AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH

THE UNIVERSITY of ADELAIDE

ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT AT WORK

Survey of Aboriginal Employment in the not-for-profit Aboriginal Community Services sector

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Report prepared for:
The Don Dunstan Foundation

AISR
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1.1 THE SURVEY SAMPLE

Organisations participating in the survey met the sample selection criteria of representing **not for profit organisations** providing services to **at least one Aboriginal client**. The **31** not for profit organisations represented in the sample comprised –

> ➢ Twelve organisations (38.7%) which are **not Aboriginal specific but have a dedicated Aboriginal unit/component**;
> ➢ Eleven organisations (35.5%) providing **services to both Aboriginal and non Aboriginal clients**; and
> ➢ Eight organisations (25.8%) providing **services *only* to Aboriginal people**.

These organisations were –

a. based in major centres across the State, with twelve (38.7%) located outside the metropolitan area;
b. diverse in size, with client caseloads ranging from less than 20 to more than 10,000 clients per annum;
c. providing services to clients of whom one quarter were Aboriginal. Across individual organisations the proportion of Aboriginal clients ranged from 2% to 100%.
d. A broad range of services were being provided by the organisations, most commonly information, advocacy, counseling, community development and personal care services.

1.2 WORKFORCE PROFILE

1.2.1 PAID AND VOLUNTEER STAFF

Twenty five organisations provided information on the numbers of paid staff and regular volunteers.

Regardless of their service focus or location, organisations with a greater proportion of Aboriginal clients were more likely to employ Aboriginal staff in paid positions. Overall, eighteen (72.0%) of the 25 organisations which provided information about their overall staffing had at least one paid Aboriginal staff member.

There was significant reliance in the sector on volunteers, with 40.0% of people involved in these organisations being volunteers rather than paid staff. However, Aboriginal workforce members were more likely to be volunteers than in paid positions compared with non-Aboriginal workers. Volunteers represented 65.5% of the Aboriginal workforce while 36.4% of non Aboriginal workforce members were volunteers.

1.2.1.1 WORK ROLES OF ABORIGINAL AND NON ABORIGINAL STAFF

Fifteen organisations provided data about the number of paid Aboriginal and non Aboriginal staff working in various roles.

Compared with non Aboriginal employees, a somewhat smaller proportion of Aboriginal staff were employed in *Direct support* roles (e.g. support worker, personal care assistant, residential care officer) and a somewhat greater proportion were employed in roles which fell outside of conventional role categories (i.e. *Other* roles many of which are presumed to involve culturally specific work).

Aboriginal people comprised 13.6% of all *Managers/senior staff* and 11.5% of those in *Professional care* roles.

1.2.1.2   EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS OF ABORIGINAL AND NON ABORIGINAL STAFF

Sixteen organisations provided data about the types of contracts under which their Aboriginal and non Aboriginal staff were employed.

Aboriginal staff were more likely to be employed as **permanent** full time staff members (36.7% of all Aboriginal staff) than were non Aboriginal staff (9.1% of all non Aboriginal staff) and comprising 30.1% of all permanent full time staff across the sector.

1.2.1.3   DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF ABORIGINAL STAFF

Based on data from the 14 organisations which provided information on the gender composition of their Aboriginal workforce, just over three quarters (76.1%) of Aboriginal staff working in these organisations were female. This is consistent with the gender split seen generally across health and community service sectors.

Age profile data from 13 organisations showed that the majority (73.4%) of Aboriginal staff were aged 21 to 49, though a substantial 24.4% were aged 50 and over.

Data on the educational qualifications of Aboriginal staff was provided by 11 organisations. The vast majority of these staff had completed at least a Certificate III or IV level qualification. Only 10.8% had received no further qualification after High School.

1.2.2   JOB RELATED TRAINING OR STUDY OFFERED

Sixteen respondents from organisations with Aboriginal staff provided an indication as to whether or not their organisation was currently supporting those staff to undertake further training or study. Eleven of these organisations (68.8%) reported that they were doing so. Participation in training and study courses at all levels was reported.

The vast majority of respondents who supplied information about the types of job related training provided to their Aboriginal staff indicated that the organisation gave staff *a formal induction and orientation* upon joining the organisation as well as *on the job training specific to the person's work role*. First Aid training and OH&S training were also offered by more than 50% of organisations. Prevocational training (language, numeracy and literacy skills) was not generally available.

More than 80% of organisations provided *flexible work hours* and supported *attendance at conferences, workshops and training programs*. There was also significant support offered in terms of *mentoring*, *assistance with study costs* and the provision of *paid study leave*. Only two organisations did not offer any support for further training; those organisations were staffed predominantly or entirely by volunteers.

Given that more than two thirds of organisations currently had Aboriginal staff undertaking further training or study, this demonstrates the importance and impact of these supports.

1.3 EXISTING DEMAND LEVELS

1.3.1 UNFILLED VACANCIES AND NEW POSITIONS

Twenty one respondents were able to provide information about current vacancies and new positions expected in the next 6-12 months.

Six organisations (28.6%) reported a total of 35 unfilled vacancies overall. Administrative officers, project officers, professional staff, coordinators and senior management staff were being sought.

A total of 118 new positions were expected to become available across seven organisations within the next 6-12 months. Most of the expected new positions were in case worker, care worker and support worker roles, but a small number were for coordinators and managers, clerical staff and enrolled nurses.

1.3.2 DIFFICULTY FILLING PARTICULAR ROLES

Approximately half of the organisations expressed difficulty in filling particular roles with Aboriginal staff, in particular, in filling *higher level professional care roles* (Psychologists, Social Workers, Occupational Therapists and Key Community Workers) and *CEO roles* with Aboriginal staff. However some level of difficulty existed across all types of role.

1.4 RECRUITMENT OF ABORIGINAL STAFF

1.4.1 RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES USED

Twenty one respondents provided information about the recruitment strategies used by their organisation.

It was common practice to actively encourage Aboriginal applicants when recruiting new staff (61.9% of organisations). Two thirds of organisations (66.7%) considered that one of the best methods, for recruiting Aboriginal staff involved utilising Aboriginal community and service networks.

1.4.2 PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO RECRUITMENT

Around half of the respondents who felt able to comment on recruitment believed that overall their organisation was able to attract and recruit the Aboriginal employees it needed, however a quarter disagreed.

Specific barriers faced by organisations in attracting and recruiting Aboriginal staff were most commonly identified as the *lack of competitive salaries* (especially against Government salaries), *lack of security of employment,* and *lack of a career path.*

Several respondents also commented that finding local Aboriginal people with the necessary standard or level of education/training (e.g. higher than Certificate III or IV) was a significant limiting factor in the recruitment of Aboriginal staff.

1.4.3 STRATEGIES SUGGESTED FOR INCREASING RECRUITMENT

Strategies suggested for increasing recruitment of Aboriginal people mainly involved/required access to government funding, for example –

- Government assistance (funding) to allow NGOs to offer higher salaries and thereby better compete with the government sector when recruiting staff;
- Government support to offer incentives directly to Aboriginal people to work for a community organisation, such as additional remuneration in recognition of their cultural knowledge; and
- Government providing the extra funding necessary for organisations to employ Aboriginal staff (e.g. to cover extended cultural leave).

Several respondents also identified a need for better education and good quality training for Aboriginal people in general, especially for the higher level care qualifications required for some jobs within the sector.

Two community level strategies aimed at accessing Aboriginal people who may not otherwise consider working for a local community service organisation were also suggested –

- Increasing the community's awareness and understanding of the organisation in general as well as employment opportunities in particular, e.g. through local Expos and networking with Aboriginal family groups, peer groups, associations and organisations.
- Paying, on a fee for service basis, interested Aboriginal grassroots community members to encourage contact with the services, leading to engagement in volunteering as a first step.

1.5 RETENTION OF ABORIGINAL STAFF

1.5.1 RETENTION RATES

Respondents from twenty one organisations were able to provide data on the number of paid staff who had left their organisation in the last 12 months. The overall retention rate for these organisations was **86.8%.**

Retention rates were essentially the same for Aboriginal and non Aboriginal staff, being 85.8% and 87.0% respectively.

1.5.2 PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO RETENTION

Twenty respondents completed questions regarding the challenges of retaining Aboriginal staff. The majority of these people believed that overall their organisation was able to retain the Aboriginal employees it needed.

Echoing the barriers to recruitment identified by the sample, commonly identified barriers to *retaining* Aboriginal staff included the *lack of competitive salaries* (especially against Government salaries), *lack of a career path*, and *insufficient permanent employment opportunities.* In addition, *insufficient opportunity for career development and/or promotion* was also cited as a barrier to retention by more than 40% of respondents.

1.5.3 STRATEGIES SUGGESTED FOR MAXIMISING RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

There is considerable overlap in strategies suggested for promoting recruitment and retention – particularly with regard to funding support to provide competitive salaries, and being able to offer permanent employment.

Many respondents also identified the need for increased support for the training, up-skilling and mentoring of existing Aboriginal staff, and for non Aboriginal staff to provide them with the skills they need to be effective and supportive managers/supervisors of Aboriginal staff.

In addition, strategies for enhancing on the job and external training were also suggested, including the following (although noting that many organisations in the sample are already pursuing the first two) -

- Improving the staff orientation process to ensure that Aboriginal staff have a good understanding of their role and the expectations of the organisation;
- Linking the employee with an independent mentor who respects the employee and has skills to mediate in the workplace, if needed;
- Encouraging Aboriginal staff to work across all areas of the organisation if desired, not being restricted to Aboriginal specific programs; and
- Developing links with tertiary training organisations providing training to Aboriginal people.

The psychosocial working environment was also considered an important factor in retention. An environment supporting the retention of Aboriginal staff was seen as including the following –

- Attention to building the confidence of Aboriginal staff;
- A focus on keeping the work interesting and fulfilling;
- An "open door" policy encouraging ideas and input from all employees;
- Providing clear and consistent work/community boundaries for Aboriginal staff;
- Recognising achievements, e.g. when work is performed well or milestones are accomplished;
- Drawing links between the day to day activities of staff and the broader outcomes achieved as a direct result of their work; and
- Having organisation-wide policies regarding cultural respect.

Improvements to working conditions including the physical environment and the information technology environment were also thought to have potential benefits for retention.

2   INTRODUCTION

This report is the culmination of stage one of a wider project being undertaken by the Don Dunstan Foundation. It undertakes preliminary mapping of Aboriginal employment in the Aboriginal community services sector in South Australia, identifying services which provide only for Aboriginal people and services that are not Aboriginal-specific but have a dedicated Aboriginal service component, and organisations providing services to both Aboriginal and non Aboriginal people.

The intention of the report is to provide a better understanding of the scope of Aboriginal employment in the Aboriginal community services sector in South Australia, given the absence of such information at the time of the project. The project identifies opportunities for increasing the participation of Aboriginal employment in the sector and some of the key challenges and strategies associated with this.

The project also adds to earlier work undertaken by the Australian Institute for Social Research (AISR) for the Don Dunstan Foundation during 2006-2007 (Barnett, Spoehr & Parnis 2007) which identified challenges and opportunities associated with the South Australian government's progress towards achieving a target of 2 per cent Aboriginal employment in the SA public sector.[1] Many of the findings of that research are echoed in those of this current project, as this report will demonstrate.

As this report reveals the Aboriginal community services sector in South Australia is a major employer of Aboriginal people. It is likely that demand for services in the sector is likely to grow over coming years in line with trends in the wider community services sector and in response to efforts to better meet the needs of Aboriginal communities. The findings from the survey suggest there is potential for growth in Aboriginal employment over the medium term in response to existing demand. Workforce ageing of the Aboriginal workforce over coming years is likely to see the emergence of new job openings, creating opportunities for younger generations of Aboriginal people to build careers working in the Aboriginal community services sector. Better understanding the profile of Aboriginal employment in the sector provides the foundation for the development of strategies that can increase the range and quality of employment opportunities for Aboriginal people.

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[1] Barnett K, Spoehr J & Parnis E (2007) *Equity Works: Achieving the Target of 2% Aboriginal Employment in the South Australian Public Sector*, Final Report to the Don Dunstan Foundation, Adelaide

3   FINDINGS

3.1   THE SAMPLE

3.1.1   ELIGIBILITY

Of the 167 persons invited to participate in the survey, 53 (31.7%) attempted the questionnaire. However based on screening questions, only **31** of these were deemed to be in scope for the survey. These were persons who met the sample selection criteria of representing **not for profit organisations** providing services to **at least one Aboriginal client**.

Figure 1 illustrates the participation pathways of those invited to take part in the survey.

