

Dubbo Regional Council Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2021 - 2023



We are **DRC** |  DUBBO
REGIONAL
COUNCIL
Creating community for today & tomorrow





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ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

Dubbo Regional Council would like to respectfully acknowledge the traditional owners of the Dubbo Region, the Wiradjuri people and acknowledge their Ancestors and Elders past, present and emerging.



OUR COUNCIL

ABOUT DUBBO REGIONAL COUNCIL

On 12 May 2016 the former Dubbo City Council and Wellington Shire Councils were amalgamated to form Dubbo Regional Council.

Council has progressed strongly in creating an innovative and robust organisation with agreed strategies and plans. Focused on driving organisational change, a new customer experience culture and heightened economic prosperity for the region.

Council engage over 600 employees, delivering a diverse range of services including planning, infrastructure, community and lifestyle services, administration, economic development, corporate business and recreational services.

Our community focus is to deliver high quality services, strengthen our community engagement, customer experience and drive financial sustainability. Our workforce is to build an organisational culture founded on accountability, leadership excellence and performance.

OUR VISION, PURPOSE AND VALUES



COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT

It is the vision of the Dubbo Regional Council to create community for today and tomorrow. The aims, initiatives and actions outlined in this strategy will allow us to do this whilst ensuring our workforce is:

- Representative of our community;
- Capable and skilled;
- Diverse;
- Educated;
- Supported;
- Culturally sensitive; and
- Culturally inclusive



INTRODUCTION

The 2019 estimated residential population for the Dubbo Region was 53,719. Households with indigenous person(s) was reported as being 3,449

¹ - Dubbo Regional Council Community Profile REMPLAN

The Aboriginal population of the Dubbo Regional Local Government area is increasing, and it is important that our organisation is reflective of our community.

Dubbo is taken from the Aboriginal word meaning “red earth” which is consistent with the local landscape.

Dubbo Regional Council acknowledges all clan groups that reside within the Dubbo and Wellington Wiradjuri Nation.

Council acknowledges unemployment disadvantages faced by Aboriginal people and that Aboriginal people can be at risk of both relative poverty and absolute poverty due to socioeconomic disadvantage.

Council is also committed to giving consideration to Aboriginal persons and organisations when exploring indirect employment requirements through avenues such as procurement and tender opportunities.

Council has created a strategy with a holistic approach that is achievable and respectful. The knowledge, skills and experiences of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people provide a rich learning environment for us all.

Meaningful employment is an important indicator of wellbeing. Employment allows not only income but independence. When the proportion of adults in the workforce is low, communities become more dependent on income support, and poverty increases.

The 2016 Census statistics identified that Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people made up 14.6% of the Dubbo population and 26.1% of the Wellington population.

² – 2016 Census|Australian Bureau of Statistics

As at 9 March 2021 Dubbo Regional Council’s Aboriginal staff population is 14%.





In 2016 the Aboriginal Affairs Dubbo Opportunity Hub Community Portrait showed that 16% of the Aboriginal workforce were unemployed.

³

<https://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/new-knowledge/facts-and-figures/community-portraits/Indigenous-Portrait2016D-Dubbo-Opportunity-Hub.pdf>

⁴ The next Australian census will be conducted on 10 August 2021.

The Aboriginal Employment Strategy allows Dubbo Regional Council to build a foundation to increase opportunities for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander members of the community, support and encourage our existing employees, whilst at all times ensuring our actions are aligned with Council's Vision, Purpose & Values.

Part of this strategy will give respect to local Aboriginal cultural protocols.



GOALS

ENHANCE CAREER PATHWAYS FOR ABORIGINAL EMPLOYEES – GOAL ONE

Council appreciates the importance of a diverse and inclusive workforce. It is also important that our workforce is reflective of our community, recognising Aboriginal cultures in the Dubbo and Wellington areas.

