

Australian Indigenous Employment Index

Distress and Disclosure Protocol

Client: Minderoo Foundation – Generation One

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Contact:

Carol Vale

carol@murawin.com.au

www.murawin.com.au

ABN 91 167 803 830

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1. INTRODUCTION

Minderoo Foundation (Generation One), Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre and Murawin Consulting are collaborating on a research project that will look at the current experiences of Indigenous employees and the steps being taken by their organisations to close the employment gap to establish a baseline and identify best practice approaches. Data collection for this project will include qualitative interviews with senior executives, line managers to Indigenous employees and Indigenous employees. It will also include focus groups with groups of Indigenous employees who self-nominate to participate. The project will include a significant number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants.

Project Context

Generation One has identified a gap in quality data to support informed decision making on achieving Indigenous employment parity. Currently data on Indigenous employment trends is captured by ABS Census, annual ABS Labour Force Survey, Closing the Gap and AIHW reporting at population level only. There is an absence of employment trend data at organisational level, nor is data on employment practices collected and aggregated at the individual employer level. This existing data gap means it is difficult to ascertain which organisations, sectors or geographic locations are making progress (or otherwise) on Indigenous employment, and the organisational practices that either underpin or undermine progress.

Generation One plans to start a national dialogue within industry to close the employment gap and requires the development of an Index of Indigenous Employment that will highlight both the state of Indigenous employment and employment practices at Australia's top 50 largest workplaces.

The Index will be informed by a set of key indicators and will produce a unique dataset. The aim of the project is to create the data baseline with the goal of strengthening employer performance across the Index domains, and be used in the context of wider implications in the areas of informing policy change and directing advocacy initiatives.

Specifically, the research results will be used to:

- empower large employers to efficiently improve Indigenous employment outcomes within their organisation and industry;
- inform any future advocacy initiatives to government regarding closing the Indigenous employment gap;
- educate general industry and employers on the strategies to improve Indigenous employment.

2. RISKS OF DISTRESS

The interviews will collect and analyse data to deliver significant new insights to help build a clearer picture of Indigenous employment and greater understanding of “what works” to recruit and retain Indigenous people; however, there is some risk that these discussions will trigger distress for employees if a participant has had negative experiences in their workplace, of the support or training they have received at work. Given that interviews are focussing on workplace culture, it is possible that non-Indigenous line managers or executives may also experience distress. The interviews will also cover whether Indigenous participants have experienced racism or bias at work, whether they feel their employment is genuine or “tick-a-box” and the cultural load they carry in the workplace – i.e. the extra work that Indigenous people do to educate employees about Indigenous culture, to work on RAPs etc., and this may also raise potentially distressing topics or memories. We also acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may find being involved in research, or speaking to researchers, to be uncomfortable or intimidating due to past poor research practices undertaken with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The interviews will seek to focus on workplace culture, experience as an Indigenous employee, and leadership and embedding of reconciliation within the organisation, but there is a potential risk that a participant may disclose experiences of racism or discrimination in the workplace.

3. DISTRESS PROTOCOLS

This document outlines the procedure for Murawin researchers who are part of the research team to follow if a participant becomes distressed while participating in an interview.

During recruitment, the consent process, and at the commencement of the interview, participants will be reminded of the voluntary nature of their participation, including their right not to answer any questions that they do not want to answer, and their right to withdraw consent at any stage prior to, during, or up to one month after the interview.

The participant information sheet, and the beginning of the interview, will give participants an outline of the types of questions that will be asked. For example:

- “Today we’d like to talk with you about what important Indigenous cultural events your organisation commemorates, and what has been your experience of them?”

During the interview, participants will be reminded that they can take a break at any stage. For example:

- “Please let me know if you would like to take a break”
- “Remember that we can take a break at any stage – just let me know”
- During the interview, researchers will monitor participants for signs of distress (as relevant or noticeable in in-person, video or telephone interviews). For example:
 - Voice (e.g. quieter sound);
 - Facial complexion (e.g. draining of colour);
 - Body tension (e.g. shaking hands);
 - Extended pauses;
 - Breathing;
 - Body language (e.g. shielded/closed):
 - Crying; and
 - Eye contact (e.g. looking down or looking away).