Figure 1: Diagram showing participation pathways
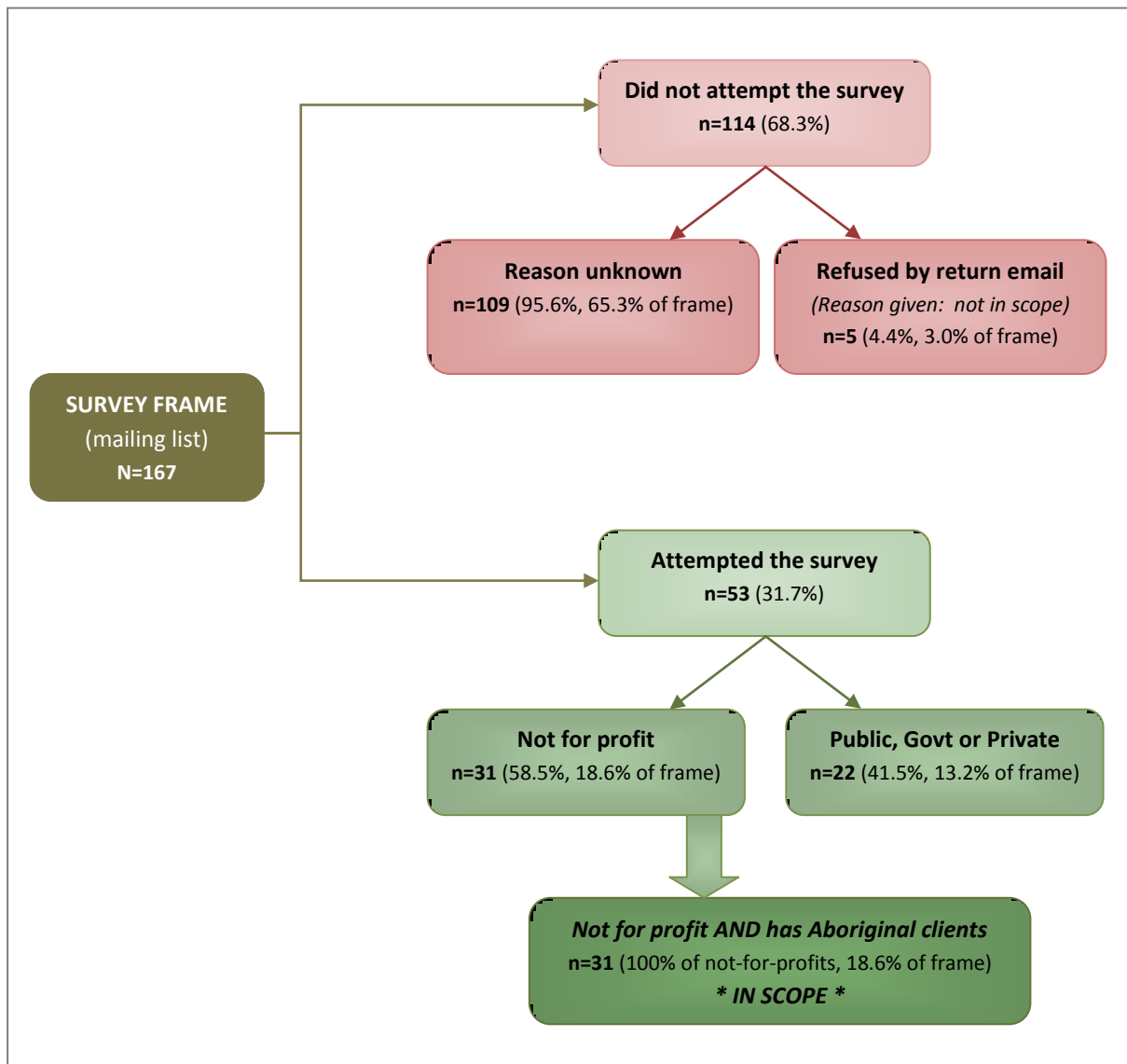
This report presents results based on the in scope sample of 31 organisations.

3.1.2 SERVICE CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

The 31 not for profit organisations represented in the sample comprised –

- Twelve organisations (38.7%) which are **not Aboriginal specific but have a dedicated Aboriginal unit/component**;
- Eleven organisations (35.5%) providing **services to both Aboriginal and non Aboriginal clients**; and
- Eight organisations (25.8%) providing **services *only* to Aboriginal people**.

These organisations were based in major centres across the State, with twelve (38.7%) located outside the metropolitan area. Mt Gambier in particular was well represented. See Figure 2 for details.

Figure 2: Location (region) of main office of participating organisations
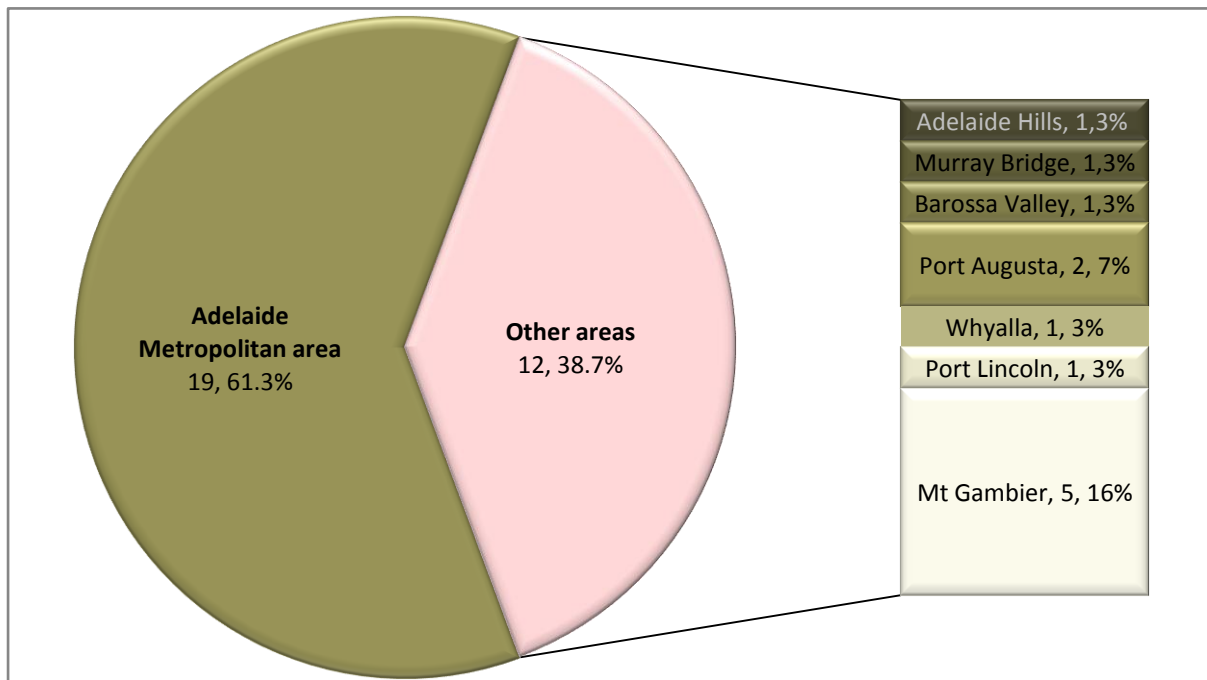
Together these organisations provided services to clients in all regions of the State, with many operating across more than one region – see Table 1.

Table 1: Region of service provision

Service region	No. of organisations	% of organisations (n=31)
Eastern Adelaide	10	32.3%
Northern Adelaide	12	38.7%
Southern Adelaide	11	35.5%
Western Adelaide	12	38.7%
Adelaide Hills	9	29.0%
Barossa, Light and Lower North	6	19.4%
Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island	6	19.4%
Limestone Coast	11	35.5%
Murray and Mallee	10	32.3%
Yorke and Mid North	7	22.6%
Eyre and Western	8	25.8%
Far North	8	25.8%
Other States/Territories	4	12.9%
Not Stated	*6*	*19.4%*

Organisations of all sizes were represented in the sample. The number of clients serviced by each organisation ranged from a current caseload of less than 20 to more than 10,000 clients in total per annum.

Overall, one quarter of clients was Aboriginal. However across individual organisations the proportion of clients who were Aboriginal ranged from 2% to 100%. Thirteen organisations had a client base where 50% or more of their clients were Aboriginal.

A broad range of services were being provided by the organisations, most commonly information, advocacy, counselling, community development and personal care services – see Table 2.

Table 2: Types of community services provided

Type of Community Service	No. of organisations	% of organisations (n=31)
Individual and family support		
Information and advice	15	48.4%
Individual and group advocacy	14	45.2%
Counselling	13	41.9%
Community development	12	38.7%
Emergency relief	8	25.8%
Financial support	5	16.1%
Personal and health services		
Personal care services	10	32.3%
Health services	9	29.0%
Home care & maintenance	6	19.4%
Respite for carers	6	19.4%
Accommodation services		
Low care residential accommodation	7	22.6%
Housing services	6	19.4%
Transitional and crisis accommodation	5	16.1%
Employment services		
Vocational education & training	7	22.6%
Help in finding paid employment	5	16.1%
Supported employment	4	12.9%
Children's services		
Child protection	4	12.9%
Foster care & adoption support	3	9.7%
Child care	2	6.5%
Other services		
Sport and recreation	2	6.5%
Legal services	2	6.5%
Referral service	2	6.5%
Miscellaneous	4	12.9%
Not Stated	*6*	*19.4%*

3.2 WORKFORCE SUPPLY AND DEMAND

3.2.1 PROFILE OF THE EXISTING WORKFORCE

Twenty five organisations provided information on the numbers of paid staff and regular volunteers currently involved with their organisation.

In total, 4,441 people were reported to be working for these 25 organisations as either a paid staff member or as a regular volunteer. As shown in Figure 3 below, this sector appears to rely heavily on volunteers, with 40.0% of people involved in these organisations being volunteers rather than paid staff.

Figure 3: Broad composition of the workforce
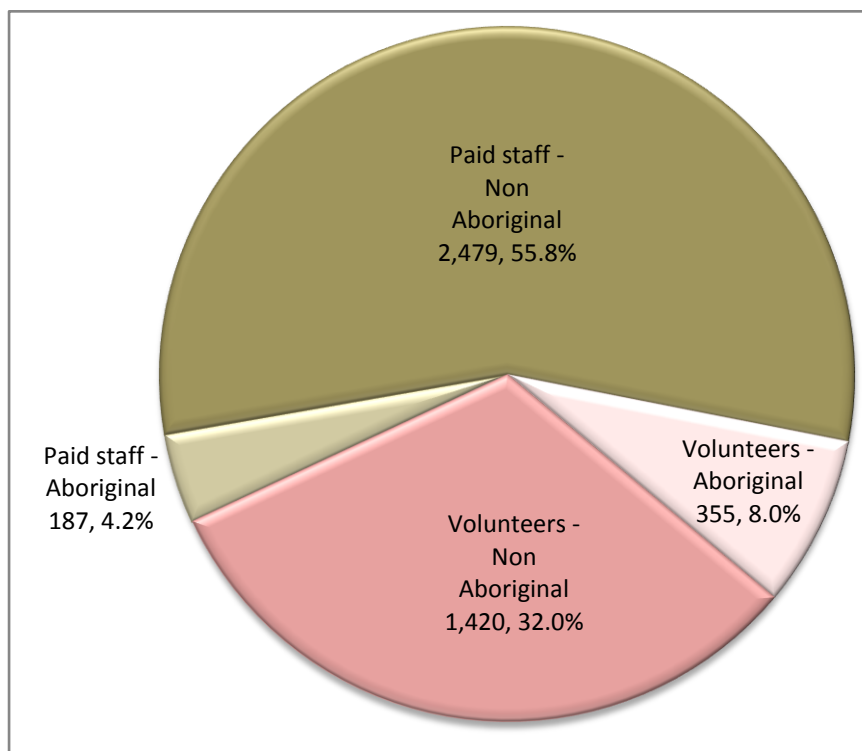
Regardless of their service focus or location, organisations with a greater proportion of Aboriginal clients were more likely to employ Aboriginal staff in paid positions. Overall, eighteen (72.0%) of the 25 organisations which provided information about their overall staffing had at least one paid Aboriginal staff member.

3.2.1.1 THE CONTRIBUTION OF VOLUNTEERS

Given the large number of regular volunteers reported, the use of volunteers was examined further on an individual organisation basis.

Of the 25 organisations which provided data about their workforce –

- One small organisation was staffed *only* by volunteers;
- Volunteers comprised *50% or more* of the workforce for a further seven organisations;
- Only eight (32.0%) of the 25 organisations did not use *any* volunteers as part of their workforce.

There were no particular organisational characteristics captured by the survey that differentiated organisations with a greater proportion of volunteers from those with few or no volunteers.

3.2.1.2 ABORIGINAL REPRESENTATION IN THE WORKFORCE AS A WHOLE

There is a marked disparity in the level of Aboriginal representation within the paid and the volunteer segments of this workforce. Aboriginal people comprised 20.0% of all volunteers but only 7.0% of all paid staff – see Figure 4.

