



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## The impacts of COVID-19 on the Indigenous Workforce



### Summary

COVID-19 represented the largest economic shock to the Australian economy in nearly a century.

To understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Australia's Indigenous workforce, Generation One commissioned Deloitte Access Economics to quantify the economic damage.

The findings unveiled an alarming data gap on the Indigenous workforce, and led to the conclusion that the economic participation of Indigenous Australians is not regularly measured. Only through forecasting and modelling from 2016 economic data was Deloitte Access Economics able to estimate the number of Indigenous jobs lost in 2020.

### Key findings of the report included:

- In the first three months of the COVID-19 pandemic, an estimated 14,400 Indigenous workers lost their jobs.
- New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia experienced the greatest Indigenous job losses.
- Overall employment impacts are expected to set back progress against Australia's **Closing the Gap** employment targets by at least two years.
- Indigenous Australians were less likely to qualify for JobKeeper due to a higher number being employed on a casual basis for less than 12 months.
- COVID-19 exacerbated existing barriers to employment for Indigenous people such as digital inclusion and crowded housing, and poses new employment barriers into the future, including digital exclusion.

# 49%

**of working Indigenous people are employed**

compared to 75% employment rate for non-Indigenous people

# 14,400

**Indigenous Australians are estimated to have lost their jobs between March and June 2020**

**Indigenous Australians are**

# 2.4x

**less likely to work from home**

# 2 YEARS

**of lost progress.**

Estimates suggest that employment may not recover to pre-Covid-19 levels until early 2022

## Where to next?

Generation One is advocating for more regular data capture on the Indigenous workforce, including by Australia's 100 largest workplaces, by governments, and through national legislative change to shine a spotlight on the invisible recent experiences of Indigenous Australians in the labour force.

## Call to action

To help close the data gap, we are calling on every Australian workplace to understand and report on the state of Indigenous employment in their own organisations.

To support organisations on their journey, Generation One is embarking on a major research project amongst the 100 largest Australian workplaces to examine what works when it comes to achieving Indigenous employment parity.

**To learn more, or register your organisation's interest to help close the Indigenous employment data gap, contact Generation One at [generation-one@minderoo.org](mailto:generation-one@minderoo.org)**



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