



# Indigenous Employment Strategy | **2023 to 2025**



**AURORA**  
EDUCATION  
FOUNDATION

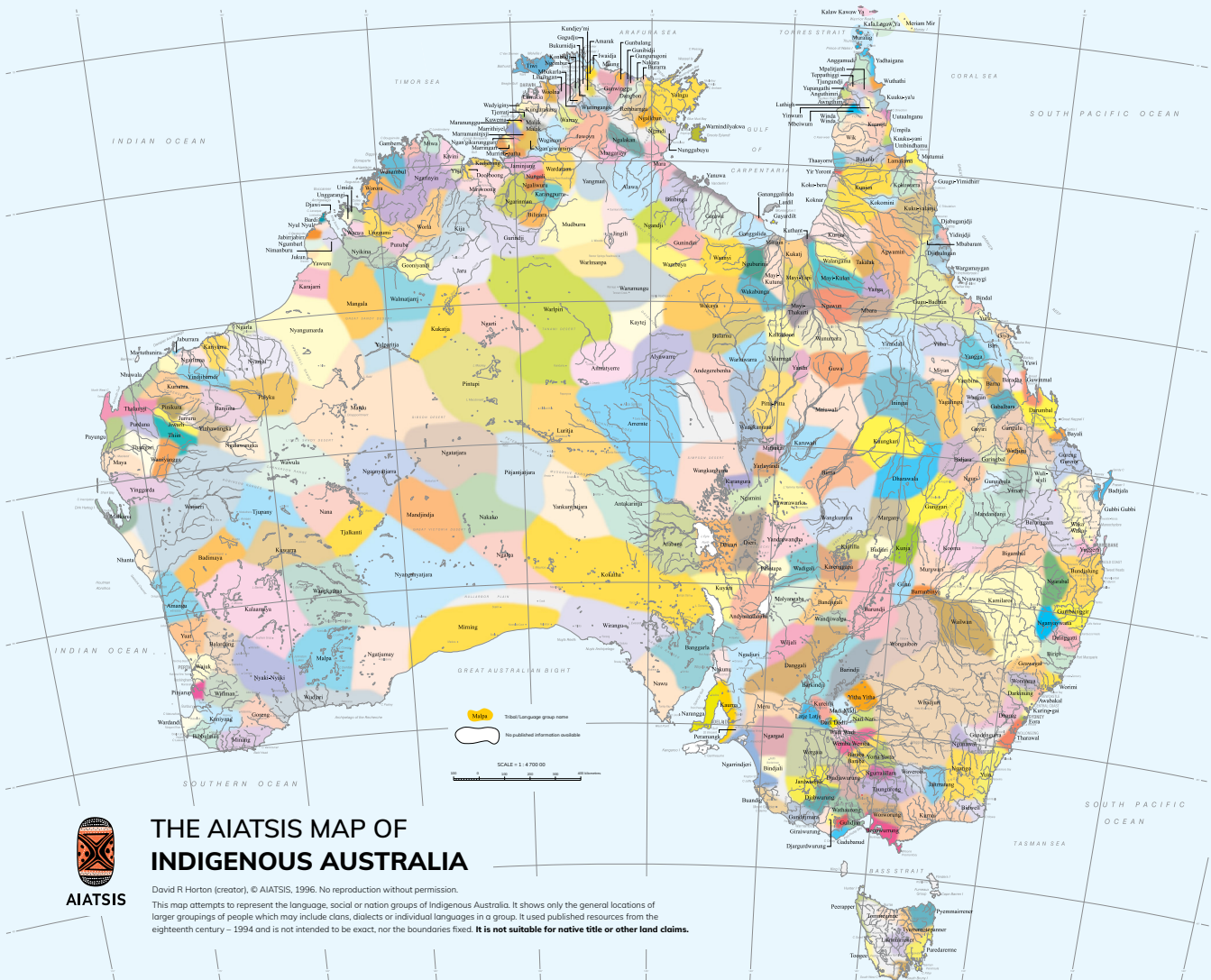
# Contents

CEO Message	3
Our Commitment	3
Guiding Principles	4
Objectives	5
Framework and Review	6
Current Staffing Profile	6
Action Plan	7

The Aurora Education Foundation (Aurora) acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners of the land where we live, learn and work.

We pay our respects to Elders both past and present.