Figure 4: Representation of Aboriginal people in the paid and volunteer workforce
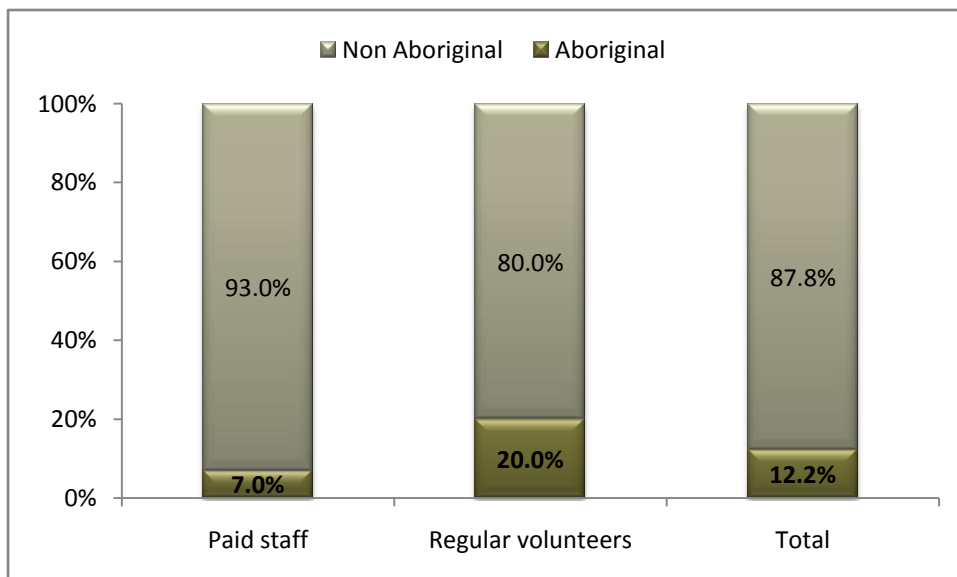
Viewed from another perspective, nearly two thirds (65.5%) of all Aboriginal people working in this sector were volunteers rather than paid workers, while in contrast only around one third (36.4%) of non Aboriginal people working in the sector were volunteers. This is illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Proportion of paid versus volunteer staff in the Aboriginal and Non Aboriginal workforce
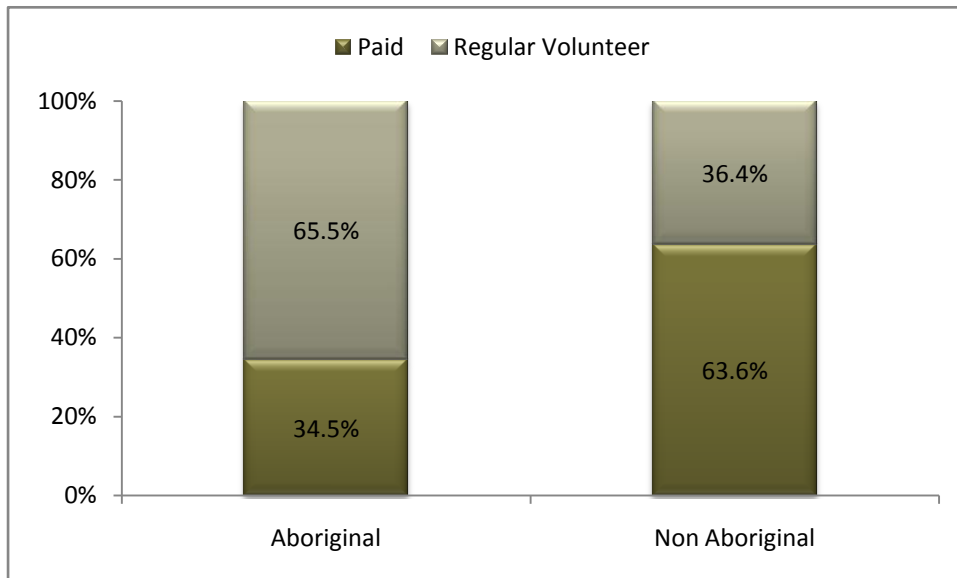
3.2.1.3   WORK ROLES OF ABORIGINAL AND NON ABORIGINAL STAFF

Organisations were asked to report the number of paid Aboriginal and non Aboriginal staff working in various roles. Only fifteen organisations provided complete and internally consistent data for all of the relevant items.

Compared with non Aboriginal employees, a somewhat smaller proportion of Aboriginal staff were employed in *Direct support* roles (e.g. support worker, personal care assistant, residential care officer) and a somewhat greater proportion were employed in roles which fell outside of conventional role categories (i.e. *Other* roles) – see Figure 6.

Figure 6: Roles undertaken by Aboriginal and Non Aboriginal staff (paid employees only)
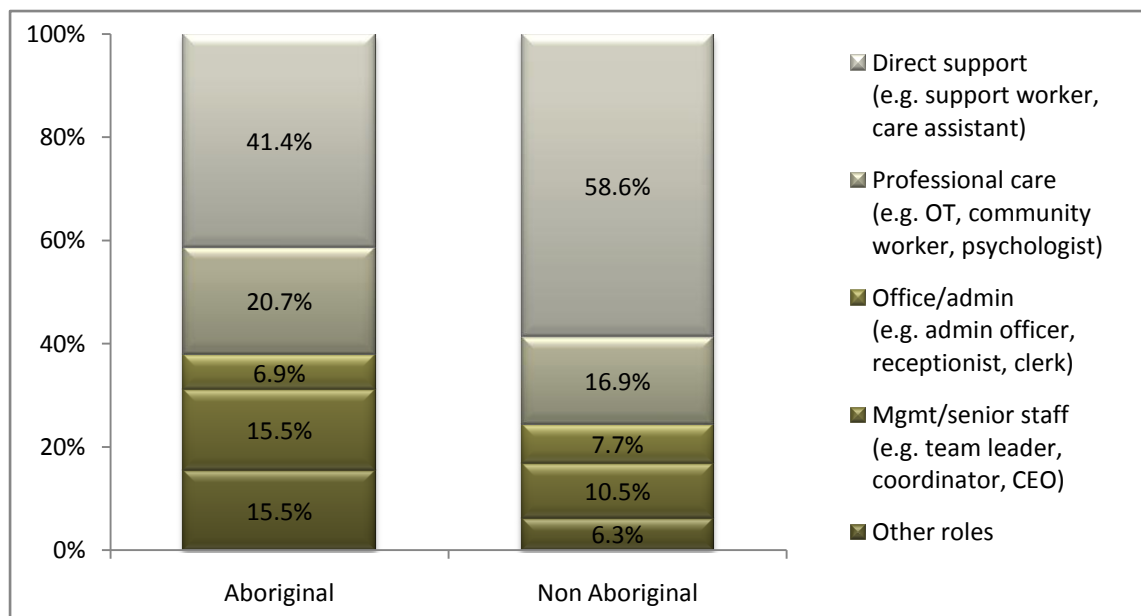
Looking at Aboriginal representation within particular role categories (see Figure 7), 20.9% of all staff employed in Other roles were Aboriginal. The survey did not collect descriptive information about the Other roles. It is possible that Aboriginal people are more likely to hold more specialised culture-specific roles within these organisations.

It is encouraging that Aboriginal people comprised 13.6% of all *Managers/senior staff* and 11.5% of those in *Professional care* roles.

Figure 7: Aboriginal representation by role (paid employees only)
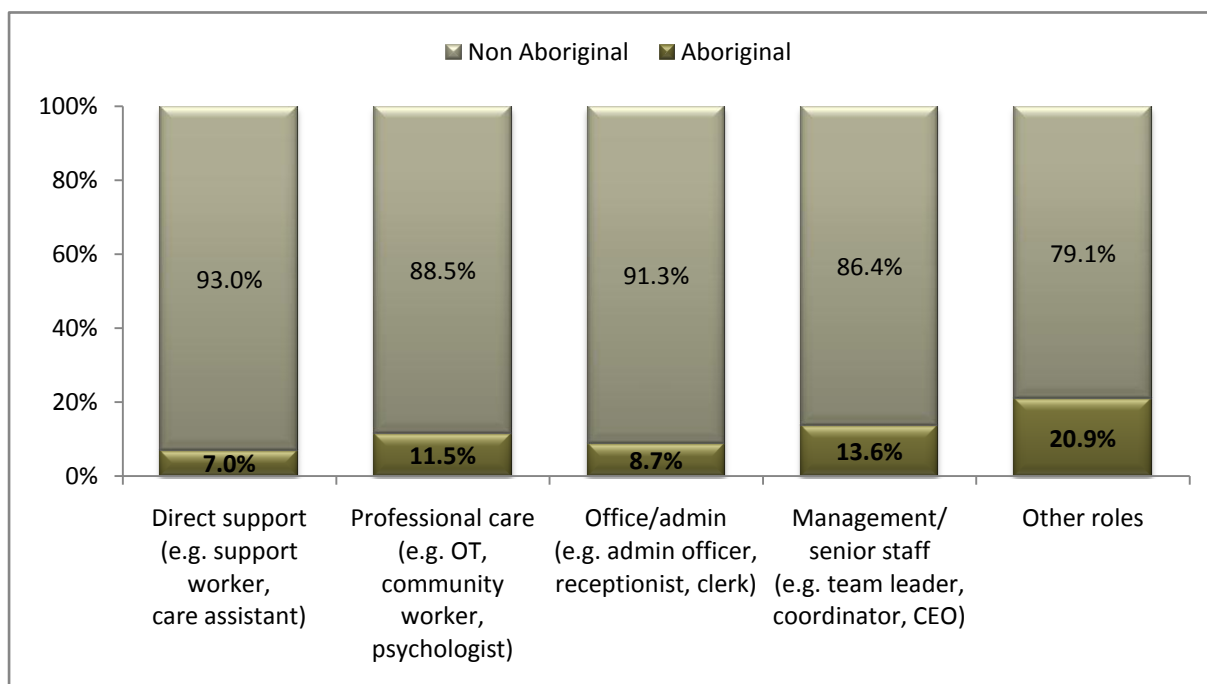
3.2.1.4 EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS OF ABORIGINAL AND NON ABORIGINAL STAFF

Sixteen organisations provided complete and internally consistent data about the types of contracts under which their Aboriginal and non Aboriginal staff were employed.

Aboriginal staff were more likely to be employed as permanent full time staff members (36.7% of all Aboriginal staff) than were non Aboriginal staff (9.1% of all non Aboriginal staff). In contrast, non Aboriginal staff were more likely to be on short or long term contracts (47.8% of non Aboriginal staff versus 23.3% of Aboriginal staff). See Figure 8 for details.

Figure 8: Employment contracts of Aboriginal and Non Aboriginal staff
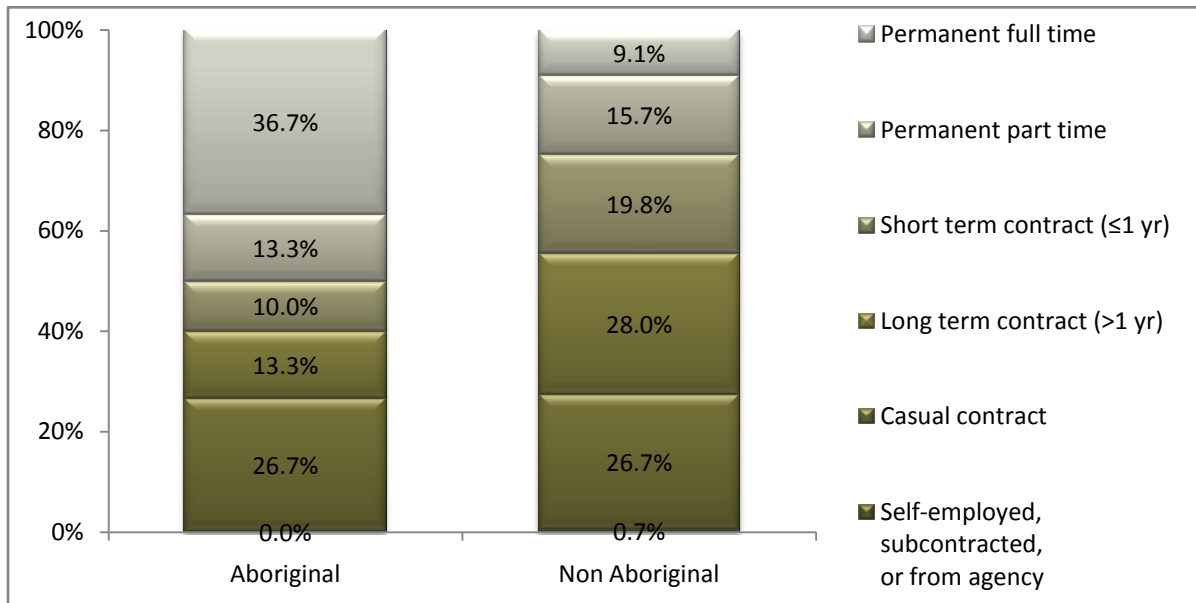
Looking at Aboriginal representation within particular employment contract categories, it is again clear that Aboriginal people are particularly well represented within the permanent full time workforce, comprising **30.1%** of all permanent full time staff – see Figure 9.