If a participant exhibits signs of distress, the researcher will employ a range of techniques as required. For example:

- Acknowledge the challenges of talking about difficult issues: “it can be really hard to talk about these things”
- Offer to take a break: “would you like to take a short break?”
- Pause the interview: “let’s take a little break. I’ll stop the recorder”
- Practice and model grounding: “when I’m upset, I find it helpful to focus on taking some slow breaths and focusing on my breathing. Do you want to try that for a moment”.
- Offering encouraging comments: “thanks for sharing your experiences with us. It can be hard to talk about these things, but it is really important for us to hear about [insert relevant topic of conversation]. We appreciate your contribution to this research”
- Shift the interview to a less distressing topic, if appropriate: “perhaps you could tell me a bit more about [insert relevant topic of conversation]”
- If and when the moment passes, the researcher can reflect back on their understanding to give the participant an opportunity to reframe their contribution. The interviewer can also recheck consent and provide relevant referrals. For example:
 - Provide a summary of the participant’s contribution and check the researcher’s understanding. “Please correct me if I have not interpreted you correctly, but what I’ve been hearing is that [insert relevant topic of conversation]”

- Check consent: “Remember that we can take a break or finish the interview at any time if things are becoming a bit too much for you, and you can skip any questions that you don’t want to answer”.
- Ask the participant if they would like to continue: “would you like to continue with the interview or finish up here?”
- Guide participant towards relevant support: “do you have someone you can talk to about these things after we finish here today?”
- Offer an opportunity to debrief with a researcher after the interview.
- Provide referrals to appropriate support services (see below for more information on referrals)

If the participant’s levels of distress are such that they raise concern or require immediate assistance, the interviewer will pause the interview. If this occurs the researcher will recheck consent for the use of the data collected so far and follow the appropriate procedure. For example:

- Cease the interview: “I’m going to stop the interview here. We can continue another time if you would like. It’s your choice about whether what we’ve talked about so far is included in the research project or not.”
- Thank the participant for their contribution regardless of whether they have consented to use of the data.
- Provide referrals and check immediate support (as above).

If the researcher has concerns about a participant, they will advise their project manager at Murawin and the project manager will determine the appropriate course of action. This may include checking in with a participant later in the day or the next day.

If there are concerns about the safety of the participant or another person, the project manager may consult with the Managing Director of Murawin and will pass on information to the appropriate person in the organisation. Interview participants will be made aware prior to the interview that if there are concerns for their safety, the researcher may be required to breach confidentiality. If this is required, the researcher would discuss this with the participant after the interview.

4. REFERRALS

A list of national support services is below. The interviewer can use this list to suggest a possible service (or services) to participants. In addition, we will consult with the Employee Assistance Programs of organisations involved in this project to determine local options for relevant and culturally safe services to refer participants to in case of distress.

<p>1800 RESPECT</p>	<p>A national sexual assault, family and domestic violence counselling line for anyone who has experienced, or is at risk of, physical or sexual violence. This service is designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities, Indigenous Australians, young people and individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Online counselling is also available.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732) 1800 RESPECT(link is external)</p>
<p>Blue Knot Helpline</p>	<p>Staffed by trained trauma-informed counsellors, this support line offers information, support and referral to adult survivors of childhood trauma and abuse, and partners, family and friends of survivors.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>1300 657 380 Mon–Sun: 9am – 5pm (AEST) Blue Knot Helpline(link is external)</p>
<p>Bravehearts Information and Support Line</p>	<p>Open to anyone wanting information, advice, referrals and support regarding child sexual assault.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>1800 272 831 Mon–Fri: 8:30am – 4:30pm (AEST) (hours vary on public holidays) Bravehearts Information and Support Line(link is external)</p>

Counselling Online	A free online and SMS/text-based service for Australian residents concerned about or affected by alcohol and other drugs.	Yes	Counselling Online (link is external) Use the website to sign up for SMS support. See the website to sign-up for SMS support
DrugInfo (Alcohol and Drug Foundation)	A telephone and online service for anyone who needs relevant, up-to-date information about alcohol and other drugs.	Yes	1300 858 584 DrugInfo (link is external)
eheadspace	A free and confidential telephone and online service for young people aged 12–25. Qualified youth mental health professionals provide support to young people worried about their mental health or experiencing issues such as depression, bullying and isolation. Support is also available to concerned parents or carers.	No	1800 650 890 Mon–Sun: 9am – 1am (AEST) eheadspace (link is external)
Family Drug Support Australia	A telephone support service for users, families and carers in crisis due to alcohol and other drug use.	Yes	1300 368 186 Family Drug Support Australia (link is external)
Family Relationship Advice Line	Provides information on family relationship issues and advice on parenting arrangements after separation. It is for anyone – including step-parents, young people and friends – affected by family	No	1800 050 321 Mon–Fri: 8am – 8pm Sat: 10am – 4pm (AEST) (excluding

