

Indigenous Employment Index

Draft discussion guide for Line Managers

10 August 2021 version 6

Murawin will undertake interviews using the method of **Yarning**, which supports an Indigenous worldview of oral storytelling, and encourages open dialogue, informal conversation and the sharing of participant's thoughts and experiences. *This method is appropriate for interviews with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people as its aim is to create a safe space for discussion.*

The guide will support a semi-structured interview that explores key topic areas, rather than a sequential question and answer approach. The questions included in this guide and their sequence are indicative only.

Key questions indicated in **red** will be prioritised and ensure that interviews adhere to the agreed 45-minute timeframe. Remaining questions will be explored as appropriate for each interview.

Topic areas include:

- Commitment, Governance and Reporting
- Workplace culture and leadership
- Attraction and Recruitment
- Engagement, Retention & Development
- Indigenous Community Engagement

Interviewer guidance

- Introduce researcher (Murawin) and the research scope.
- Explain what the discussion is about - "We've been asked to conduct research by Minderoo Foundation with 50 of Australia's large employers to produce a dataset that will provide an evidence base on closing the Indigenous employment gap and will also educate employers on strategies to improve Indigenous employment. We'd like to hear your views on your experience as an employee, your views on any initial outcomes and impact, and any thoughts you have about how this could be improved"
- Advise the participant of the ethics approval through Curtin University, and in alignment with the AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research
- Explain audio-recording and transcription
- Explain how data will be used and stored – especially that it will be stored/used in line with Australian privacy and Indigenous data governance principles and, that it will not be passed to anyone else or any other organisation and will be used solely for evaluation of the program
- Interview will take about 45 minutes
- Explain that participants can ask to stop at any time, particularly if they feel distressed
- Explain that participants can explore how their experience compares to previous workplaces.
- Explain the importance of honest opinions, no right or wrong answers.
- Explain recording and confidentiality of participant information and informed consent process

- Any questions before starting?

Discussion guide

1 Introductions and context

For non-Indigenous Managers:

- Can you tell me a bit about yourself, your role and the company you work for?
- How long have you been with the company?
- What area of the business do you work in?
- Have you worked in many areas of the business?
- How do you interact with Indigenous employees?
- Based on previous answer, is this your first time managing/ interacting Indigenous employees?
- Can you tell me what support/training the organisation has provided for managing Indigenous employees?

For Indigenous Managers:

- Can you tell me a bit about yourself - your mob, where you're from?
- And what about your role and the company you work for?
 - How did you get started with these mob?
 - How long have you been working for here?
 - What are you most proud of in your work?
- How do you interact with Indigenous employees?
- Based on previous answer, is this your first time managing/ interacting Indigenous employees?
- Can you tell me what support/training the organisation has provided for managing Indigenous employees?

2 Attraction and Recruitment

- As a line manager how are you encouraged or supported to increase Indigenous representation, including the recruitment of Indigenous employees?
- Can you outline your approach to attracting and recruiting Indigenous employees?
Prompt: is there anything you can think of in terms of communication or interview style for instance?
 - How is this managed and reported to executive?
 - What has been working, and what have been some of the challenges?
 - What are your reporting requirements around Indigenous employment?
 - What has been working, and what have been some of the challenges?
 - How inclusive, culturally safe and responsive do you feel this process is?
 - How do you determine which roles are identified versus roles where Indigenous candidates are encouraged to apply?
 - How do you secure funding for identified roles?

- How do you ensure Indigenous people are being employed, not because of their Aboriginality but because match the majority of the role requirements?
- Do you have any understanding of the impact of colonisation on Indigenous people, their job-readiness and experiences in the workplace? E.g., Indigenous people experience the impact of generational trauma, or may have different levels of education or experience than their non-Indigenous counterparts?
 - How does this affect the way Indigenous people are engaged and recruited?
 - Does your organisation provide capacity-building or support to potential Indigenous employees to support job readiness? E.g., a working with children checks, licence, internships, scholarships, etc
- How are Indigenous cultural responsibilities and requirements identified and supported? E.g., time for sorry business, allowances to work 'on Country', recognition of kinship/guardianship requirements, flexibility around pay periods?

3 Engagement, Retention and Development

- How confident do you feel in being able to effectively support those responsibilities?
 - Do you have an understanding of the term cultural load?
 - How do you as a line-manager seek to understand and respond to your employees' experiences of cultural load in the workplace?
 - Are you provided with appropriate training to understand how to manage Indigenous employees appropriately and effectively?
- What are the opportunities for Indigenous employees to participate in focussed development opportunities? E.g., formal education, mentoring, a buddy or sponsorship?
 - Are there any professional development opportunities specific to Aboriginal people that you offer?
 - Who has the responsibility to ensure that Indigenous employees are accessing appropriate professional development and support?
 - What has been the impact of this approach?
- What do you understand about the HR and people processes in terms of cultural allowances? Often this may require extended absences of leave or allowance for flexible work arrangements. E.g. time for sorry business, allowances to work 'on Country', recognition of kinship/guardianship requirements?
 - Do you work with your Indigenous employees to understand what their specific HR needs may be and provide accommodations based on these?
 - Do you feel confident to participate in these conversations?
 - What avenues of communication and feedback are there for Indigenous employees to provide feedback that may be culturally or personally sensitive?
 - If in place, are these used by Indigenous employees and what feedback have you had?
- What does your review process look like?
 - Is Indigeneity considered in relation to reviews and opportunities?
- How do you feel about the appropriateness or accessibility of any internal development and leadership activities for Indigenous employees?