Figure 9: Aboriginal representation by type of employment contract
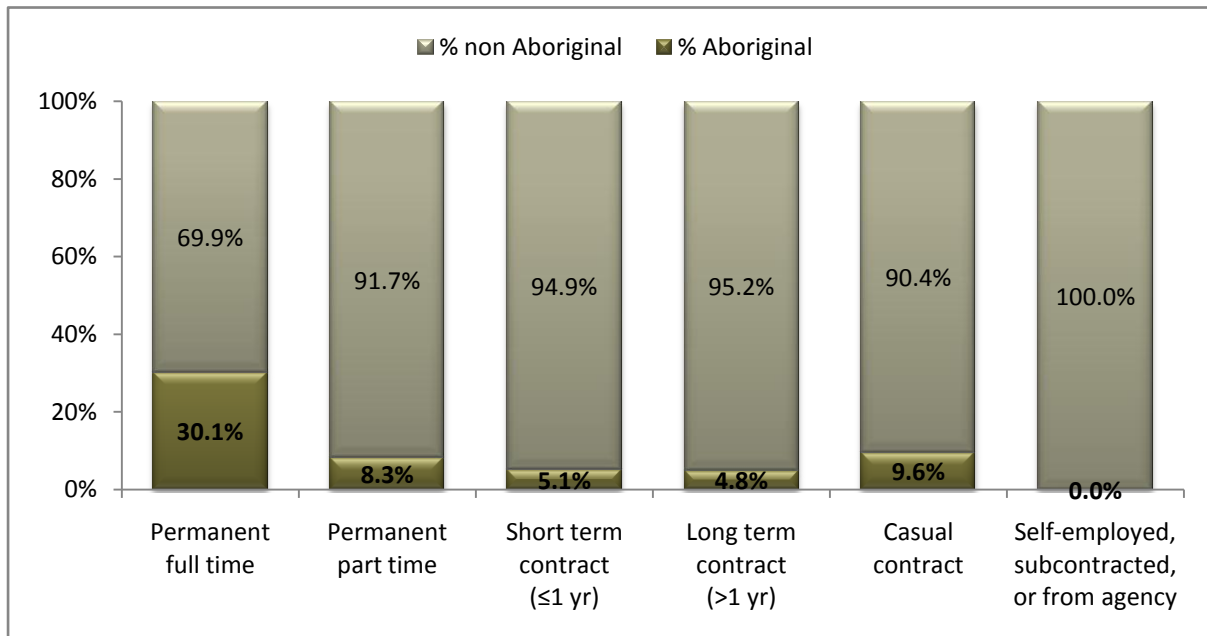
3.2.1.5 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF ABORIGINAL STAFF

The following demographic profile is based only on those 14 organisations which provided complete and internally consistent data for the demographic items in the survey.

These data show that just over three quarters (76.1%) of Aboriginal staff working in these organisations were female. This is consistent with the gender split seen generally across health and community service sectors.

Age profile data from 13 organisations showed that the majority (73.4%) of Aboriginal staff were aged 21 to 49, though a substantial 24.4% were aged 50+ – see Figure 10.

Figure 10: Age profile of Aboriginal staff (paid employees only)
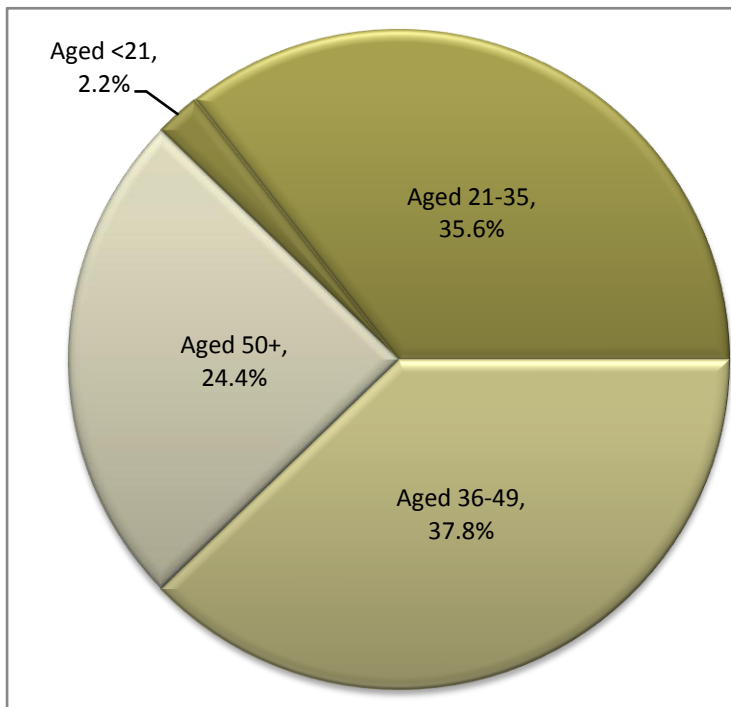
Data on the educational qualifications of Aboriginal staff was provided by 11 organisations. The vast majority of these staff had completed at least a Certificate III or IV level qualification. Only 10.8% had received no further qualification after High School. See Figure 11 for details.

Figure 11: Highest qualification completed by Aboriginal staff (paid employees only)
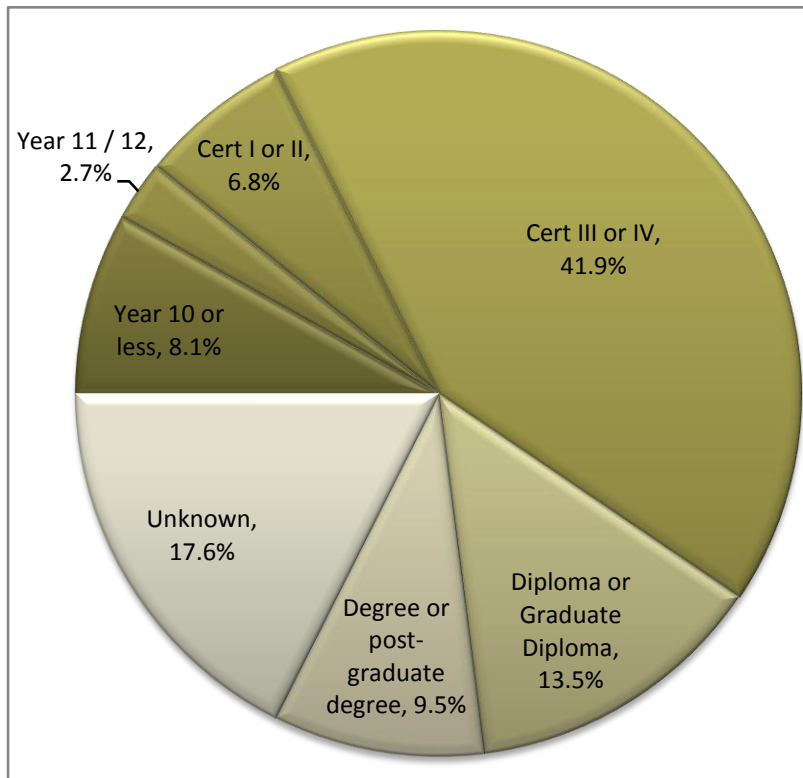
3.2.1.6   SUPPORTING ABORIGINAL STAFF TO UNDERTAKE FURTHER TRAINING/STUDY

Previous research undertaken for the Don Dunstan Foundation has identified the importance of work-related, training for Aboriginal employees as part of broader career path development, as a critical retention promoting factor (Barnett, Spoehr & Parnis 2007).

Sixteen respondents from organisations with Aboriginal staff provided an indication as to whether or not their organisation was currently supporting those staff to undertake further training or study. Eleven of these organisations (68.8%) reported that they were doing so. Participation in training and study courses at all levels was reported – see Table 3.

Table 3: Types of training/study currently being supported by the organisation

Type of training/study	No. of organisations	% of organisations (n=11)
Management or supervisor training (on or off the job)	5	45.5%
Certificate I or II	1	9.1%
Certificate III or IV	5	45.5%
Diploma or Graduate Diploma	6	54.5%
Degree or Post Graduate Degree	4	36.4%

3.2.2 DEMAND LEVELS

3.2.2.1 EXISTING VACANCIES AND NEW POSITIONS EXPECTED

Twenty one respondents were able to provide information about current vacancies and new positions expected in the next 6-12 months.

Six organisations (28.6%) reported a total of 35 unfilled vacancies overall. Administrative officers, project officers, professional staff, coordinators and senior management staff were being sought. In all cases the recruitment processes were either commencing shortly or were already underway.

A total of 118 new positions were expected to become available across seven organisations within the next 6-12 months. Most of the expected new positions were in case worker, care worker and support worker roles, but a small number were for coordinators and managers, clerical staff and enrolled nurses.

3.2.2.2 DIFFICULTY FILLING PARTICULAR ROLES

Around half of the respondents felt able to comment on their organisation's difficulty in filling particular roles with Aboriginal staff. These respondents mainly identified difficulties in filling *higher level professional care roles* (Psychologists, Social Workers, Occupational Therapists and Key workers) and *CEO roles* with Aboriginal staff. However some level of difficulty existed across all types of role – see Figure 12.

Figure 12: Difficulty filling particular roles with Aboriginal staff

Legend: Difficult or very difficult | Neither | Easy or very easy

Role	Difficult or very difficult	Neither	Easy or very easy
CEOs	87.5%	12.5%	
Managers	63.6%	27.3%	9.1%
Coordinators	63.6%	18.2%	18.2%
Team leaders	66.7%	11.1%	22.2%
Fundraising staff	75.0%	25.0%	
Finance or payroll officers	44.4%	44.4%	11.1%
Booking clerks	50.0%	16.7%	33.3%
Reception staff	20.0%	50.0%	30.0%
Administrative staff	18.2%	54.5%	27.3%
Residential program officers	33.3%	66.7%	
Key workers	80.0%	20.0%	
Community workers	44.4%	44.4%	11.1%
Psychologists	100.0%		
Social workers	80.0%	20.0%	
Occupational therapists	100.0%		
Residential care officers	33.3%	66.7%	
Personal care assistants	60.0%	40.0%	
Support workers	55.6%	44.4%	

3.3   RECRUITMENT OF ABORIGINAL STAFF

3.3.1   RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES USED

Previous research in the SA public sector identified a range of recruitment barriers experienced by Aboriginal people, and the consequent need for strategies to address them. These included significantly under-developed culturally inclusive recruitment processes and supported recruitment.

Application and selection processes can be intimidating because of their formality and lack of familiarity, and when they are lacking in cultural sensitivity. Project interviews emphasised the importance of culturally inclusive recruitment processes, and of ensuring that this is part of standard HR policy and practice. Specific mention was made of the difficulties posed for many Aboriginal applicants by existing Job and Person Specifications and the need for user-friendly wording. The survey also identified the

importance of Aboriginal membership on selection panels and of providing information that enables a level playing field for Aboriginal applicants who lack knowledge of the public sector and how it operates. These findings are supported by existing research .... (Barnett, Spoehr & Parnis 2007).

Twenty one respondents provided information about the recruitment strategies used by their organisation.

It was common practice to actively encourage Aboriginal applicants when recruiting new staff (61.9% of organisations) – see Figure 13.

Figure 13: Recruitment practice regarding Aboriginal applicants
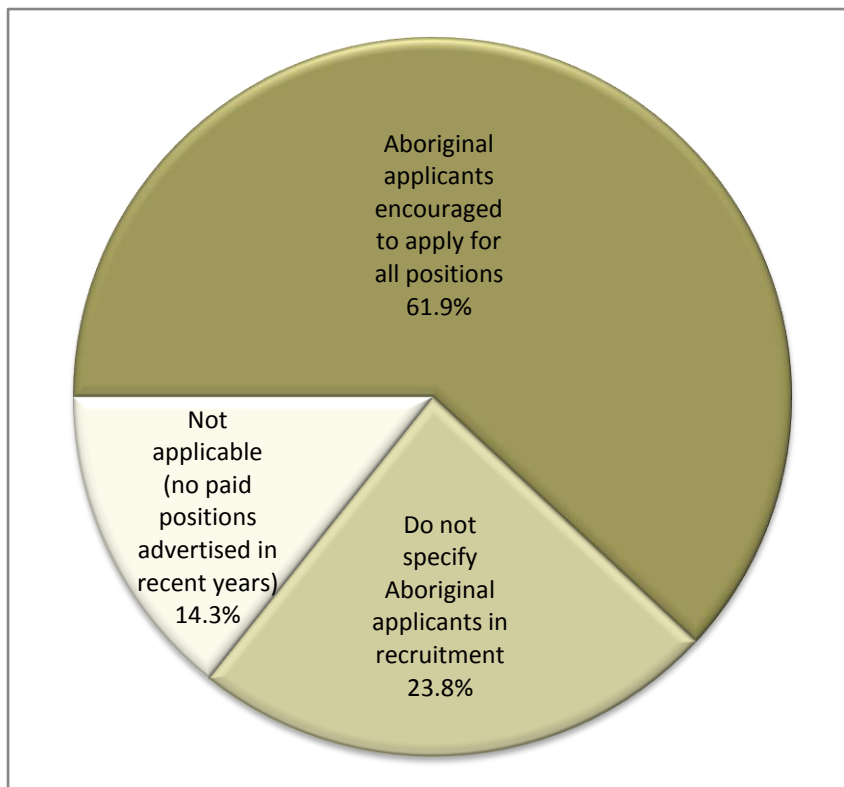
Two thirds of organisations (66.7%) considered that the best method, or one of the best methods, for recruiting Aboriginal staff involved utilising Aboriginal community and service networks – see Table 4. This was also a key finding of earlier research by the AISR undertaken for the Don Dunstan Foundation, highlighting the importance of word of mouth through trusted Aboriginal intermediaries as a key recruitment strategy (Barnett Spoehr & Parnis 2007).

