

Following the launch of the RAP, a number of initiatives were implemented throughout the Organisation:

- Interrelate Centres display Interrelate's Reconciliation Statement in their foyers (2011)
- Cultural awareness training provided to staff (2011)
- Interrelate's induction process updated to include all staff having access to a copy of SNAICC's 'Working and Walking Together: Supporting Family Relationship Services to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Families and Organisations' and 'The Cultural Dictionary' (produced by the Canberra Multicultural Resource Centre) (2012).
- Kutanya was formed (2012). Kutanya is an internal reference group made up of staff who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, or staff who are working with Aboriginal communities. Kutanya aims to support the delivery of services to Aboriginal communities and to support ATSI staff.
- Interrelate commenced consultations with ATSI staff in regards to the development of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy (2013).
- Initiatives for the strategy were finalised with Kutanya, and all staff were consulted for further feedback (2014).
- Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country protocol guidelines implemented (2014).
- Interrelate's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy launched (2015).

Interrelate has a strong commitment to supporting its ATSI staff and will use a range of formal and informal processes to support the development of ATSI staff to move into leadership roles, such as informal mentoring and support for ATSI staff which supports professional development and career pathways; ATSI staff providing career guidance,

support and coaching to other staff, providing space for ATSI staff to meet regularly to debrief and support each other.

It is anticipated that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy will increase the number of ATSI workers within Interrelate and facilitate their professional development to support career progression.

Principles for the Implementation of the Strategy

Interrelate identifies the following areas as being key principles for the implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy:

1. Relationships and Partnerships

Interrelate acknowledges the importance of trust and relationships when working with ATSI staff, and is committed to working in partnership with ATSI staff in the development and delivery of the initiatives within the Strategy.

2. Communication and Consultation

Interrelate acknowledges that good communication supports the development of strong relationships and partnerships, and allows for the exchange of ideas and feedback that will support Interrelate in providing a place of work that is appropriate, accessible and supportive for ATSI staff. Interrelate is committed to open communication and consultation with ATSI staff in the development and delivery of the initiatives within the Strategy.

Geographical Data

Interrelate has a presence in major regions throughout NSW and places us in a position to improve ATSI employment outcomes. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy allows for the exploration of innovative solutions that result in employment outcomes for ATSI people as set against our key objectives of:

- Culturally supportive workplace environments
- Attraction and selection of ATSI staff
- Retention of ATSI staff
- Investment in the potential of our people

Strategic Alignment

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy has been developed to support our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) as well as to support The Council of Australian Government's (COAG's) agenda of increasing ATSI employment and reducing the level of disadvantage amongst ATSI Australians.

Data Collection and Reporting

Information will be collected from a number of sources, including HR Metrics, and progress against the initiatives of this Strategy will be reported to the Board and Executive Team of Interrelate every six months.

Priority Area 1: Develop and maintain a culturally supportive workplace environment

Outcomes	Actions	Measures
A culturally aware organisation that builds greater respect for ATSI people within Interrelate	Engage with all staff to undertake ATSI specific cross cultural training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70% of staff undertaken ATSI specific cross cultural training ATSI flags displayed in all centres 'Working and Walking Together' book in all centres, and provided to all new employees at the time of induction Maps of Aboriginal Australia and Aboriginal language displayed throughout centres Online cultural awareness training module developed
	Employment of ATSI staff in each region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6% representation rate of the total workforce
	Support for ATSI staff to connect with, and support, each other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee participation in Kutanya Industry partnerships to bring together all ATSI workers in the regions for ongoing support, development and networking opportunities
	Establish an annual Staff Reconciliation Awards program, recognising contributions of individuals or groups that worked towards promoting and achieving increased participation of ATSI staff and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awarding of a Staff Reconciliation Award

