

UNCONSCIOUS BIAS IN THE AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SERVICE: IMPLICATIONS FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EMPLOYMENT

An applied mixed methods study into gaining a better understanding of how unconscious bias impacts Indigenous employment

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the
Australian National University

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Candidate declaration

I am the author of the thesis titled, ***Unconscious Bias in the Australian Public Service: Implications for Indigenous employment*** submitted for the degree of doctor of philosophy. Chapter 5 is based on a journal article that I authored contributing 100 per cent of the material.

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Date: 06 February 2023

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Abstract

Unconscious bias in the Australian Public Service is affecting the workplace experience of Indigenous employees. Indigenous employees in the APS remain over-represented in lower APS classifications and under-represented in executive and senior executive levels. On average Indigenous employees have considerably shorter careers in the APS compared to non-Indigenous employees, whose career length in the APS remains relatively constant (APSC, 2021i). Other indicators of workforce participation, engagement, and separation rates indicate Indigenous employees do not share the same level of employment equity when compared to non-Indigenous employees. The impact of unconscious bias prevents Indigenous employees' from enjoying a workplace experience equal to that of non-Indigenous APS employees. Literature suggests barriers to Indigenous employment because of bias include; stereotyping, discrimination, prejudices, and racism (Bargallie, 2020; Faulkner & Lahn, 2019; Larkin, 2014). The results translate into limited career advancement and promotion opportunities, making higher classifications less appealing and pigeonholing Indigenous employees into specific Indigenous roles.

My thesis aimed to investigate how unconscious bias manifests in APS in the everyday working relationship between employees and managers. A grounded theory constructionist approach guided a mixed methods research methodology to understand how unconscious bias affects the workplace experience of Indigenous employees in the APS. The following three research questions formed the focus of the research:

1. Does unconscious bias exist in the APS, and if so, how is it experienced in the Australian Public Service?
2. To what extent is cultural competence supporting an inclusive Australian Public Service workplace?
3. To what extent is the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees congruent with the expectations required of APS employment?

The quantitative research component of this thesis draws on a measure of implicit bias from social psychology (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998) to estimate the effect of individual levels of unconscious bias between Indigenous and non-Indigenous APS

employees. The qualitative research component applied a combination of thematic analysis and a process of determining a prioritised list of weighted workplace needs through the Modern Quality Function Deployment methodology. The result of the study from both quantitative and qualitative research components discerned three high-level priority response recommendations to assist the APS in repositioning APS Indigenous employment policy and practice:

- Priority response 1: Restructure cultural competence in the APS is fundamental for future Indigenous employment.
- Priority response 2: Empowering Indigenous employee voice for greater workplace participation and inclusion.
- Priority response 3: Developing an Integrated training program to address unconscious bias that combines a mixture of behavioural, cultural and structural strategies and measures to embed change into the DNA of the APS.

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Abbreviations

AHP	Analytic Hierarchy Process
APS	Australian Public Service
APSC	Australian Public Service Commission
APSUBS	Australian Public Service Unconscious Bias Survey
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
AustUBS	Australian Unconscious Bias Survey
CAT	Cultural Awareness Training
CCN	Cultural competence need
CI	Consistency Index
CPSS	Community and Personal Services Sector
CR	Consistency Ratio
CRT	Critical Race Theory
CtG	Close the Gap
EL	Executive Level
EMST	Employee Manager Segments Table
EVP	Employee Value Proposition
HoQ	House of Quality
HR	human resources
IAP	Indigenous Apprenticeships Program
IAT	Implicit Association Test
Modern QFD	Modern Quality Function Deployment
NAIDOC	National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Celebration
PGT	Project Goals Table
PM&C	Prime Minister and Cabinet
QFD	Quality Function Deployment
RANC	Row Average Normalised Columns
RAT	Racial Awareness Training
RI	Random Index
SES	Senior Executive Service
UBN	Unconscious bias need
USA	United States of America
WCN	Workplace congruence need

Preface

My thesis came about in response to a curiosity about why the APS continues to be a challenge for many of my Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues. Why does the APS struggle to achieve equitable representation in middle and senior management positions, and why do we continue to lose far too many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees compared to our non-Indigenous colleagues?