We acknowledge the diverse nations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia. For the purposes of this document the term 'Indigenous' refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



# Message from the CEO



## LEILA SMITH

Aurora is in the midst of a ‘strategic leap’. In 2020 we became an Indigenous organisation and adopted a new organisational vision, mission, Theory of Change and 5-year strategic plan. As our programs grow, so do our staff numbers. At 2023, Aurora has over 40 staff, half of which are Indigenous team members as well as 35 Indigenous mentors who are casual staff working in the High School Program team.

This is the right time for us to build on our first Indigenous Employment Strategy and develop our second Indigenous Employment Strategy for 2023 to 2025. Over the years we have made changes that have made a positive difference to the lives of Indigenous people. Our second Indigenous Employment Strategy expands on Aurora’s commitment to growing and developing a talented Indigenous workforce across the organisation in a wide range of roles, and at all levels – from trainees to executive roles.

## Our Commitment

Aurora is an Indigenous organisation that supports Indigenous students to realise their full education and employment potential – whether it is completing Year 12 or achieving a DPhil from Oxford. Through our interconnected pathways, we walk with students from high school through to university and the workplace, redefining Indigenous educational and employment success.

Aurora developed its first Indigenous Employment Strategy in 2018 and since then has committed to growing and developing a talented Indigenous workforce across the organisation. Aurora recognises the importance of Indigenous staff delivering its programs and services and is committed to growing a diverse Indigenous and non-Indigenous workforce across our organisation.

Aurora promotes Indigenous excellence and recognises the strengths, knowledges and values of Indigenous people and communities. Our second Indigenous Employment Strategy focuses on attracting, recruiting and retaining Indigenous staff and creating an inclusive workplace culture.



## Guiding Principles

The Strategy was developed in consultation with the Indigenous Employee Network.

The guiding principles in the development and implementation of this Strategy are as follows:

- ▶ **Respect for and consideration of the unique and diverse cultural, social and spiritual belief systems practiced by Indigenous peoples.**
- ▶ **Acknowledgement of the wealth of individual and collective cultural knowledge and perspectives, skills and experiences that Indigenous peoples bring to the workplace and the value created when this is embedded across organisational life and practice.**
- ▶ **Implementation of policies and workplace practices that empower Indigenous employees to set their goals and achieve their full potential.**
- ▶ **Employment practices that empower Indigenous people to achieve equitable outcomes in recruitment, retention and career development.**



## Objectives

Aligned with the Aurora's 5-year Strategic Plan, the overall objective of this Strategy is to continue to build, and increase, a high performing cohort of Indigenous employees. To achieve this, Aurora will invest in resources and strategies to attract, retain, support and develop Indigenous talent. This will be supported by a workplace culture which understands, values and respects Indigenous people and cultures.

Our goals are:

### Recruitment

- Attract and provide Indigenous people with employment opportunities at all levels within the organisation.
- Strengthen Indigenous leadership through sustainable pathways to a majority Indigenous executive team.
- Talent attraction

### Leadership & Retention

- Indigenous employees have access to leadership opportunities and are supported to achieve their career goals; Indigenous employees feel their cultural identity is valued and consider Aurora as an employer of choice.
- Invest in Indigenous staff through tailored professional and personal development programs that reflect Indigenous ways of knowing and being and are mapped to a capability framework with a developmental focus for each level of the organisation.
- Coaching / empowering managers

### Culturally Safe Workplace

- An inclusive workplace that values, respects and develops employee competence in Indigenous cultures, with a strong commitment to maintaining a culturally safe working environment.
- Build cultural safety by supporting staff to continuously grow their understanding of Indigenous cultures, reflect critically on their potential for their own unconscious bias, and to support internal changes that ensure procedures, process and program practices are culturally safe.

## Framework and Review

This Strategy is a key element in supporting Aurora’s 5-year Strategic Plan and will be implemented across the organisation.

The Strategy includes an Action Plan which outlines the activities that Aurora will undertake to implement the Strategy. Each activity is an ongoing initiative and will be monitored annually.

Unless specified, the activities do not apply to Mentors as Mentors have a separate tailored development program delivered by Aurora.

Aurora will review the activities two times per year and amend as required. The activities will be monitored and reviewed by the Executive, People & Culture Committee and Indigenous Employee Network.