	relationship or separation issues. Referrals to local services are also offered.		national public holidays) Family Relationship Advice Line
GriefLine	Provides support to people experiencing loss and grief, at any stage in life. Online counselling is also available.	No	(03) 9935 7400 (National) 1300 845 745 (National landline only) Mon–Sun: 12pm – 3am (AEST) GriefLine (link is external)
Kids Helpline	Provides confidential telephone and online counselling services to young people aged 5–25 years old for any reason.	Yes	1800 551 800 Kids Helpline (link is external)
Lifeline	A generalist and crisis telephone counselling, information and referral service, provided by trained volunteers who are supported by professional staff.	Yes	13 11 14 Lifeline (link is external)
MensLine Australia	A telephone and online support service for men with family and relationship concerns. MensLine is staffed by professional counsellors who are experienced in men’s issues.	Yes	1300 789 978 MensLine Australia (link is external)

Men's Referral Service	<p>Offers a confidential telephone service provided for men by men. For men who want to stop their violent or abusive behaviour towards their family members. Women can also seek information and help for their male partner, husband, relative or friend.</p>	No*	<p>1300 766 491</p> <p>Mon–Fri: 8am – 9pm Sat–Sun: 9am – 5pm (AEST)</p> <p>No to Violence – Men's Referral Service(link is external)</p> <p>* Service is available 24 hours in Tasmania and New South Wales.</p>
Mind Australia Carer Helpline	<p>Provides free, confidential information, support and referral for family, carers and friends of people with a mental illness.</p>	No	<p>1300 554 660</p> <p>Mon–Fri: 9am – 5pm (AEST)</p> <p>Mind Australia (link is external)</p>
National Alcohol and Other Drug Hotline	<p>Provides confidential advice about alcohol and other drugs to individuals, family and friends, general practitioners, health professionals, and business and community groups. The hotline will automatically redirect you to the Alcohol and Other Drug Information Service operating in your state or territory.</p>	Yes	<p>1800 250 015</p> <p>National Alcohol and Other Drug hotline</p>
QLife	<p>Provides early intervention, peer-supported telephone counselling and referral services for people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and/or intersex (LGBTI).</p>	No	<p>1800 184 527</p> <p>Mon–Sun: 3pm – 12am (AEST)</p> <p>QLife (link is external)</p>

Samaritans	Provides anonymous crisis support, for issues such as relationship or family problems, loss and bereavement, financial or job-related worries, illness, addiction and suicide.	Yes	135 427 Samaritans (link is external)
SANE Australia	Provides information, guidance and referrals to people who are affected by or need support to manage mental health concerns.	No	1800 187 263 Mon–Fri: 9am – 5pm (AEST) SANE Australia (link is external)
Suicide Call Back Service	Provides telephone, video and online counselling to people 15 years and older who are affected by suicide, which can include feeling suicidal, being worried about someone, caring for someone suicidal, being bereaved by suicide and health professionals supporting people affected by suicide.	Yes	1300 659 467 Suicide Call Back Service (link is external)
Wellways Helpline	A peer-led, volunteer support and referral service that provides information to people experiencing mental health issues, as well as their families and friends.	No	1300 111 400 Mon–Fri: 9am – 9pm (AEST) Wellways Helpline (link is external)
Youth BeyondBlue	Provides information and confidential telephone and online counselling for young people aged 12–25 years old, who may be	Yes*	1300 224 636 * Online counselling available Mon–Sun: 3pm – 12am (AEST)

	experiencing anxiety, depression or suicidal ideation.		Youth BeyondBlue
Dardi Munwurro / Brother to Brother hotline	Specialist Aboriginal family violence service and Brother to Brother hotline - 24-hour crisis line for Aboriginal Men	Yes	1800 435 799 (crisis line) (03) 8456 3044 (Dardi Munwurro)
Kurbingui	Aboriginal community organization providing social and emotional wellbeing and youth services in Brisbane.	Yes	(07) 3235 9999 (child safety after hours) Kurbingui
Sydney Aboriginal family Support Service	Aboriginal owned counselling and support service in Sydney.	No	0410 539 905 Sydney Aboriginal Family Support Service
Gallang Place	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporation providing counselling, advocacy and support services in Brisbane.	No	07 3899 5041 Gallang Place