

## 2. Recruitment

Current approaches appear to be most effective in recruiting Indigenous staff to entry level positions. However, there is scope for APS agencies to consider extending recruitment efforts to:

- advertising APS jobs in Indigenous-specific media more prominently and prolifically
- implementing new ways of attracting Indigenous Australians to join the APS at higher classifications
- recruiting more vigorously for placements outside the ACT and in regional Australia.

## 3. Greater diversity of job opportunities

Indigenous APS employees are still primarily working in service delivery (41%), and 65% are in roles involving interaction with Indigenous Australians and/or communities.

It is important to Indigenous staff to extend their experience to other work areas which in turn would benefit from reflecting the diversity in the Australian community. APS agencies need to promote a wider range of job roles to Indigenous staff and develop strategies for:

- helping them map their career pathways
- equipping them with the relevant skills to work in the area of their choice
- providing opportunities for increasing their level of confidence.

## 4. Career development and advancement

There is a need for robust strategies focussed on:

- increasing awareness among Indigenous staff about opportunities for higher duties and/or promotion
- targeted professional and personal development for Indigenous employees
- career development for APS 5–6 and EL1 Indigenous staff to increase the number of Indigenous staff in leadership roles at the EL2 and SES classifications.

## Ways forward

The critical message from the 2009 census is that agencies need to do more to improve the representation of Indigenous staff in the APS. Some key drivers to contribute to this work are already in place:

- the Commission's Strategy
- the COAG target of 2.7% of Indigenous representation in the public sector by 2015
- the Australian Government's *Ahead of the Game: Blueprint for the reform of Government Administration*.

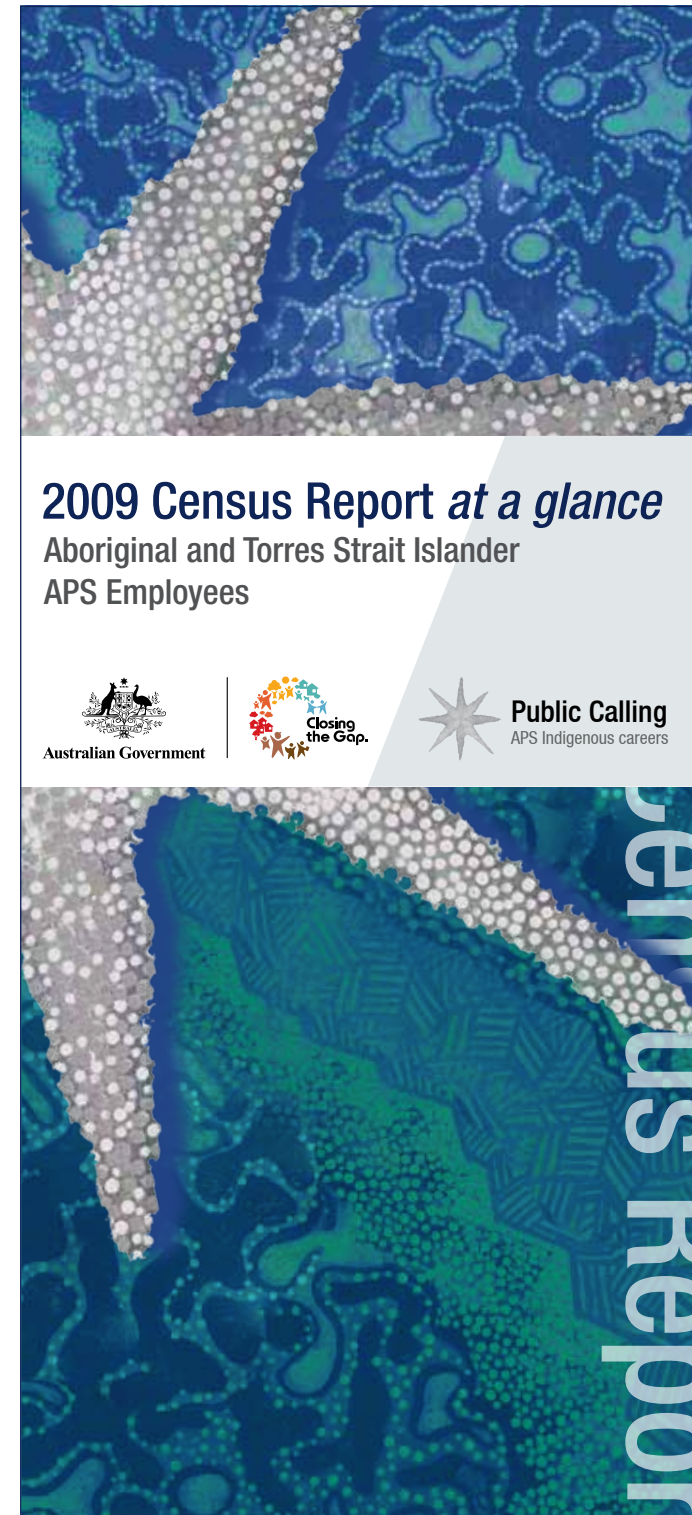
It is up to APS agencies to take on the challenge and actively address the issues raised in the 2009 census report.