- Can you describe any opportunities for Indigenous employees to participate in targeted development opportunities? E.g. formal education, mentoring, a buddy or sponsorship?
- Do you seek input from Indigenous employees on the barriers and opportunities for Indigenous participation in these activities?
- How responsive do you feel your organisation is to the experiences of Indigenous employee, including wellbeing, inclusion and cultural safety and experiences of racism in the workplace?
 - How would an Indigenous employee provide feedback on negative or exclusionary behaviours? Can you provide an example of this?
- As a line manager how do you ensure the wellbeing of Indigenous employees? *Prompt: what programs and supports are available (E.g., health and wellbeing services, financial literacy etc.)*

4 Commitment, Governance and Reporting

- Can you describe the organisation's diversity and inclusion commitment and approach, what it aims to achieve?
 - Does this approach include reconciliation and/or Indigenous employment?
 - If so, can you describe the current formal structures, processes, and plans? *E.g. a Reconciliation Action Plan or Indigenous Employment Strategy / Plan*
 - Have you had any role in implementing this approach?
 - Who has oversight of this approach? e.g., does the board of executive leadership team have oversight?
 - How are Indigenous people or employees engaged in the design and implementation of this work?
 - What outcomes do you think this approach has achieved?
- Are you provided data from employee engagement with Indigenous employees?
 - If yes, how is this used, for what purpose and how is it then provided back to Indigenous employees?

5 Workplace culture and leadership

- What does an inclusive work environment mean to you?
 - What are leadership's expectations around cultural safety and building an inclusive work environment, and how does this work in practice?
 - How is this communicated with employees?
- Thinking about the culture of your company, how culturally safe do you think it is, and does this vary across different areas of the business?
 - Does this differ across levels or business streams?
 - What support or training are you given to be culturally competent as a manager of Indigenous Australians? *Prompt: non-verbal communication, use of silence, taking cultural leave etc.*
 - Have you had feedback from Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees on their perspective of cultural safety?

- How does your organisation celebrate Indigenous culture and protocols? E.g., events, art, Country, place, language
 - What has been your experience of them?
 - Are you encouraged or required by leadership to both participate and empower your employees to participate in these events?
 - Are you provided with learning or resources on Indigenous protocols? Do you have any examples of resources?
 - How do you use the resources you are provided?
 - What is your organisation's protocol regarding Acknowledgement of Country?
 - When and how would you or your employees deliver an Acknowledgement?
- Does your organisation provide opportunities for Indigenous employees to network with each other?
 - If yes, is this well utilised?
 - What is management's involvement in these networking activities?
- As a line manager how are you encouraged to seek the perspective of your Indigenous employees on broader organisational planning?
 - How is this input used?
 - Can you give examples of where this has occurred?

6 Indigenous Community Engagement

We're going to ask some questions on engagement external to the organisation.

- Do you have any understanding about how your organisation consults and engages with Indigenous communities on Indigenous related work?
 - What are the formal processes in place?
 - Could you speak to the principles and practices?
 - If engagement strategy in place, can you provide detail on the approach outlined in this plan?
 - Have you ever used the plan?
 - How are you encouraged or supported to consult or engage with Indigenous communities in the areas you operate?
- Can you describe the organisations formal and informal partnerships that support Indigenous employment? E.g., with Indigenous communities, organisations, representatives, and or university or education providers.
 - Do you have any involvement with these partnerships?
 - How does leadership encourage partnership opportunities?
 - Overall, how do you feel about the organisations approach to these types of partnerships?

7 Closing notes and recommendations

- Overall, how do you feel your organisation is performing in regard to Indigenous employment?

- Are there any standout initiatives, practices, ways of working that you think the organisation should build on?
 - Does this mirror your previous experiences at other workplaces?
- Do you have an example of a management incident you have been involved in where the outcome for the Indigenous employee was exceptional (either for the organisation or the individual)?
- What are the key challenges and opportunities for you as a line manager of Indigenous employees?
 - Could you be better supported?
 - Do you feel you can identify opportunities for Indigenous employees to progress at work and feel a high level of work satisfaction?
- Considering all of what we have discussed, do you have any suggestions for improvement? *Prompt: Attraction and Recruitment, Engagement, Retention & Development, Workplace culture and leadership, Commitment, Governance and Reporting, Indigenous Community Engagement*
- Is there anything else you would like to add before we finish?

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