



# BARRING DJINANG

A Taungurung phrase meaning 'Pathway of the feet'



# FOREWORD



**The Hon. Gavin Jennings MLC**  
Special Minister of State



**The Hon. Natalie Hutchins**  
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

We are very pleased to introduce Barring Djinang, the new Aboriginal Employment Strategy for the Victorian public sector.

On behalf of the Victorian Government, we acknowledge and pay respect to Victoria's Aboriginal peoples as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the lands that are now called Victoria.

The contribution of Victoria's Aboriginal public sector employees benefits all Victorians. Victoria's public sector workplaces have taken strides forward in recent years to improve Aboriginal employment outcomes. But there is more to be done to overcome some longstanding challenges. To this end, Barring Djinang will continue to build a highly capable public sector that benefits from the unique skills and experience Aboriginal employees bring into the workplace.

A Taungurung phrase meaning "Pathway of the Feet", Barring Djinang's focus is on growing the pathways to a career in the Victorian public sector, as well as placing a stronger emphasis on building new or improved opportunities for existing staff.

Barring Djinang has been designed to foster and grow careers and actively support growth targets for Aboriginal representation.

The Victorian Government's commitment to self-determination will fundamentally change the way government works with the Victorian community to improve outcomes for all Victorians. The Strategy will actively contribute to the Victorian Government's advancement of Aboriginal self-determination through three key focus areas.

Firstly, by strengthening Aboriginal leadership capacity, the Strategy will grow the number of Aboriginal staff in senior positions in the public service, and will support the development of future Aboriginal leaders in Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, public and private sectors. Secondly, existing and future Aboriginal staff will have better access to development opportunities, support and career pathways. This includes opportunities to ensure that Aboriginal Victorians are represented at the highest levels of public sector leadership – there is no reason not to aspire to Victoria seeing its first

Aboriginal Department Secretary in the lifetime of this Strategy. Finally, building the cultural capability of the public sector at individual, managerial, leadership and whole of organisation levels, the Strategy will help to ensure that the Victorian public sector can work more effectively with the community it serves, including supporting Aboriginal self-determination and ensuring that the priorities of Aboriginal Victorians shape the work of government.

This Strategy is built on a foundation of engagement and consultation with the Aboriginal community. Through the new Barring Djinang Steering Group, the Victorian Public Sector Commission will partner with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and ensure that the Aboriginal community guide decisions about the Strategy and its implementation, consistent with the commitment to advancing Aboriginal self-determination.

We thank the Victorian Public Sector Commission, and all those who contributed to the development of Barring Djinang for their efforts.

# BARRING DJINANG



**Barring Djinang is the Victorian Government's new 5 year strategy to enhance Aboriginal employment outcomes across the Victorian public sector.**

The Victorian public sector has undertaken work in the past to increase representation of Aboriginal people in the sector. While some improvements have been made, further work and innovation is required to continue to improve not only representation, but also the quality of the workplace and career experiences of current and future Aboriginal staff.

The Victorian Government is working in partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal community towards self-determination. This agenda will be supported by strengthening the Aboriginal leadership pipeline and providing more access to timely development opportunities and support. This Strategy recognises the need to build the cultural capability of the public sector so that it can more effectively support the government's work in this area.

Barring Djinang has adopted an Aboriginal employment target of 2% for the Victorian Public Service. No target has been set for the broader public sector.

The VPSC has a role to play in outlining a set of strategic objectives that will work to collectively have a positive impact on the workplace. For the public sector this means an ongoing commitment to meaningful careers for current and future Aboriginal staff.

Throughout this document, the term Aboriginal is used to refer to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

# RATIONALE & OBJECTIVES

## Rationale

Research indicates there are persistent and longstanding issues in respect to the public sector's capacity to support Aboriginal employment.

We have an opportunity to address these systemic challenges now, by strategic investment in current and future Aboriginal staff throughout the employee lifecycle, while growing the cultural capability of the sector.

## Objectives

To address longstanding issues with respect to Aboriginal employment and make sustainable improvements across the sector.