To demonstrate Council’s commitment to enhancing career pathways for the Aboriginal community, Council will introduce the below initiatives and undertake the actions listed to ensure they are achieved.

| Initiative | Action |
|--|--|
| 1.1 Research options for identified and targeted positions. | If sufficient information is discovered and the position can be supported financially (if not funded) expressions of interested to be sought from the Senior Leadership Team where positions can be supported within the organisation. |
| 1.2 The introduction of five specifically identified Apprentice and Trainee positions. | Staged approach to incorporating five apprentice/trainee positions as a permanent addition to the Dubbo Regional Council organisational structure. |
| 1.3 Engage with local community and school groups for industry introductions and workplace visits | Facilitate requests for work experience, industry visits and requests to attend schools and career expos where possible. |
| 1.4 Engage with the local Aboriginal community providing support to those applying for positions with Dubbo Regional Council | Promotion and availability of a member of the People and Culture Team to the Aboriginal Community to provide guidance and support on applying for positions with Dubbo Regional Council and the merit based recruitment system on a regular basis. |
| | Promotion of the Studiosity program in conjunction with the Macquarie Regional Library. This would allow access to the two components of the program, Homework Help and Writing Support. This would provide another level of support and assistance in increasing digital and literacy skills, education and confidence in applying for positions. |
| 1.5 Establish relationships with Aboriginal employment providers to ensure open and transparent communication around Councils merit based recruitment system | Hold and information session for providers to attend to facilitate how a merit based recruitment system works, Councils policy and how they can assist their clients in applying for positions with Council. |
| 1.6 Update the “Work at Council” section of the Dubbo Regional Council website to be user and culturally welcoming. | Update the website to provide information on Council’s merit based recruitment system and how to apply for positions with Council. |





SUPPORT AND RETAIN ABORIGINAL EMPLOYEES – GOAL TWO

To achieve Council’s vision and purpose we must invest in our employees to equip staff with skills and knowledge to progress through the organisation, and provide cultural supports and career pathways to sustain Aboriginal employees.

Part of the learning methodology that Council utilises is the 70, 20, 10 model.

Experiential Learning – 70% of learning through reflection on doing, on the job experiences and challenges.

Social Learning – 20% of learning from other people, social behaviour, observing, imitating others. This may include coaching, mentoring or peer group shared learnings.

Formal Learning – 10% of learning that is structured concise goals and objectives, courses and training programs.

Council will support our existing Aboriginal staff to ensure their employment with Council is supported and progressive. To do this we commit to:



| Initiative | Action |
|--|---|
| 2.1 Promote and encourage the use of internal support mechanisms offered. | Council’s Aboriginal Liaison Officer profile and contact details and Councils Employee Assistance Program information will be included in Councils induction process. This is mandatory for all staff to undertake and will ensure the information is commonly known. |
| 2.2 Support and encourage employees to access Councils learning and development framework, Uplift, to grow, develop and enhance their skills and capabilities. | Staff will be made aware of all opportunities available for learning, both directly job related and professional development opportunities. |
| 2.3 Internal Acknowledgement Celebration of Culture and Traditions. | Introduction of internal functions to acknowledge NAIDOC and other significant calendar cultural events. |
| 2.4 Exploration of Management Policies for opportunities to increase cultural awareness. | Exploration of Management policies when they come up for review to see if there is opportunities to increase cultural awareness. |
| 2.5 Develop a reward and recognition program that includes recognition of Aboriginal employees in Councils Reward and Recognition Policy. | An annual award to acknowledge the contribution of an Aboriginal employee to Council. |

CREATE AND MAINTAIN A CULTURALLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT – GOAL THREE

A culturally safe environment is essential to a productive and harmonious work environment. Council is committed to increasing awareness and understanding of Aboriginal culture and fostering an environment that is inclusive and promotes mutual respect and understanding for all individuals, irrespective of culture and background within Dubbo Regional Council.

Council will be establishing a Wiradjuri Tourism Centre and Cultural Guidance Technical Advisory Panel. In addition to the panels advisory and governance role, this panel will support the creation of safe cultural spaces for employees with initial focus on the Wiradjuri and First Nations cultural appropriateness of programs, partnerships, activities and initiatives of the Wiradjuri Tourism Centre and Western Plains Cultural Centre.

The guidance provided by the panel will support the broader organisation in related initiatives including awareness education. Timing for the establishment of the future Advisory Panel is anticipated to be July 2021.