My career journey in the APS has been a success. I want to think that getting to where I am now was because of my capability. However, it was not an easy journey that could have ended many years ago at the hands of some nasty hidden agenda to rid the APS of ex-ATSIC employees. At this time, I was made to feel incapable and not valued as an Aboriginal employee, almost succumbing to a desperate act to end my life one Friday afternoon. Long story short, I am still here; I survived and have achieved considerable success in the APS.

Because of this experience, I have vowed to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment outcomes in all my roles. My legacy I want to leave the APS is an APS that genuinely values and embraces our differences as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, where our unique cultural values and identity add to the APS as a whole. Race matters not as a feared topic of discussion or an extremist left or right political or ideological view of race, but one where our unique cultural perspectives can be better understood in strengthening the APS to serve the needs of all Australian citizens. After all, our differences are cultural as we are all one human race. I want my research to help shape an APS where all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees have every opportunity to thrive and are encouraged to do so on their own terms.

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1. Background

This research project concerns how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees experience unconscious bias in the Australian Public Service (APS). I aimed to provide Indigenous employees and managers with the lexicon to share their perceptions and attitudes of unconscious bias. Two fundamental queries are at the core of this thesis. The first concerns whether unconscious bias exists in the APS, and if it does, how unconscious bias was perceived and experienced in the workplace. The second query concerns how a lens of cultural competence as a diversity and inclusion response could strengthen Indigenous employment in the APS in mitigating unconscious bias.

For public administration to serve the public effectively, its workforce should mirror the diversity of society in terms of representation, which can be considered ‘passive or active’ (Mosher, 1968, p. 21). Passive representation is when individuals from groups such as ethnic minorities or women are employed proportionately to their social representation. By contrast, active representation is when an agent in the bureaucracy actively seeks the interests and desires of those being represented (Bradbury & Kellough, 2010). From this perspective, the APS Indigenous employment policy is primarily a form of passive representation. The challenge is understanding how APS employees' cognitive processes form associations reflected in their attitudes, values, and opinions of others to understand unconscious bias better. This approach is consistent with an active form of bureaucratic representation. For example, Akram (2018) seeks to understand how unconscious bias is a contested concept requiring a greater understanding of the role of agency in reproducing inequality. Unconscious bias cannot be eliminated, but through careful consideration of agency, it can be mitigated somewhat to minimise its effect on Indigenous employees and, ultimately, the Indigenous community as recipients of government services.

1.2. The problem

The APS remains an important employment destination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Indigenous representation in the APS value adds to the APS – bringing a

unique range of skills and experiences as First Australians in the design, development, and delivery of government programs and services for Australian citizens. As of April 2021, 3.4% of the APS employee workforce identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (APSC, 2021a, p. 5). Overall this represents over 5,000 employees¹ (APSC, 2021d). Most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees (i.e., 87%) are employed in APS 1–6 classifications, whereas non-Indigenous employees comprise a considerably lower proportional representation of 66% for the same APS 1–6 classifications. A similar disparity exists between Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees in the APS for Executive Level to Senior Executive Service Levels. That is, 14% of all Indigenous employees are in Executive Level classifications, and 35% of all non-Indigenous employees are in Executive Level classifications (APSC, 2021a). It is clear from this data that Indigenous employees are over-represented in lower APS classifications and under-represented in higher APS classifications. Also, on average, Indigenous employees have considerably shorter careers in the APS compared to non-Indigenous employees – whose career length in APS had remained relatively constant (APSC, 2021i).

Other indicators of workforce participation, engagement, and separation rates indicate Indigenous employees do not share the same level of employment equity compared to non-Indigenous employees. For example, the separation rate for Indigenous employees in 2020 was higher than that for non-Indigenous employees – 8.2% and 6.0 %, respectively. For engagements, Indigenous employees appear to have fared considerably better when compared to non-Indigenous employees – reported at 7.5% compared to 5.9 % (APSC, 2021d). However, excluding Indigenous employees that commenced in the Indigenous Apprenticeships Program (IAP)² for the 2019-20 financial year, an adjusted proportional Indigenous engagement rate is reported that reduces the 7.5% to 2.8% (Services Australia, 2020). Table 1.1 shows the separations and engagement rates for Indigenous employees compared to non-Indigenous employees as at 30 June 2020.

¹ For actual numbers refer to APSC 2021d – Tables 79 and 80.