Priority Area 2: Attract and select quality, ATSI applicants

Outcomes	Actions	Measures
Increased representation of ATSI employees in the Interrelate workforce, with a 6% rate of total workforce population by December 2016	Develop workplace targets for the employment of ATSI staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workplace employment targets established
	Develop a communication and marketing strategy that demonstrates Interrelate's commitment to employing ATSI peoples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships with local organisations in the delivery of an annual Aboriginal Career Fair for employment in the region Partnerships with local employment agencies to promote employment opportunities Attendance at Employment Expos Attendance at ATSI Training and Employment Conferences Attendance at NAIDOC and Reconciliation events
	Establish an ATSI recruitment portal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A website that promotes the Employment Strategy, the employment conditions of Interrelate, positions vacant and the recruitment process is in place and promoted to all ATSI organisations and other job networks
	Advertise Interrelate employment opportunities through ATSI specific media: (all identified positions and positions servicing ATSI communities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of positions advertised in ATSI specific media
	Establish recruitment opportunities and pathways documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Places identified to advertise positions that will be accessed by ATSI peoples Current recruitment advertisement structures reviewed Interrelate's Career Pathways Program promoted to all staff 'Identified positions' established throughout the regions Annual ATSI industry based scholarship established Aboriginal Internship Program established

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal Work Experience Program for High School students established • Partnerships with organisations that provide employment and education support to ATSI peoples, such as Career Trackers, Aboriginal Employment Strategy (www.aes.org.au), ATSI Jobs Australia and the ATSI Employment Program • 'Identified Positions' for ATSI staff in the Emerging Leaders Program
Establish induction practices that support ATSI people in commencing employment with Interrelate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interrelate Buddy Program promoted throughout the Organisation • Register of ATSI staff to act as 'buddies' in the Program
Review and further develop workplace conditions of employment that attract candidates to consider working with Interrelate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workplace conditions reviewed • Flexible working hours available • Special leave made available for family and cultural commitments • Mentoring opportunities made available • Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) made available in regards to attaining qualified rates of pay and for training and development opportunities
Establish recruitment practices that support ATSI people in applying for employment with Interrelate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection criteria and recruitment processes reviewed • Web based and paper based applications made available • Opportunities provided to 'have a yarn' with Panel Head before applying • ATSI staff member made available to 'have a yarn' before applying for ATSI specific positions • 100% of recruitment panels for ATSI positions have an ATSI representative participate • Cultural awareness training provided for recruitment panel members

Priority Area 3: Develop a culturally supportive environment to support the retention of ATSI staff

Outcomes	Actions	Measures
6% representation rate of ATSI employees in the Interrelate workforce maintained	Continue culturally appropriate workplace conditions which are supportive of the needs of our ATSI staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion and utilisation of the provisions of NAIDOC leave and leave for ATSI customs, traditional law and cultural practice in the Enterprise Agreement
	Conduct a workforce analysis of current retention rates and identify reasons for turnover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exit Interview process offers an ATSI staff member in the interview process
	Provision of external support for ATSI staff for counselling and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with the EAP provider to arrange for staff to access ATSI Counsellors for support
	Develop regional representation rates using ABS data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional representation rates set and met
	Increase access to information and resources that assist ATSI employees to balance work and community/ cultural responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of resources distributed
	Support resources that respect ATSI cultural values in the workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome to Country protocols established

Priority Area 4: Invest in the potential of our people

Outcomes	Actions	Measures
Skilled and engaged workforce	Identify training needs of ATSI staff through annual reviews and L&D Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training Needs Analysis completed • Opportunities promoted to ATSI staff for internal career planning advice and support
	Establishment of professional development opportunities for ATSI staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of opportunities promoted to ATSI staff • Number of ATSI staff participating in secondment and higher duty opportunities • Promotion of the Study Assistance Program • % of reported ATSI employees in professional learning and development opportunities
	Develop and implement an Aboriginal Mentor Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal Mentor Program launched with mentors in place • Number of ATSI staff in mentoring relationships
	Support the inception and maintenance of ATSI people's involvement in Interrelate's Alumni Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alumni Program established and promoted to ATSI staff • Number of ATSI staff connected to the Program
	Provision of job selection training for ATSI staff to assist them in applying for other opportunities within Interrelate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of opportunities promoted to ATSI staff • Number of ATSI staff participating in training
	Increase participation rate of ATSI employees on leadership programs and forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of reported ATSI employees attending leadership programs