## Current Staffing Profile

As at March 2023, Aurora’s workforce profile was:

<b>Total number of permanent staff</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>FTE: 95.34</b>
<b>Total number of Indigenous permanent staff</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>FTE: 100</b>
<b>Proportion of Indigenous permanent staff</b>	<b>51.1.%</b>	<b>FTE: 56</b>
<b>Total number of casual staff</b>	<b>35</b>	
<b>Total number of Indigenous casual staff</b>	<b>35</b>	
<b>Proportion of Indigenous casual staff</b>	<b>100%</b>	

## Action Plan

<b>Recruitment</b>	<b>Attract and provide Indigenous people with employment opportunities at all levels within the organisation</b>		
Target	Maintain the proportion of Indigenous staff as over 50% of total staff		
Activities	Action	Assigned To	Measure
	Increase the use of established networks to promote employment opportunities within Aurora, such as Indigenous Higher Education Units, Aurora Internships, Aurora Alumni, the First Nations Executive Network and Aurora mentors	People & Culture & Pathways & Programs	% increase in Indigenous applicants
	Develop a recruitment marketing strategy and include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly identifiable and consistent Aurora branding for recruitment advertisements</li> <li>• Use Indigenous media for recruitment advertising</li> <li>• Use Indigenous recruiters to attract Indigenous applicants where appropriate</li> </ul>	People & Culture & Development	% increase in Indigenous applicants
	Create at least one identified Indigenous traineeship each year with a commitment to providing ongoing employment	Hiring Managers	One trainee per year
	Maintain Aurora website content specifically targeted at attracting Indigenous applicants	Development	% of Indigenous applicants
	Identify relevant positions as being available to Indigenous applicants only	Hiring Managers	% of Indigenous applicants
	For all roles not identified for Indigenous people, include in all selection criteria that <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are strongly encouraged to apply</i>	People & Culture	% of Indigenous applicants
	Ensure an Indigenous panel member is present on all selection panels	People & Culture & Hiring Managers	Number of select panels with Indigenous representation
	Establish an Aurora Indigenous talent network to include Aurora mentors, Aurora Alumni and past Aurora applicants	People & Culture	Number of Aurora alumni

## Action Plan

<b>Leadership and Retention</b>	<b>Indigenous employees have access to leadership opportunities and are supported to achieve their career goals.</b>		
	<b>Indigenous employees feel supported and consider Aurora as an employer of choice.</b>		
Target	Retention of Indigenous staff equal to or greater than retention of non-Indigenous staff Positive feedback from Indigenous staff on their employment experience with Aurora Increase in Indigenous staff in leadership roles		
Activities	Action	Assigned To	Measure
	Encourage participation of Indigenous staff in internal and external professional development initiatives that will enhance professional knowledge and skills, including implementing internal leadership development programs	People & Culture	Feedback from participants
	Complete exit interviews for all staff leaving the organisation	People & Culture	Feedback from exit interviews
	Encourage staff to utilise the 5 days study assistance leave program to engage and complete education/training relevant to the work of Aurora	People & Culture & Managers	Take up of study leave assistance
	Develop succession opportunities in Individual Development Plans that will support Indigenous staff to perform in acting roles when available	People & Culture & Managers	Number of Indigenous staff acting in higher role
	Provide internal opportunities for Indigenous staff to network through monthly Indigenous Employee Network meetings	All	Number of meetings held each year
	Provide external opportunities for Indigenous Staff to network	All	% of staff attending external events



## Action Plan

<b>Culturally Safe Workplace</b>	<b>An inclusive workplace that values, respects and develops employee competence in Indigenous culture, with a strong commitment to creating a culturally safe working environment.</b>		
Target	Positive feedback from Indigenous staff Ensuring Indigenous employees feel culturally safe at the workplace		
Activities	Action	Assigned To	Measure
	Identify and deliver a suitable Indigenous cultural competency program for all staff, including training on induction and periodic refresher training	People & Culture	% of staff attending cultural competence training
	All People & Culture initiatives and programs to be reviewed to ensure they include Indigenous ways of knowing and being	People & Culture	Initiatives and programs to include Indigenous ways of knowing and being
	Senior managers to visibly champion Aurora's vision, purpose and values and to effectively deal with unaligned workplace behaviour	All managers	Staff and peer feedback
	Include values alignment in recruitment and performance development activities	People & Culture	% of recruitment interviews and performance plans with values alignment
	Include meaningful and considered Acknowledgements of Country at all major internal meetings	All	Number of meetings complying
	Consult with relevant Indigenous managers, staff and Elders on matters related to cultural protocols	All	Feedback from Indigenous staff
	Encourage staff to take paid cultural leave to attend cultural events such as NAIDOC	People & Culture & Managers	Uptake of cultural leave
	Create opportunities for staff to celebrate and share culture at the workplace such as celebrating significant events throughout the year or attending local community events	All	Number of cultural activities

1. Current policy is for 5 paid cultural leave days for Indigenous team members.



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