Table 4: Strategies considered best for recruiting Aboriginal staff

Recruitment method	No. of organisations	% of organisations
Aboriginal community and service networks	13	61.9%
Newspaper advertisement	2	9.5%
Word of mouth	2	9.5%
Combination of above (networks, advertisement, word of mouth)	1	4.8%
Employment agency	1	4.8%
In house recruitment and training scheme	1	4.8%
Don't know	1	4.8%
Total	**21**	**100.0%**

3.3.2   JOB RELATED TRAINING OR STUDY OFFERED

Various job factors may make a position more or less attractive to Aboriginal applicants. Such factors include the job related training on offer, and support for further training or study.

The vast majority of respondents who supplied information about the types of job related training provided to their Aboriginal staff indicated that the organisation gave staff *a formal induction and orientation* upon joining the organisation as well as *on the job training specific to the person's work role* – see Table 5. First Aid training and OH&S training were also offered by more than 50% of organisations. Prevocational training (language, numeracy and literacy skills) was not generally available.

Table 5: Types of job related training provided to Aboriginal staff

Type of job related training	No. of organisations	% of organisations (n=21)
On the job training specific to the work role	18	85.7%
A formal induction and orientation	16	76.2%
First Aid training	13	61.9%
Occupational health and safety training	11	52.4%
Prevocational training (language or literacy)	1	4.8%

Most organisations offered some form of support to Aboriginal staff undertaking further training or study, and many provided several forms of support. More than 80% of organisations provided *flexible work hours* and supported *attendance at conferences, workshops and training programs* – see Table 6. There was also significant support offered in terms of *mentoring*, *assistance with study costs* and the provision of *paid study leave*. Only two organisations did not offer any support for further training; those organisations were staffed predominantly or entirely by volunteers.

Table 6: Types of support provided to Aboriginal staff for further training/study

Type of support	No. of organisations	% of organisations (n=21)
Flexible work hours	18	85.7%
Support to attend conferences, workshops or training programs	17	81.0%
Mentoring	15	71.4%
Assistance with study costs	14	66.7%
Paid leave	11	52.4%
No support available	*2*	*9.5%*

As previously outlined in *Section 3.2.1.6*, more than two thirds of organisations currently had Aboriginal staff undertaking further training or study, which demonstrates the importance and impact of these supports.

3.3.3   PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO RECRUITMENT

Around half of the respondents who felt able to comment on recruitment believed that overall their organisation was able to attract and recruit the Aboriginal employees it needed, however a quarter disagreed – see Figure 14.

Figure 14: Belief in the organisation's ability to attract and recruit the Aboriginal employees needed

Specific barriers faced by organisations in attracting and recruiting Aboriginal staff were most commonly identified as the *lack of competitive salaries* (especially against Government salaries), *lack of security of employment,* and *lack of a career path* – see Figure 15.

Figure 15: Barriers faced by the organisation in attracting and recruiting Aboriginal staff
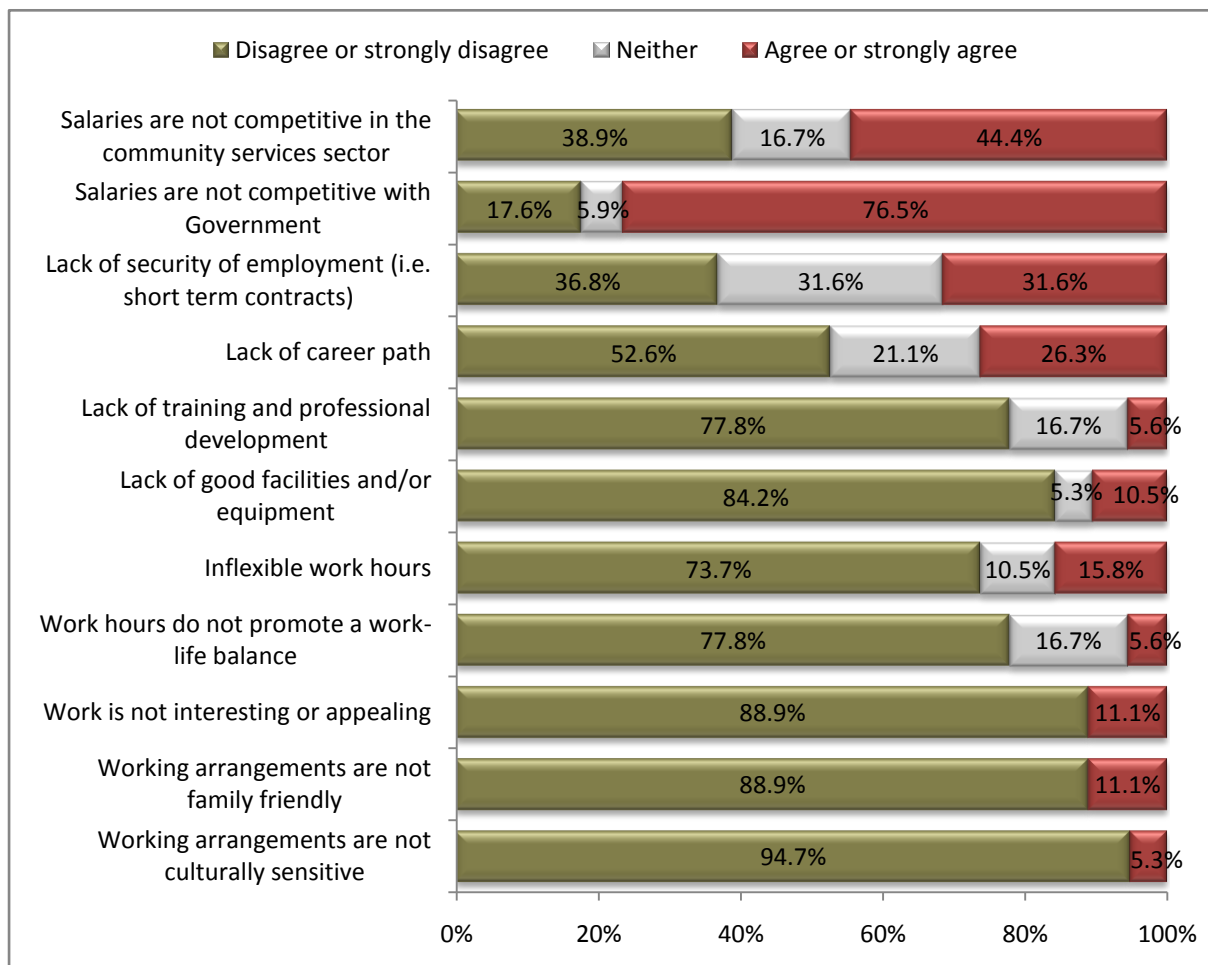
Several respondents also commented that finding local Aboriginal people with the necessary standard or level of education/training (e.g. Diploma) was a significant limiting factor in the recruitment of Aboriginal staff. Linking this finding with the finding that only one organisation provides prevocational training support (see Table 5), it is likely that there is a need to build collaborative working links with vocational education and training (VET) providers (eg TAFESA) in order to develop supported pathways into employment. TAFESA operates a number of programs targeting Aboriginal people and they are likely to be the most appropriate VET partner for such a strategy.

These findings reinforce those of earlier research undertaken for the Don Dunstan Foundation, in particular, the need for family friendly and culturally sensitive working arrangements, the provision of training and professional development, and the importance of security of employment. Permanent as opposed to contract employment emerged as especially critical –

> *A key finding of this Project has been that Aboriginal public sector employees are committed to a long term future with their employer and are frustrated by the limited availability of ongoing employment opportunities* (Barnett, Spoehr & Parnis 2007).

3.3.4 STRATEGIES SUGGESTED FOR INCREASING RECRUITMENT

Strategies suggested for increasing recruitment of Aboriginal people mainly involved/required access to government funding, for example –

- Government assistance (funding) to allow NGOs to offer higher salaries and thereby better compete with the government sector when recruiting staff;
- Government support to offer incentives directly to Aboriginal people to work for a community organisation, such as additional remuneration in recognition of their cultural knowledge; and
- Government providing the extra funding necessary for organisations to employ Aboriginal staff (e.g. to cover extended cultural leave).

Several respondents also identified a need for better education and good quality training for Aboriginal people in general, especially for the higher level care qualifications required for some jobs within the sector.

Two community level strategies aimed at accessing Aboriginal people who may not otherwise consider working for a local community service organisation were also suggested –

- Increasing the community's awareness and understanding of the organisation in general as well as employment opportunities in particular, e.g. through local Expos and networking with Aboriginal family groups, peer groups, associations and organisations.
- Paying, on a fee for service basis, interested Aboriginal grassroots community members to encourage contact with the services, leading to engagement in volunteering as a first step.

The need for more general socio-political changes within the local community, and through government leadership, was cited by one respondent –

> "Aboriginal bosses that target Aboriginal community issues specific to their work place by consulting local Aborigines, not what their white bosses dictate. ... Aboriginal minister for Ab affairs in govt sending a proper message to community of Ab ownership of Ab issues, therefore gaining trust."

3.4 RETENTION OF ABORIGINAL STAFF

3.4.1 RETENTION RATES

Respondents from twenty one organisations were able to provide data on the number of paid staff who had left their organisation in the last 12 months. The overall retention rate for these organisations was 86.8%.

Retention rates were essentially the same for Aboriginal and non Aboriginal staff, being 85.8% and 87.0% respectively.

3.4.2 PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO RETENTION

Twenty respondents completed questions regarding the challenges of retaining Aboriginal staff.

The majority of respondents believed that overall their organisation was able to retain the Aboriginal employees it needed – see Figure 16.
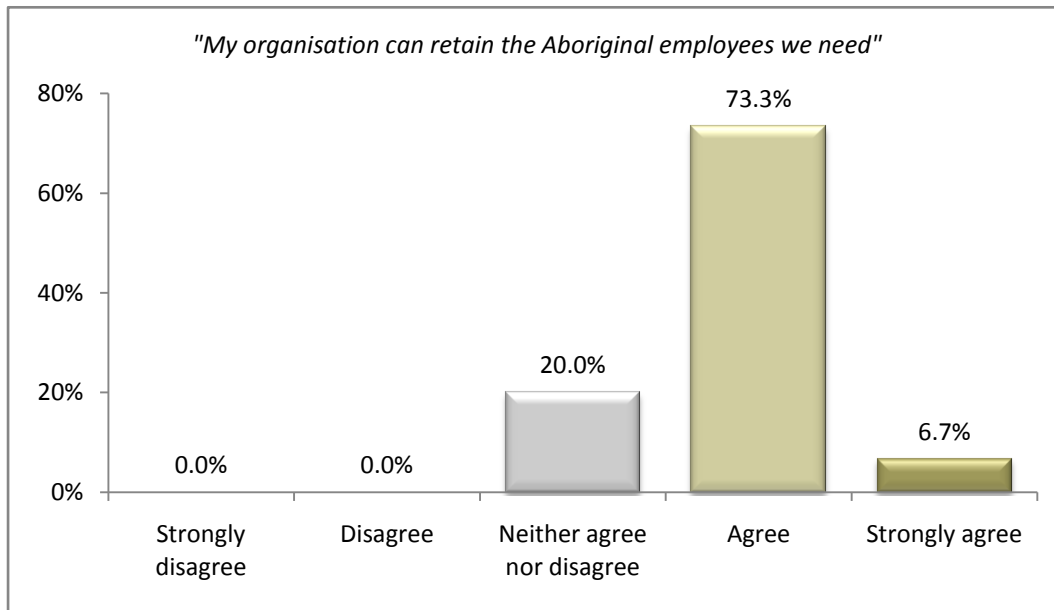
Echoing the barriers to recruitment identified by the sample, commonly identified barriers to *retaining* Aboriginal staff included the *lack of competitive salaries* (especially against Government salaries), *lack of a career path*, and *lack of security of employment.* In addition, the *lack of opportunity for career development and/or promotion* was also cited as a barrier to retention by more than 40% of respondents – see Figure 17.