To ensure Dubbo Regional Council is a culturally safe environment, Council will introduce the below initiatives and undertake the actions listed to ensure they are achieved.





| Initiative | Action |
|---|---|
| <p>3.1 Develop and implement an Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training Program for Dubbo Regional Council.</p> | <p>A training plan to be developed to have staff trained in Aboriginal Cultural Awareness.</p> <p>A training provider to be sourced that can provide the Aboriginal Cultural awareness training in accordance with Dubbo Regional Council requirements.</p> |
| <p>3.2 Creating a visual acknowledgement and appreciation of the local Aboriginal culture throughout work environments.</p> | <p>Work environment to feel more welcoming and acknowledging of Aboriginal culture both traditional and contemporary.</p> |



OUR PROCESS

Consultation and Education

As part of the process of developing the Aboriginal Employment Strategy a number of consultation processes were undertaken.

This consultation included:

Internal Consultation

All staff were invited to express their interest in participating in a workshop to provide input into the strategy to ensure it is inclusive of our staff's perspectives. The workshop was facilitated by Council's Aboriginal Liaison Officer in conjunction with the People Culture and Safety Team to ensure the workshop was delivered in a constructive and culturally safe manner where participants could provide open and honest feedback.

External Consultation

Throughout the process Council's Aboriginal Liaison Officer provided regular updates and held discussions with local Aboriginal Community Working parties to gain their support of the strategy.

Staff involved in the development of the Dubbo Regional Council Aboriginal Employment Strategy and the facilitation of the consultation workshops completed a Statement of Attainment in Responding to Aboriginal Cultural Sensitivities through TAFE NSW to ensure the strategy was developed in a meaningful, achievable and respectful manner.

Monitoring and Review

People Culture and Safety Branch report annually to the Executive Leadership Team on the implementation of this Strategy.

Council's Annual Report will include information on Aboriginal employment.

The Aboriginal Employment Strategy will be reviewed every two years by People Culture and Safety.



Key References

Australian Bureau of Statistics

www.abs.gov.au

Dubbo Regional Council Community Profile REMPLAN

www.app.remplan.com.au/dubboregionalcouncil

Closing The Gap In Partnership

www.closingthegap.gov.au

Local Government (State) Award 2020

https://www.industrialrelations.nsw.gov.au/assets/Uploads/publications/Local-Government-award-listing-163/award_0308.pdf

Australians Together

www.australianstogether.org.au

YOUR MOB LEARNING

www.yourmoblearning.org

Department of Aboriginal Affairs – Community Portrait

<https://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/new-knowledge/facts-and-figures/community-portraits/>

Wellbeing and Healing through Connection and Culture Report – Lifeline in partnership with The Centre of Best Practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention

<https://www.lifeline.org.au/media/xw1hognd/full-report-final-wellbeing-and-healing-through-connection-and-culture-2020.pdf>



| Enhance Career Pathways for Aboriginal Employees | | | | |
|---|--|-----------------------|---|--|
| Initiative | Action | Responsibility | Target Date | Success Measure |
| 1.1 Research options for identified and targeted positions. | If sufficient information is discovered and the position can be supported financially (if not funded) expressions of interest to be sought from the Senior Leadership Team where positions can be supported in the organisation. | PCS SLT | Ongoing | Increasing the opportunities for the local Aboriginal Community, making our workforce reflective of the community in which we work and live. Building capability with the Aboriginal community providing them with the tools to develop transferable skills to advance their employment and career prospects. |
| 1.2 The introduction of five specifically identified positions. | Staged approach to incorporating five Apprentice/Trainee positions as a permanent addition to the Dubbo Regional Council organisational structure. | PCS SLT | Five years phased introduction completion completed by 2026 | |
| 1.3 Engage with local community and school groups for industry introductions and workplace visits. | Facilitate requests for work experience, industry visits and request to attend career expos where possible. | PCS ALO | Ongoing | Strengthened relationships with stakeholders in the community. |
| 1.4 Engage with the local Aboriginal community providing support to those applying for positions with Dubbo Regional Council. | Promotion and availability of a member of the People and Culture Team to the Aboriginal Community to provide guidance and support on applying for positions with Dubbo Regional Council and the merit based recruitment system on a regular basis. | PCS | Ongoing | Strengthened relationships with stakeholders within the community. Greater understanding and transparency in the community regarding employment with Dubbo Regional Council. Increased number and increased quality of applications from the local Aboriginal Community. |
| | Promotion of the Studiosity program in conjunction with the Macquarie Regional Library. This would allow access to the two | PCS MRL | Ongoing | |