To achieve sustainable improvement in Aboriginal employment outcomes

### Public sector leaders will:

- foster and grow careers
- invest in development
- support diversity
- enable a culturally capable workforce

### Underpinned by:

- strong partnerships with the Aboriginal community
- strong governance and reporting to inform progress and highlight opportunities

### Resulting in:

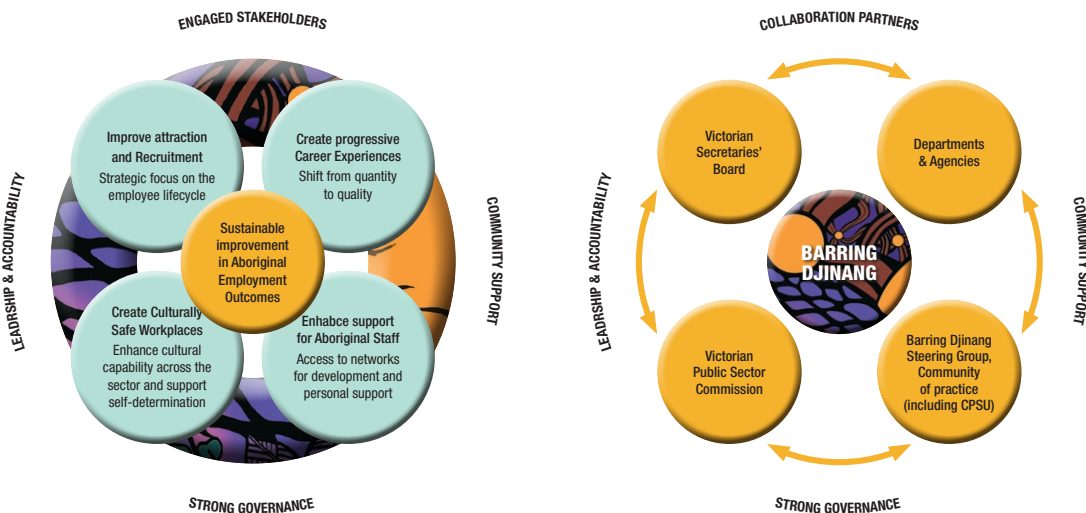
- a highly capable, diverse public sector that benefits from the unique skills and experience Aboriginal employees bring into the workplace.

# OUR APPROACH

Barring Djinang's implementation will be underpinned by strong partnerships with stakeholders. The Strategy is designed to support the current work of departments' Aboriginal Inclusion Action Plans and

Aboriginal Employment Plans, and will work to create new and supportive relationships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. The Barring Djinang Steering Group will ensure that a strong Aboriginal voice is

maintained throughout the life of the Strategy, and the VPSC will continue to work closely with agencies on implementation via a new Community of Practice.



# THE CASE FOR CHANGE

## Challenges identified from research

### Ongoing attraction and recruitment challenges

- Low representation and supply at all levels
- Limited application success dissuading Aboriginal applicants from applying or re-applying
- Culturally appropriate recruitment practice is not systemic

## Why this is important for us to address

- Ongoing attraction issues if no action is taken
- Current pipeline is likely to be insufficient to meet employment target.

## Our strategic response

### IMPROVE ATTRACTION AND RECRUITMENT

**Strategic focus on the employee lifecycle**

### Inconsistent career experiences and opportunities

- Low numbers of senior level Aboriginal staff
- Previous focus on representation led to perverse outcomes, including low quality workplace experiences for many Aboriginal staff
- Aboriginal staff report generally low level of support to develop the career that they want

- Lack of support for career development limits self-determination of Aboriginal staff within the workplace
- Self-determination of Aboriginal Victorians will be supported by a greater number of senior Aboriginal staff in the public sector, and enhanced leadership capacity in the Aboriginal community controlled sector
- Opportunities to extend pathways into the sector from existing initiatives like Jobs Victoria

### CREATE PROGRESSIVE CAREER EXPERIENCES

**Shift from quantity to quality**

### Lack of culturally safe and aware work cultures

- Not all public officials and employers meet responsibilities contained in public sector values, employment principles and Human Rights Charter in respect to Aboriginal employment
- Aboriginal staff expectations of the workplace are not being met in all cases: high rates of bullying and harassment; lateral violence; high cultural load; variable cultural awareness of managers

- Too much focus on what Aboriginal staff need to do and not what non-Aboriginal people need to do continues the status quo
- Aboriginal people have a right to enjoy their culture at all times, including in the workplace.
- Self-determination will be supported by increased cultural capability of the public sector

### INVEST IN WORKPLACE CULTURAL CAPABILITY

**Enhanced cultural capability across the sector**

### Limited access to support

- Aboriginal staff networks are valuable, but more support is needed
- Existing support mechanisms may not be culturally appropriate

- If Aboriginal staff do not receive the support they need to perform, develop or lead in the workplace, this may lead to limited engagement and satisfaction with career