Figure 17: Barriers faced by the organisation in retaining Aboriginal staff
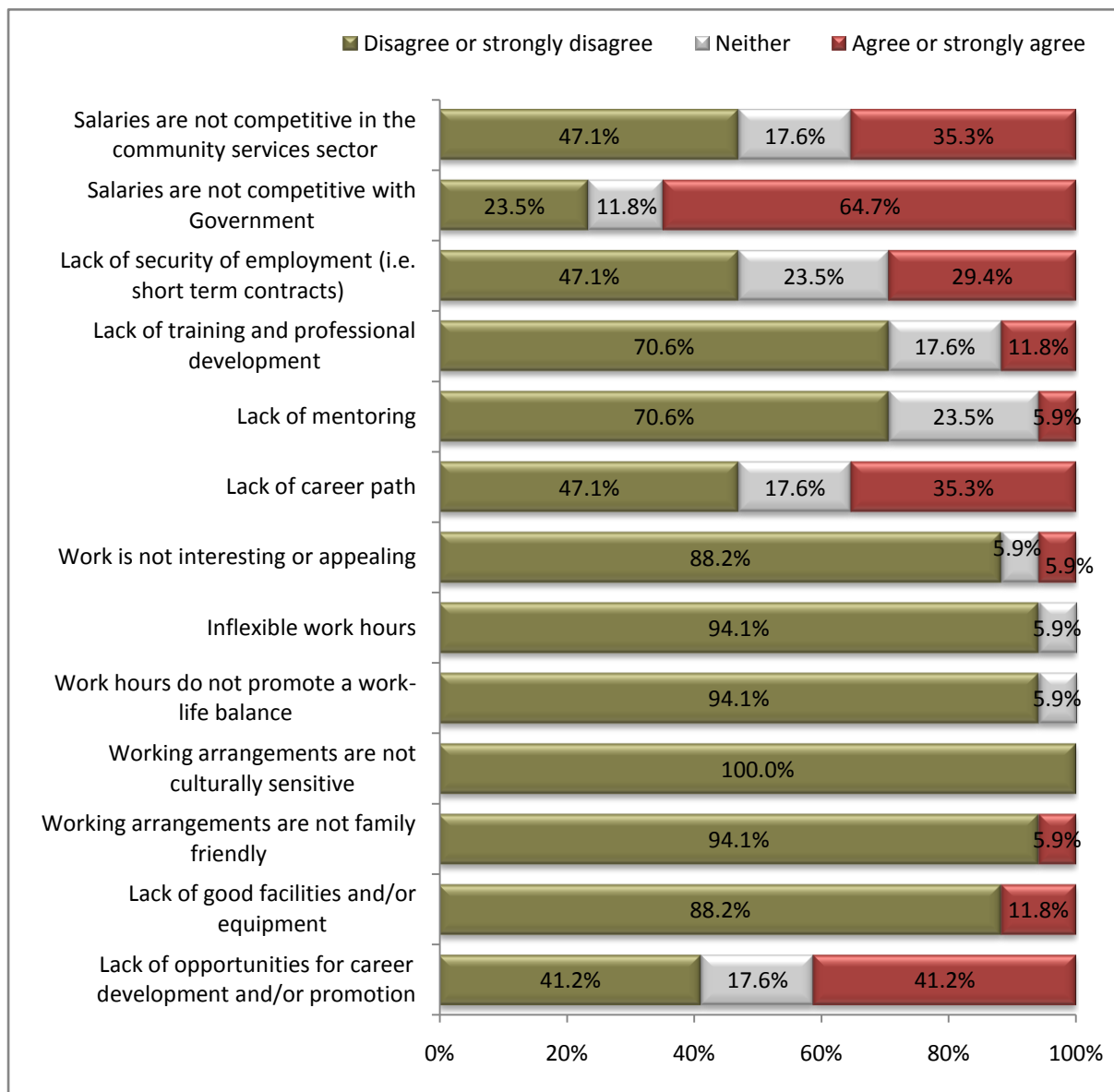
One respondent highlighted a potential work-life balance issue specific to Aboriginal staff –

"Aboriginal staff due to communities tend to be at work all the time even though their paid employment finished hours earlier."

Another respondent provided a concrete example of the salary barrier –

"Our most recent Aboriginal staff member was poached by another community organisation. We were pleased that she could get a better paying job in a good organisation but sad that she left us."

3.4.3 STRATEGIES SUGGESTED FOR MAXIMISING RETENTION

There is undoubtedly substantial overlap in strategies promoting recruitment and retention. Many of the recruitment-oriented strategies outlined in *Section 3.3.4* also apply to supporting staff retention, in particular the call for access to government funding to support competitive salaries.

Many respondents indicated that increased support for the training, upskilling and mentoring of existing Aboriginal staff would support the retention of these staff. In some cases government assistance was called for, with a number of organisations reporting that they had to look outside of their organisation for funds to support staff training. However several organisation-initiated strategies for enhancing on the job and external training were also suggested, such as –

- Improving the staff orientation process to ensure that Aboriginal staff have a good understanding of their role and the expectations of the organisation;
- Linking the employee with an independent mentor who respects the employee and has skills to negotiate for both parties if needed;
- Encouraging Aboriginal staff to work across all areas of the organisation if desired, not being restricted to Aboriginal specific programs; and
- Developing links with tertiary training organisations providing training to Aboriginal people.

Non Aboriginal staff were also seen as a potential focus of additional training, for example providing them with sufficient skills and tools to be efficient and supportive managers/supervisors of Aboriginal staff.

These findings echo earlier AISR research with Aboriginal employees in the SA public sector.

> *Aboriginal employees consulted for the Project have identified that a range of support mechanisms exist for them and have been positive about their impact. …. It is also important to structure support as a coordinated process that begins with informing and recruiting Aboriginal people to the public sector workforce and continues across the employment spectrum, including to its exit ….*

> *Two important factors influencing retention were found to be working in an environment where the Aboriginal person feels valued **(51.4%)** while having knowledge, skills and experience under-utilised **(43.4%)** works against retention …. It is important for retention strategies to address these factors. Aboriginal employees also reported that their main motivation for seeking employment in the public sector had been to contribute to the well-being of Aboriginal people. This was also identified as one of several key factors considered to influence their retention. Workplaces that are not culturally inclusive and whose employees have limited cultural competence are less likely to value the contribution of Aboriginal employees and to under-utilise their expertise. It will be important for future recruitment strategies to take this finding into account* (Barnett, Spoehr & Parnis 2007).

Improvements to working conditions including the physical environment and the information technology environment were also thought to have potential benefits for retention.

The psychosocial working environment was also considered an important factor in retention. An environment supporting the retention of Aboriginal staff was seen as including the following –

- Attention to building the confidence of Aboriginal staff;
- A focus on keeping the work interesting and fulfilling;
- An "open door" policy encouraging ideas and input from all employees;
- Providing clear and consistent work/community boundaries for Aboriginal staff;
- Recognising achievements, e.g. when work is performed well or milestones are accomplished;
- Drawing links between the day to day activities of staff and the broader outcomes achieved as a direct result of their work; and
- Having organisation-wide policies regarding cultural respect.

4   CONCLUSIONS

These survey findings indicate a number of strengths in the Aboriginal community services workforce in South Australia, and some challenges that need to be addressed.

Previous research by the AISR (2007), which was based on interviews and surveys with a very high proportion of the Aboriginal public sector workforce, identified the importance to Aboriginal people of permanent work, and of being provided with work-based opportunities for study and career development. The current study has found that some 70 per cent of community service organisations in SA are providing opportunities for study and training as well as conditions at work (such as study leave, flexible hours, mentoring) that add further support to these opportunities. It has also found that Aboriginal community services workers are much more likely than their non Aboriginal peers to be employed on a permanent basis. Given the community services sector's reliance on funding that is associated with short term projects, this is an extremely positive trend.

It is also a positive finding that nearly 14 per cent of all community services management are Aboriginal people, as are 11.5% of all professional staff. The majority of organisations studied also understand the importance of active (as opposed to passive) recruitment strategies that include using Aboriginal community and work based networks to encourage Aboriginal people to seek work in this sector.

Approximately half of those surveyed find it difficult to recruit Aboriginal people into some roles, in particular, CEO and higher level professional care roles. Some organisations experience difficulties at all workforce levels, often because of formal qualification issues. The survey also identified that only one organisation provides prevocational training (eg in literacy and numeracy). This training is recognised to build pathways to employment relevant VET study and is designed to compensate for earlier gaps in formal education. However, it requires working relationships being established or strengthened between community services organisations and VET providers, in this case, TAFESA. From this foundation, supported pathways can be developed into the community services sector, with support being provided in a case management model by Aboriginal mentors and TAFESA Student Services officers to ensure that a holistic response to individual needs is undertaken. There is probably scope to explore traineeships and internships as part of such a pathway.

The findings also suggest that there is scope for professional development programs that build the capacity of existing Aboriginal community services professionals to assume higher level coordination and management roles, including at the most senior levels of an organisation. This would be facilitated by creating a specific program that involves both Aboriginal and non Aboriginal managers from the sector, with funding sought from the SA government. There are numerous models in the private sector for fast tracking potential management candidates and these could be adapted for the community services sector. Clearly there are many Aboriginal community services workers who hold the basic Certificate III or IV qualification needed for many of the roles in this sector, but the gap appears to be at levels beyond this. It is also noted that 11 per cent of the Aboriginal workforce have no post secondary formal qualifications, and this group will also need a supported pathway that leads to these qualifications, and beyond.

The Aboriginal workforce in the sector also has a much higher proportion of volunteers, which can be seen as a strength. However, it is likely that many of these are also seeking a pathway into paid employment. As such, they represent a relatively untapped source of employment, whose volunteer work is likely to bring recognition of prior learning if formal assessment is made of their capabilities. Again, this identifies the importance of building stronger working links with TAFESA in order to provide supported training pathways.

5 APPENDICES

5.1 METHODOLOGY

5.1.1 SURVEY FRAME

The AISR compiled a list of organisations believed to be not-for-profit community services organisations, and through telephone contact ascertained the name of an appropriate contact who would be able to provide information about the characteristics of the organisation, its staffing profile, and issues of recruitment and retention.

There were 168 entries on the frame (mailing list) developed for this survey.

5.1.2 QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The content of the questionnaire drew on related surveys of community service organisations, a review of literature on salient recruitment and retention issues for the Aboriginal community services workforce, and key stakeholder consultation. The structure and layout of the questionnaire was designed for online delivery with attention paid to ease of use by respondents.

See Appendix 1 (*Section 5.5*) for the survey tool.

5.1.3 SURVEY IMPLEMENTATION

The survey was distributed on 15th July 2011 via a personalised email invitation sent to each email address on the mailing list. These emails were generated and dispatched using a secure online survey delivery system (SurveyMonkey).

The body of each email invitation incorporated a brief summary of the purpose for the survey, its voluntary nature, how long it should take to complete, and a guarantee of confidentiality. Each email invitation also contained a unique web-link to the survey for each potential participant. Each respondent's unique web-link was deactivated by the online system when the respondent had completed the survey, preventing individuals from responding multiple times to the survey. See Appendix 1 (*Section 5.4*) for the Email Invitation.

Response rates were tracked during the course of the survey via the online survey system. Reminder emails were sent on 25th July to those who had not responded and to those who had only partially responded. The survey was closed on 2nd August.

Minor amendments were made to the frame as a consequence of feedback from the survey dispatch process. Four incorrect email addresses were amended, one recipient directed us to a different contact, and one person was removed when they indicated that a more appropriate respondent was already on our list.

The number of entries on the frame was therefore reduced to 167. However we suspect that quite a number of the organisations on the frame may have been *out of scope* for the survey, based on our finding that only 31 (58.5%) of the 53 persons who attempted the survey indicated that their organisation met our inclusion criteria (i.e. a not for profit organisation with Aboriginal client(s)). For full details on eligibility and participation, see *Section 3.1.1*.

5.1.4 DATA ANALYSIS

Cleaning of the data, coding of qualitative information, and analysis of the dataset was undertaken in PASW (SPSS) V18.0. A range of data manipulation and tabulation strategies were used to summarise and present the results. Graphics illustrating the results were constructed using Excel.

Note that results are reported only for *the sample of organisations which participated in the survey*. The data is *not* weighted, due to unavailability of a sufficiently detailed, accurate and up to date frame for the sector.

Some respondents did not complete all the questions in the survey, and some did not provide internally consistent numeric data. Where inconsistencies were evident within sets of items the cases affected have been excluded from the results. As a consequence, some analyses were performed on subgroups of respondents. Caution should be exercised when interpreting results based on small groups.

5.2 APPENDIX 1 – THE EMAIL INVITATION

Subject: **Aboriginal employment in the SA Community Services sector**

Dear <First Name>

We would like your help to understand Aboriginal employment in SA community services organisations.

The Australian Institute for Social Research at The University of Adelaide is mapping not-for-profit community services organisations in South Australia to investigate aspects of labour supply and demand, and in particular the engagement of Aboriginal staff. This research is being undertaken in collaboration with the Don Dunstan Foundation, for the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR).

What is involved?
We have attached a link to a *confidential web-based survey* for you to complete with regard to employment within <**Organisation Name**>. This survey has been approved by the Aboriginal Health Council Ethics Committee. It will take around 10-15 minutes of your time.

Confidentiality
Your survey responses will be confidential, and your participation or non-participation will not affect your organisation in any way.
Any reports of the results from this survey will not identify individuals or organisations.

Is the survey compulsory?
Participation in this research is voluntary. However your input is important. It will ensure that we obtain information about employment in a range of different organisations.

How to participate
Please follow the link below to undertake the survey on line:
<SECURE LINK INSERTED HERE>

NOTE: This link is uniquely tied to your email address. If you cannot complete the survey in one sitting, you will be able to re-enter the survey using this link. Please do not forward this message to others.

We would appreciate if you could complete the survey *within the next 7 days*, if possible.