| | | | | |
|--|---|-------------|----------------|--|
| | components of the program, Homework Help and Writing Support. This would provide another level of support and assistance in increasing digital and literacy skills, education and confidence in applying for positions. | | | |
| 1.5 Establish relationships with Aboriginal employment providers to ensure open and transparent communication around Council's merit based recruitment system. | Hold an information session for providers to attend to facilitate how a merit based recruitment system works, Council's policy and how they can assist their clients in applying for positions with Council | PCS ALO | Ongoing | Increased number of applications from Aboriginal community members for advertised positions. |
| 1.6 Update the "Work at Council" section of the Dubbo Regional Council website to be user and culturally welcoming. | Update the website to provide information on Council's merit based recruitment based system and how to apply for a position with Council. | PCS COMS | September 2021 | Applicants are educated on the expectations of Council in regards to job applications and Council's recruitment processes resulting in a higher standard of applications, strengthening the pool of candidates received. |
| Support and Retain Aboriginal Employees | | | | |
| 2.1 Promote and encourage usage of internal support mechanisms offered. | Aboriginal Liaison Officer profile and EAP information to be included in online induction in which all staff complete to ensure information is commonly known. | PCS | Ongoing | Staff are educated about services available them, feel supported in the workplace and feel confident in asking for help when required. |
| 2.2 Support and encourage employees to access Council's learning and development framework, Uplift, to grow, develop and enhance their skills and | Staff are made aware of all opportunities available for learning, both directly job related and professional development opportunities | PCS | Ongoing | Capabilities of staff are strengthened. Staff feel supported and are developing a vast range of transferable skills. |

| | | | | |
|--|--|-------------------|---------------|--|
| capabilities. | | | | |
| 2.3 Internal Acknowledgement and Celebration of Culture and Traditions | Introduction of internal functions to acknowledge NAIDOC Day and other significant calendar cultural events. | PCS ALO SLT | January 2022 | All employees become educated about the importance and meaning of Aboriginal Cultural events and come together to acknowledge these. |
| 2.4 Review leave policy to explore consideration and acknowledgment of kinship. | Exploration to see if kinship can be incorporated into Councils leave policy. | PCS ELT ALO | June 2022 | The Aboriginal kinship system is formally recognised within Council's policy if possible. |
| 2.5 Development of a Reward and Recognition program that includes recognition of Aboriginal employees in Councils Reward and Recognition Policy. | An annual award to acknowledge the contribution of an Aboriginal employee to Council with Council's Reward and Recognition policy. | PCS ELT | December 2023 | An annual award incorporated into Councils Reward and Recognition Program once developed, to acknowledge the contribution of an Aboriginal employee to Council. |
| Create and Maintain A Culturally Safe Environment | | | | |
| 3.1 Develop and implement an Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training Program for Dubbo Regional Council. | A training plan to be developed to have staff trained in Aboriginal Cultural Awareness. | PCS ALO | December 2021 | Undertake and employee engagement survey to ensure that Aboriginal employees feel safe and supported when coming to work and that Dubbo Regional Council employees are respectful, educated and embrace a diverse workplace and that our culture is positive, inclusive and reflective of closing the gap. |
| 3.2 Create a visual acknowledgement and appreciation of the local Aboriginal Culture throughout work environments. | Workspaces to feel more welcoming and acknowledging of Aboriginal Culture, both traditional and contemporary. | PCS ALO PA | June 2022 | |

RESPONSIBLE KEY

PCS – People Culture and Safety

SLT – Senior Leadership Team

ALO – Aboriginal Liaison Officer

MRL – Macquarie Regional Library

COMS – Corporate Image and Communications

PA – Property Assets



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