### ENHANCED SUPPORT FOR ABORIGINAL STAFF

**Access to networks for development and personal support**

### Lack of central governance and oversight

- Siloed approaches to outcomes due to lack of a coordinated approach
- Previous strategy provided learnings about the need for strong governance and oversight

- Need a strategic focus from the centre on the most problematic aspects of the workforce lifecycle
- Without consistency, approaches may be limited in efficacy at the whole of sector level

### CENTRAL OVERSIGHT AND STRONG GOVERNANCE

**Demonstrate leadership and commitment**



# INITIATIVES

FOCUS AREA	INITIATIVES	KEY DATES	OUTCOMES
IMPROVE ATTRACTION AND RECRUITMENT	<b>NEW INITIATIVES</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Aboriginal Vocation Education &amp; Training (VET) Graduate Program:</b>                      Entry-level program targeted at with VET Grads (based on Aboriginal Pathway to GRADS)                 </li> </ul>	Q3, 2017/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased success rate for Aboriginal applicants</li> <li>Breadth and depth of Aboriginal applicant pool increases</li> <li>Aboriginal workforce is more evenly distributed across functions and levels of the public sector</li> </ul>
	<b>CONTINUED INITIATIVES</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Aboriginal Undergraduate Cadetship Program:</b>                      Entry-level program designed to connect Aboriginal tertiary students with a career in the public sector                 </li> <li> <b>Aboriginal Pathways to the GRADS:</b>                      Entry-level program designed to recruit Aboriginal tertiary graduates                 </li> </ul>	Ongoing Ongoing		
CREATE PROGRESSIVE CAREER EXPERIENCES			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Career Pathways Framework:</b>                      Online tool to support career planning by outlining careers paths across job families and groups of capabilities                 </li> </ul>	Q4, 2017/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased mobility across sectors</li> <li>Increased career satisfaction for Aboriginal staff</li> <li>The next cohort of Aboriginal leaders are supported to emerge</li> <li>Standard workforce planning identifies and uses designated roles to foster careers</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Aboriginal Future Leaders Pilot Program:</b>                      Individualised assessment and development for identified Aboriginal staff, utilising Victorian Leadership Academy methodologies                 </li> </ul>	Q1, 2017/18	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Designated roles:</b>                      Provide guidance to departments on use of designated roles                 </li> </ul>	Q3, 2017/18	
<b>CONTINUED INITIATIVES</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Aboriginal Career Development Program:</b>                      Mid-career development program for Aboriginal staff                 </li> </ul>	Ongoing		
CREATE CULTURALLY SAFE WORKPLACES			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Aboriginal Employment Portal:</b>                      Online repository of Barring Djinang resources                 </li> </ul>	Q3, 2017/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased cultural capability in public sector workforce and systems</li> <li>Aboriginal employees' expectations of the public sector are more likely to be met</li> <li>Public officials and employers are more likely to demonstrate responsibilities relating to Aboriginal employment</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Cultural Capability Toolkit:</b>                      Self-service toolkit for staff and managers to grow cultural capability                 </li> </ul>	Q1, 2017/18	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Public Entity Capacity Building Program:</b>                      Tailored support to annual cohort of public entities (by place or industry group) to plan and improve Aboriginal employment outcomes                 </li> </ul>	Q1, 2018/19		
ENHANCE SUPPORT FOR ABORIGINAL STAFF			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Regional Aboriginal Staff Networks:</b>                      Create new forums for regional Aboriginal staff to meet, connect and engage                 </li> <li> <b>Culturally appropriate EAP provision:</b>                      Ensure that EAP needs of Aboriginal staff are being met                 </li> </ul>	Q1, 2017/18 Q3, 2017/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased connections and support for Aboriginal staff</li> <li>Emerging issues relating to employment arrangements are identified and addressed</li> </ul>
PROVIDE CENTRAL OVERSIGHT AND STRONG GOVERNANCE			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Revisit employment policies and practices:</b>                      Explore existing materials to ensure alignment with strategy and principles                 </li> </ul>	Q3, 2017/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing tracking and reporting of outcomes, including regular Community of Practice meetings</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Reporting &amp; governance:</b>                      Initiate Barring Djinang Steering Group and Community of Practice, as well as develop insightful reports that track and measure progress against initiatives                 </li> </ul>	Q1, 2017/18	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Communications:</b>                      Implement comprehensive communications strategy                 </li> </ul>	Q1, 2017/18		



**Artwork:** *Collaborative Motivation to Employ* by Jade Kennedy

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