5.3   APPENDIX 2 – THE SURVEY TOOL

Aboriginal employment in Community Services

Thank you for participating in this research into Aboriginal employment in community services.

This survey is being conducted by The Australian Institute for Social Research at The University of Adelaide, in collaboration with the Don Dunstan Foundation, for the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

The survey maps skills and career path opportunities in the South Australian not-for-profit community services sector and investigates how organisations can better attract and retain Aboriginal staff.

This survey is completely private and confidential. Only the researchers will see your responses, and all information provided online is encrypted and secured. Any reports from this survey will NOT identify individuals OR organisations.

For further information about this survey, please contact Dr Ann-Louise Hordacre at The Australian Institute for Social Research on (08) 8303 3631 or at ann-louise.hordacre@adelaide.edu.au.

To begin the survey, please click on "Next". **[NEXT]**

1   About your organisation

1.1   Where is your main office located?

Town/Suburb _____

Postcode _____

1.2   Does your organisation provide services to Aboriginal people? *(Please select **one** of the following)*

    a)   The service is **only for Aboriginal people**
    b)   The service is not Aboriginal specific, but has a **dedicated Aboriginal unit/component**
    c)   The service is available to anyone, and **has Aboriginal clients**.
    d)   The service is available to anyone, and has **NO Aboriginal clients**. **[go to DISQUALIFICATION PAGE]**

1.3   What is your organisation's corporate structure? *(Please select **one** of the following)*

    a)   The service is **Not for Profit**
    b)   The service is **Privately Owned, for Profit** **[go to DISQUALIFICATION PAGE]**
    c)   The service is **Public or Government Owned** **[go to DISQUALIFICATION PAGE]**

1.4   In what *regions* does your organisation provide services? *(Please select **all** that apply)*

    a)   Eastern Adelaide
    b)   Northern Adelaide
    c)   Southern Adelaide
    d)   Western Adelaide
    e)   Adelaide Hills
    f)   Barossa, Light and Lower North
    g)   Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island
    h)   Eyre and Western
    i)   Far North
    j)   Limestone Coast
    k)   Murray and Mallee
    l)   Yorke and Mid North
    m)   Other States/ Territories

1.5   How many clients does your organisation provide services for and how many services? *(Please estimate if you do not know exactly)*

	Number of clients	Number of services
Aboriginal		
Non-Aboriginal		

Comments

1.6 What *Community Services* does your organisation deliver? *(Please select **all** that apply)*

Personal and health (including youth, aged, disability)

  a) Health services
  b) Personal care
  c) Home care & maintenance
  d) Respite for carers

Individual and family support

  e) Community development
  f) Counseling
  g) Financial support
  h) Emergency relief
  i) Information and advice
  j) Individual and group advocacy

  Employment services

  k) Help in finding paid employment
  l) Supported employment
  m) Vocational education & training

Children's services

  n) Child care
  o) Child protection
  p) Foster care & adoption support

Accommodation

  q) Housing services
  r) Transitional and crisis accommodation
  s) Low care residential

Other services

  t) Sport and recreation
  u) **Other** (please specify) _____

2   Staff in your organisation

2.1   Do you currently have any Aboriginal staff working in your organisation? *(Consider <u>paid</u> staff only – exclude volunteers)*

  a) Yes
  b) No **[go to QUESTION 2.11]**

Number of staff (for organisations with at least one Aboriginal staff member)

Please provide a broad profile of the staff and volunteers in your organisation, using the boxes below. You may estimate the numbers if necessary.

2.2   How many paid staff (not volunteers) currently work in your organisation?

Aboriginal staff	
Non-Aboriginal staff	
Total	

2.3   How many people *volunteer* regularly in your organisation?

Aboriginal volunteers	
Non-Aboriginal volunteers	

About your paid Aboriginal staff

We would like to understand more about **Aboriginal staff** working in the community services sector as a whole. The following questions ask about some characteristics of Aboriginal staff currently paid to work within your organisation. You may estimate the numbers if necessary, however please ensure your responses add up to the total number of *paid Aboriginal staff* that you reported for your organisation.

2.4   How many Aboriginal staff are employed in each of these roles within your organisation?

Direct support (e.g. support workers, personal care assistants, residential care officers)	
Professional care (e.g. occupational therapists, social workers, psychologists, community worker, key worker, residential program officer)	
Office/admin (e.g. admin, receptionist, booking clerk, payroll officer, fundraiser)	
Management/ senior staff (e.g. team leader, coordinator, manager, CEO)	
Other	
Total	

2.5 **How many of your Aboriginal staff have these types of employment contracts?**

Permanent full time	
Permanent part time	
Short term contracts (one year or less)	
Long term contracts (more than one year)	
Casual contracts	
Self-employed or sub-contracted or from agencies	
Apprentices or trainees	
Other	
Total	

2.6 **How many of your *Aboriginal staff* are -**

a) Female   _____
b) Male   _____

2.7 **How many of your *Aboriginal staff* are aged -**

a) 20 years or younger   _____
b) 21 to 35 years   _____
c) 36 to 49 years   _____
d) 50 years or older   _____
e) Don't know   _____

2.8 **How many of your *Aboriginal staff* have completed the following qualifications -**

*(Please select **the highest qualification** that applies for each staff member)*

a) Year 10 high school or less   _____
b) Year 11 or 12 high school   _____
c) Certificate I or II
d) Certificate III or IV   _____
e) Diploma or Associate Diploma   _____
f) Degree or postgraduate degree   _____
g) Don't know   _____

2.9 **Are any of your Aboriginal staff currently being supported by the organisation to undertake training and/or study?**

a) Yes
b) No **[go to QUESTION 2.13]**
c) Don't know **[go to QUESTION 2.13]**

2.10   What types of training and/or study are those Aboriginal staff currently undertaking?

*(Please select **all** that apply)*

a)   Management or supervision training (on or off the job)
b)   Training leading to a Certificate I or II
c)   Training leading to a Certificate III or IV
d)   Training leading to a Diploma or Graduate Diploma
e)   Training leading to a degree or post graduate qualification
f)   Other (please describe) _____

[now go to QUESTION 2.13]

Number of staff (for organisations without paid Aboriginal staff)

Please provide a broad profile of the staff and volunteers in your organisation, using the boxes below. You may estimate the numbers if necessary.

2.11   How many paid staff (not volunteers) currently work in your organisation?

Non-Aboriginal staff	

2.12   How many people *volunteer* regularly in your organisation?

Aboriginal volunteers	
Non-Aboriginal volunteers	

About your Paid Non Aboriginal staff

The following questions ask about some characteristics of the **Non Aboriginal staff** currently paid to work within your organisation.   You may estimate the numbers if necessary, however please ensure your responses add up to the total number of *paid Non Aboriginal staff* that you reported for your organisation.

2.13   How many Non-Aboriginal staff are employed in each of these roles within your organisation?

Direct support (e.g. support workers, personal care assistants, residential care officers)	
Professional care (e.g. occupational therapists, social workers, psychologists, community worker, key worker, residential program officer)	
Office/admin (e.g. admin, receptionist, booking clerk, payroll officer, fundraiser)	
Management/ senior staff (e.g. team leader, coordinator, manager, CEO)	
Other	
Total	

2.14   How many of your Non-Aboriginal staff have these types of employment contracts?

Permanent full time	
Permanent part time	
Short term contracts (one year or less)	
Long term contracts (more than one year)	
Casual contracts	
Self-employed or sub-contracted or from agencies	
Apprentices or trainees	
Other	
Total	

3   Departures, vacancies and new positions

3.1   How many paid staff have *left your organisation* in the last 12 months?

Aboriginal staff	
Non Aboriginal staff	

3.2   Do you currently have any unfilled vacancies in your organisation?

    a)   Yes
    b)   No **[go to QUESTION 3.6]**

3.3   How many unfilled vacancies do you currently have in your organisation? _____

3.4   What is the unfilled role/s?

_____

3.5   What is the status of your vacant position/s?

(If you have more than one vacant position, select more than one response if required)

    a)   The position is in the process of being filled
    b)   We do not have sufficient funds to fill the position
    c)   We have advertised but cannot locate an appropriately **trained** person
    d)   We have advertised but cannot locate a **suitable** person
    e)   Other (please specify) _____

3.6   How many new positions do you expect to open up in your organisation in the next 6 to 12 months?

(For example, new positions may occur if you have additional funding for activities or new projects commencing. If you expect no new positions, please enter 0) _____

3.7   If you are expecting new positions, what new roles do you expect to fill in the next 6 to 12 months?

_____

4   Filling positions with Aboriginal staff

4.1   What occupations do you find difficult to fill with *Aboriginal staff*?

(Please choose a category from Very difficult to Very easy for each occupation)

	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither	Easy	Very easy	Not applicable/ Unsure
Direct Support						
Support workers						
Personal care assistants						
Residential care officers						
Professional care						
Occupational therapists						
Social workers						
Psychologists						
Community worker						
Key worker						
Residential program officer						
Office/ Admin						
Admin						
Receptionist						
Booking clerk						
Finance or payroll officer						
Fundraiser						
Management/ Senior staff						
Team leader						
Coordinator						
Manager						
CEO						

Other (please specify)_____

5 Recruiting and retaining Aboriginal staff

5.1 **Do you actively encourage *Aboriginal applicants* in your recruitment?**

*(Please select **one** of the following)*

a) Aboriginal applicants are encouraged to apply for **all** our positions
b) Aboriginal applicants are encouraged to apply for **select** positions
c) We do not specify Aboriginal applicants in our recruitment processes
d) Other (please specify) _____

5.2 **What is the best method to recruit *Aboriginal staff*?** *(Please select **one** of the following)*

a) Newspaper advertisement
b) Online recruitment sites
c) Word of mouth
d) Aboriginal community and service networks
e) Other (please specify) _____

5.3 **Which of the following types of job-related training do/would Aboriginal staff receive from your organisation?** *(Please select **all** that apply)*

a) A formal induction and orientation (when they join the organisation)
b) First Aid training
c) Occupational health and safety training
d) Prevocational training (ie language or literacy studies)
e) On the job training specific to their work role
f) Other (please specify) _____

5.4 **What type(s) of support does/could your organisation provide to *Aboriginal staff* for further training and/or study?** *(Please select **all** that apply)*

a) Paid leave
b) Assistance with study costs
c) Flexible work hours
d) Support for attendance at conferences or workshops
e) Mentoring
f) Other (please specify) _____

5.5   Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements about *attracting and recruiting Aboriginal staff* to your organisation.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable/ Unsure
My organisation can attract and recruit the Aboriginal employees we need						

Attracting and recruiting **Aboriginal staff is difficult for my organisation because we cannot offer:**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable/ Unsure
Salaries that are competitive in the **community services sector**						
Salaries that are competitive with **Government**						
Security of employment (ie short term contracts)						
Training and professional development						
A career path						
Work that is interesting and/or appealing						
Flexible work hours						
Hours promoting a work-life balance						
Culturally sensitive working arrangements						
Family-friendly working arrangements						
Good facilities and/or equipment						

Other (please specify)_____

5.6   Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements about the challenges of _retaining_ Aboriginal staff in your organisation.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable/ Unsure
My organisation can retain the Aboriginal employees we need						

Retaining **Aboriginal staff is difficult for my organisation because we do not have:**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable/ Unsure
Salaries that are competitive in the **community services sector**						
Salaries that are competitive with **Government**						
Security of employment (ie short term contracts)						
Training and professional development						
Mentoring opportunities						
A career path						
Work that is interesting and/or appealing						
Flexible work hours						
Hours promoting a work-life balance						
Culturally sensitive working arrangements						
Family-friendly working arrangements						
Good facilities and/or equipment						
Opportunities for career development and/or promotion						

Other (please specify)_____

5.7   What strategies do you think are most likely to increase and sustain Aboriginal employment in the community services sector?

Please describe

---

6   Additional comments

6.1   Use the space below for any additional comments about *Aboriginal staff* in community services organisations.

6.2   If you would be willing to contribute further to this research, please provide your contact details below.

PLEASE NOTE: Your contact details will be kept <u>confidential </u>and you will only be contacted by researchers from the Australian Institute for Social Research for the purpose of this research project. We may not contact everyone. Furthermore, we assure you that the name and phone number you provide will <u>not</u> be linked to your responses in other parts of the survey.

Name: _____

Organisation: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this important survey.

[DONE]

(disqualification page)

Thank you very much for your time.

Unfortunately you do not meet the criteria for our survey at this time.

Please exit the browser and have a nice day.

[DONE]

5.4   APPENDIX 1 – THE EMAIL INVITATION

Subject: **Aboriginal employment in the SA Community Services sector**

Dear <First Name>

We would like your help to understand Aboriginal employment in SA community services organisations.

The Australian Institute for Social Research at The University of Adelaide is mapping not-for-profit community services organisations in South Australia to investigate aspects of labour supply and demand, and in particular the engagement of Aboriginal staff. This research is being undertaken in collaboration with the Don Dunstan Foundation, for the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR).

What is involved?
We have attached a link to a *confidential web-based survey* for you to complete with regard to employment within <**Organisation Name**>. This survey has been approved by the Aboriginal Health Council Ethics Committee. It will take around 10-15 minutes of your time.