## Related publications

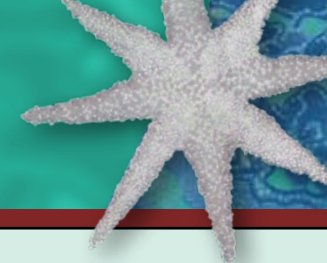
- *Indigenous APS Employees' Census Report 2009*
- *Indigenous APS Employees' Census Survey Results 2009* (online only)
- *APS Employment and Capability Strategy for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Employees* (online only)

Available for download on the Commission's website [www.apsc.gov.au](http://www.apsc.gov.au)

Email correspondence should be directed to [StateoftheService@apsc.gov.au](mailto:StateoftheService@apsc.gov.au).



# 2009 Census Report *at a glance*



## The census

The Australian Public Service Commission (the Commission) conducted the first ever census of Indigenous Australian Public Service (APS) employees in 2005. The results helped shape the work under the *APS Employment and Capability Strategy for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Employees* (the Strategy).

Since then, there has been significant progress in the Australian Government's work on 'closing the gap' in economic outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. This work includes the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG's) target to raise Indigenous representation across the Commonwealth public sector (including the APS) to 2.7% by 2015—a challenging objective.

In this context, the Commission conducted a second census of Indigenous APS employees in October/November 2009 to ask them again about their experience as employees in the APS, and about what is and is not working well for them. It also aimed to determine if current initiatives for the employment, development and retention of Indigenous staff were meeting their needs.

## Key census findings

All APS employees who had identified as Indigenous Australians were invited to participate in the census, and 52% completed the survey. The demographic profile of respondents included the following:

- employees were most likely to be aged 35–44 years (32%) or 25–34 (27%) years
- employees were most likely to be working in Queensland (26%) or the ACT (23%)

- almost three-quarters of employees were at the APS 3–4 (43%) or APS 5–6 (31%) levels
- just over two-thirds were female (68%)
- about 22% had graduate qualifications.

The 2009 census findings highlight that there are many areas where the APS is performing well. For example, at an aggregate level, positive results from the census include the following:

- 96% were willing to put in extra effort to get a job done
- 82% were satisfied with their supervisor's support for them to use flexible working practices
- 78% of those with caring responsibilities were satisfied with their supervisor's support in assisting them meeting their caring responsibilities.

However, Indigenous APS employment levels have remained static at 2.1% over the last two years, and at 30 June 2009 as reported in the State of the Service Report:

- more than half of all ongoing Indigenous staff were employed in just three agencies
- 28 agencies reported that none of their employees identified as Indigenous
- 52.5% of ongoing Indigenous staff were at the APS 1–4 classifications compared with just over a third (36.6%) of staff APS-wide
- only 0.6% of SES staff were Indigenous
- separations at 3.6% continue to be considerably higher than the actual representation rate of 2.1% as well as the engagement rate of 3.1%
- 48.5% of Indigenous employees had fewer than five years of service, compared with 38.6% of non-Indigenous.

## Critical challenges for the APS

The outcomes from the 2009 Indigenous APS employees' census make it clear that not much has changed for Indigenous APS staff since the first census in 2005.

It is, therefore, no surprise that the four key areas identified for attention in the 2009 census report are similar to those highlighted in the 2005 report:

### 1. Retention

Retaining Indigenous employees continues to be the principal challenge for APS agencies. One in seven survey respondents signalled their intention to leave the APS in the next three years, and graduates and ELLs were more likely to intend to leave than employees at other classifications.

The most commonly cited reasons for wanting to leave were:

- lack of job satisfaction (41%)
- feeling under-valued (35%)

These are commonly known as 'push' factors, and agencies should focus on eliminating them by adopting a range of methods to support Indigenous employees more effectively, including:

- implementing an Indigenous Employment Strategy
- creating and sustaining an environment where staff work sensitively and effectively with Indigenous Australians
- reducing the incidence of discrimination, harassment and/or bullying
- providing greater support to new entrants.