Confidentiality
Your survey responses will be confidential, and your participation or non-participation will not affect your organisation in any way.
Any reports of the results from this survey will not identify individuals or organisations.

Is the survey compulsory?
Participation in this research is voluntary. However your input is important. It will ensure that we obtain information about employment in a range of different organisations.

How to participate
Please follow the link below to undertake the survey on line:
<SECURE LINK INSERTED HERE>

NOTE: This link is uniquely tied to your email address. If you cannot complete the survey in one sitting, you will be able to re-enter the survey using this link. Please do not forward this message to others.

We would appreciate if you could complete the survey *within the next 7 days*, if possible.

5.5   APPENDIX 2 – THE SURVEY TOOL

Aboriginal employment in Community Services

Thank you for participating in this research into Aboriginal employment in community services.

This survey is being conducted by The Australian Institute for Social Research at The University of Adelaide, in collaboration with the Don Dunstan Foundation, for the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

The survey maps skills and career path opportunities in the South Australian not-for-profit community services sector and investigates how organisations can better attract and retain Aboriginal staff.

This survey is completely private and confidential. Only the researchers will see your responses, and all information provided online is encrypted and secured. Any reports from this survey will NOT identify individuals OR organisations.

For further information about this survey, please contact Dr Ann-Louise Hordacre at The Australian Institute for Social Research on (08) 8303 3631 or at ann-louise.hordacre@adelaide.edu.au.

To begin the survey, please click on "Next". **[NEXT]**

1   About your organisation

1.1   Where is your main office located?

Town/Suburb _____

Postcode _____

1.2   Does your organisation provide services to Aboriginal people? *(Please select **one** of the following)*

    e)   The service is **only for Aboriginal people**
    f)   The service is not Aboriginal specific, but has a **dedicated Aboriginal unit/component**
    g)   The service is available to anyone, and **has Aboriginal clients**.
    h)   The service is available to anyone, and has **NO Aboriginal clients**. **[go to DISQUALIFICATION PAGE]**

1.3   What is your organisation's corporate structure? *(Please select **one** of the following)*

    d)   The service is **Not for Profit**
    e)   The service is **Privately Owned, for Profit** **[go to DISQUALIFICATION PAGE]**
    f)   The service is **Public or Government Owned** **[go to DISQUALIFICATION PAGE]**

1.4   In what *regions* does your organisation provide services? *(Please select **all** that apply)*

    n)   Eastern Adelaide
    o)   Northern Adelaide
    p)   Southern Adelaide
    q)   Western Adelaide
    r)   Adelaide Hills
    s)   Barossa, Light and Lower North
    t)   Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island
    u)   Eyre and Western
    v)   Far North
    w)   Limestone Coast
    x)   Murray and Mallee
    y)   Yorke and Mid North
    z)   Other States/ Territories

1.5   How many clients does your organisation provide services for and how many services? *(Please estimate if you do not know exactly)*

	Number of clients	**Number of services**
Aboriginal		
Non-Aboriginal		

Comments

1.6   What *Community Services* does your organisation deliver? *(Please select **all** that apply)*

Personal and health (including youth, aged, disability)

- v)   Health services
- w)   Personal care
- x)   Home care & maintenance
- y)   Respite for carers

Individual and family support

- z)   Community development
- aa)   Counseling
- bb)   Financial support
- cc)   Emergency relief
- dd)   Information and advice
- ee)   Individual and group advocacy

Employment services

- ff)   Help in finding paid employment
- gg)   Supported employment
- hh)   Vocational education & training

Children's services

- ii)   Child care
- jj)   Child protection
- kk)   Foster care & adoption support

Accommodation

- ll)   Housing services
- mm)   Transitional and crisis accommodation
- nn)   Low care residential

Other services

- oo)   Sport and recreation
- pp)   **Other** (please specify) _____

2   Staff in your organisation

2.1   Do you currently have any Aboriginal staff working in your organisation? *(Consider <u>paid</u> staff only – exclude volunteers)*

- c)   Yes
- d)   No **[go to QUESTION 2.11]**

Number of staff (for organisations with at least one Aboriginal staff member)

Please provide a broad profile of the staff and volunteers in your organisation, using the boxes below. You may estimate the numbers if necessary.

2.2   How many paid staff (not volunteers) currently work in your organisation?

Aboriginal staff	
Non-Aboriginal staff	
Total	

2.3   How many people *volunteer* regularly in your organisation?

Aboriginal volunteers	
Non-Aboriginal volunteers	

About your paid Aboriginal staff

We would like to understand more about **Aboriginal staff** working in the community services sector as a whole. The following questions ask about some characteristics of Aboriginal staff currently paid to work within your organisation. You may estimate the numbers if necessary, however please ensure your responses add up to the total number of *paid Aboriginal staff* that you reported for your organisation.

2.4   How many Aboriginal staff are employed in each of these roles within your organisation?

Direct support (e.g. support workers, personal care assistants, residential care officers)	
Professional care (e.g. occupational therapists, social workers, psychologists, community worker, key worker, residential program officer)	
Office/admin (e.g. admin, receptionist, booking clerk, payroll officer, fundraiser)	
Management/ senior staff (e.g. team leader, coordinator, manager, CEO)	
Other	
Total	

2.5   How many of your Aboriginal staff have these types of employment contracts?

Permanent full time	
Permanent part time	
Short term contracts (one year or less)	
Long term contracts (more than one year)	
Casual contracts	
Self-employed or sub-contracted or from agencies	
Apprentices or trainees	
Other	
Total	

2.6   How many of your *Aboriginal staff* are -

     c) Female _____
     d) Male   _____

2.7   How many of your *Aboriginal staff* are aged -

     f) 20 years or younger   _____
     g) 21 to 35 years   _____
     h) 36 to 49 years   _____
     i) 50 years or older   _____
     j) Don't know   _____

2.8   How many of your *Aboriginal staff* have completed the following qualifications -

*(Please select **the highest qualification** that applies for each staff member)*

     h) Year 10 high school or less   _____
     i) Year 11 or 12 high school   _____
     j) Certificate I or II
     k) Certificate III or IV   _____
     l) Diploma or Associate Diploma   _____
     m) Degree or postgraduate degree   _____
     n) Don't know   _____

2.9   Are any of your Aboriginal staff currently being supported by the organisation to undertake training and/or study?

     d) Yes
     e) No **[go to QUESTION 2.13]**
     f) Don't know **[go to QUESTION 2.13]**

2.10   What types of training and/or study are those Aboriginal staff currently undertaking?

*(Please select **all** that apply)*

g)   Management or supervision training (on or off the job)
h)   Training leading to a Certificate I or II
i)   Training leading to a Certificate III or IV
j)   Training leading to a Diploma or Graduate Diploma
k)   Training leading to a degree or post graduate qualification
l)   Other (please describe) _____

[now go to QUESTION 2.13]

Number of staff (for organisations without paid Aboriginal staff)

Please provide a broad profile of the staff and volunteers in your organisation, using the boxes below. You may estimate the numbers if necessary.

2.11   How many paid staff (not volunteers) currently work in your organisation?

Non-Aboriginal staff	

2.12   How many people *volunteer* regularly in your organisation?

Aboriginal volunteers	
Non-Aboriginal volunteers	

About your Paid Non Aboriginal staff

The following questions ask about some characteristics of the **Non Aboriginal staff** currently paid to work within your organisation.   You may estimate the numbers if necessary, however please ensure your responses add up to the total number of *paid Non Aboriginal staff* that you reported for your organisation.

2.13   How many Non-Aboriginal staff are employed in each of these roles within your organisation?

Direct support (e.g. support workers, personal care assistants, residential care officers)	
Professional care (e.g. occupational therapists, social workers, psychologists, community worker, key worker, residential program officer)	
Office/admin (e.g. admin, receptionist, booking clerk, payroll officer, fundraiser)	
Management/ senior staff (e.g. team leader, coordinator, manager, CEO)	
Other	
Total	

2.14   How many of your Non-Aboriginal staff have these types of employment contracts?

Permanent full time	
Permanent part time	
Short term contracts (one year or less)	
Long term contracts (more than one year)	
Casual contracts	
Self-employed or sub-contracted or from agencies	
Apprentices or trainees	
Other	
Total	

3   Departures, vacancies and new positions

3.1   How many paid staff have *left your organisation* in the last 12 months?

Aboriginal staff	
Non Aboriginal staff	

3.2   Do you currently have any unfilled vacancies in your organisation?

- c)   Yes
- d)   No **[go to QUESTION 3.6]**

3.3   How many unfilled vacancies do you currently have in your organisation? _____

3.4   What is the unfilled role/s?

_____

3.5   What is the status of your vacant position/s?

(If you have more than one vacant position, select more than one response if required)

- f)   The position is in the process of being filled
- g)   We do not have sufficient funds to fill the position
- h)   We have advertised but cannot locate an appropriately **trained** person
- i)   We have advertised but cannot locate a **suitable** person
- j)   Other (please specify) _____

3.6   How many new positions do you expect to open up in your organisation in the next 6 to 12 months?

(For example, new positions may occur if you have additional funding for activities or new projects commencing. If you expect no new positions, please enter 0) _____

3.7   If you are expecting new positions, what new roles do you expect to fill in the next 6 to 12 months?

_____

4   Filling positions with Aboriginal staff

4.1   What occupations do you find difficult to fill with *Aboriginal staff*?

(Please choose a category from Very difficult to Very easy for each occupation)

	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither	Easy	Very easy	Not applicable/ Unsure
Direct Support						
Support workers						
Personal care assistants						
Residential care officers						
Professional care						
Occupational therapists						
Social workers						
Psychologists						
Community worker						
Key worker						
Residential program officer						
Office/ Admin						
Admin						
Receptionist						
Booking clerk						
Finance or payroll officer						
Fundraiser						
Management/ Senior staff						
Team leader						
Coordinator						
Manager						
CEO						

Other (please specify)_____

5 Recruiting and retaining Aboriginal staff

5.1 Do you actively encourage *Aboriginal applicants* in your recruitment?

*(Please select **one** of the following)*

e) Aboriginal applicants are encouraged to apply for **all** our positions
f) Aboriginal applicants are encouraged to apply for **select** positions
g) We do not specify Aboriginal applicants in our recruitment processes
h) Other (please specify) _____

5.2 What is the best method to recruit *Aboriginal staff*? *(Please select **one** of the following)*

f) Newspaper advertisement
g) Online recruitment sites
h) Word of mouth
i) Aboriginal community and service networks
j) Other (please specify) _____

5.3 Which of the following types of job-related training do/would Aboriginal staff receive from your organisation? *(Please select **all** that apply)*

g) A formal induction and orientation (when they join the organisation)
h) First Aid training
i) Occupational health and safety training
j) Prevocational training (ie language or literacy studies)
k) On the job training specific to their work role
l) Other (please specify) _____

5.4 What type(s) of support does/could your organisation provide to *Aboriginal staff* for further training and/or study? *(Please select **all** that apply)*

g) Paid leave
h) Assistance with study costs
i) Flexible work hours
j) Support for attendance at conferences or workshops
k) Mentoring
l) Other (please specify) _____

5.5   Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements about *attracting and recruiting Aboriginal staff* to your organisation.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable/ Unsure
My organisation can attract and recruit the Aboriginal employees we need						

Attracting and recruiting **Aboriginal staff is difficult for my organisation because we cannot offer:**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable/ Unsure
Salaries that are competitive in the **community services sector**						
Salaries that are competitive with **Government**						
Security of employment (ie short term contracts)						
Training and professional development						
A career path						
Work that is interesting and/or appealing						
Flexible work hours						
Hours promoting a work-life balance						
Culturally sensitive working arrangements						
Family-friendly working arrangements						
Good facilities and/or equipment						

Other (please specify)_____

5.6   Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements about the challenges of *retaining Aboriginal staff* in your organisation.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable/ Unsure
My organisation can retain the Aboriginal employees we need						

Retaining **Aboriginal staff is difficult for my organisation because we do not have:**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable/ Unsure
Salaries that are competitive in the **community services sector**						
Salaries that are competitive with **Government**						
Security of employment (ie short term contracts)						
Training and professional development						
Mentoring opportunities						
A career path						
Work that is interesting and/or appealing						
Flexible work hours						
Hours promoting a work-life balance						
Culturally sensitive working arrangements						
Family-friendly working arrangements						
Good facilities and/or equipment						
Opportunities for career development and/or promotion						

Other (please specify)_____

5.7   What strategies do you think are most likely to increase and sustain Aboriginal employment in the community services sector?

Please describe

6   Additional comments

6.1   Use the space below for any additional comments about *Aboriginal staff* in community services organisations.

6.2   If you would be willing to contribute further to this research, please provide your contact details below.

PLEASE NOTE: Your contact details will be kept <u>confidential </u>and you will only be contacted by researchers from the Australian Institute for Social Research for the purpose of this research project. We may not contact everyone. Furthermore, we assure you that the name and phone number you provide will <u>not</u> be linked to your responses in other parts of the survey.

Name: _____

Organisation: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this important survey.