² The IAP is an Indigenous specific entry-level development program aimed at attracting Indigenous employees to employment in the APS. The IAP is a whole of APS program and is administered by Services Australia

Table 1. 1 Ongoing engagements and separations as at 30 June 2020

	Separations*	%	Engagements*	%	Engagements adjusted for IAP**	%
Indigenous employees	n = 428	8.2	n = 393	7.5	n = 147	2.8
Non-Indigenous employees	n = 6,960	6.0	n = 6,843	5.9		

Total APS Indigenous employees as at 30 June 2020	N = 5,225
Total APS non-Indigenous employees as at 30 June 2020	N = 115,683

*Excludes data where no Indigeneity status was provided n = 29,566.

** Indigenous employees who commenced in the IAP for 2019–20 financial year totalled 246.

Sources: APSC 2021b, Services Australia 2021.

Adjusting engagements for the Indigenous IAP shows a different perspective. One has to ask, is the IAP reflecting an accurate commitment to Indigenous recruitment in the APS? If not, what does this mean for Indigenous employment policy across the APS? Unfortunately, this example is simplistic, requiring more significant analysis to determine the true impact of the IAP on engagements. Nonetheless, this indicates the potential broader structural challenges facing Indigenous employee engagement and separation in the APS, which is of concern.

In other sources, external to the APS, further insight into Indigenous employee experience indicates Indigenous employees experience forms of bias, racism, prejudice, and stereotypes in the workplace (Bargallie, 2020; Faulkner & Lahn, 2019; Larkin, 2014; Leitch, 2017). For example, Leitch discusses a concept she calls culture shock³ that sees Indigenous leaders who on joining the APS having to adjust to a dominant culture of the APS; and in adjusting to the environment of the APS, Indigenous leaders bring a ‘new awareness of entrenched institutional cultural biases, and differing ways of being, knowing and doing’ from an Indigenous employee perspective (Leitch, 2017, p. 403).

Faulkner and Lahn (2019), in their report on enablers and barriers to senior leadership positions in the APS, show that Indigenous employees experience unconscious bias in the

³ Culture shock refers to the anxiety one encounters in being exposed to a new cultural environment where one’s familiar signs and symbols of social connection are unfamiliar, and where the process of adapting to the new cultural environment is facilitated through a staged process of adjustment (Oberg, 1960, p. 177).

APS, resulting in prejudice, being pigeonholed, and stereotyped into specific roles. Bargallie (2020) and Larkin (2014) – two ex-Indigenous APS employees – in their research applied race theory to examine the employment experiences of Indigenous employees in the APS. They find evidence of structural interaction directly disadvantaging Indigenous employee engagement in the APS. Racism, while not often experienced directly, is likely to be experienced by Indigenous employees subtly and insidiously (Larkin, 2014, p. 48). Bargallie (2020, p. xii) raises similar concerns to those expressed by Larkin but instead argues existing workplace structures in the APS are supported through “white privilege” disadvantaging Indigenous employees.

1.3. Why strengthening Indigenous employment policy in the APS is important

Priority Reform 3 for the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (CtG), is Transforming Government Organisations. This priority reform action calls for a change in how governments work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. Central to the success of Priority Reform 3 will be how governments and organisations hold themselves accountable when responding to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (National Indigenous Australians Agency, 2022). Priority Reform 3 comprises six transformational elements and specifically ask governments’ to commit to:

1. Identity and eliminate racism
2. Embed and practice meaningful cultural safety
3. Delivers services in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, communities, and peoples
4. Increase accountability through transparent funding allocations
5. Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures
6. Improve engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (National Indigenous Australians Agency, 2022).

Actions listed in Priority Reform 3 ask that:

- governments commit to challenge unconscious biases that result in decisions based on stereotypes
- governments commit to addressing institutional racism and promoting cultural safety as essential
- governments commit to share and publish their engagement approaches that give effect to the transformation elements, and
- government commit to engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives before, during and after emergencies (National Indigenous Australians Agency, 2022).

A great deal of the intention of Priority Reform 3 focuses on the relationship between governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. While not specifically stated but arguably implied in interpreting Priority Reform 3, one has to ask if Priority Reform 3 applies to the APS's capability when engaging the collective skills and capabilities of its Indigenous employee workforce. In applying to the Australian Government's relationship with external stakeholders, shouldn't Priority Reform 3 also apply internally in its relationship with Indigenous employees? If so, commitment to enhancing the capability of the APS to achieve Priority Reform 3 will also benefit from addressing racism, embedding cultural safety, and addressing unconscious bias in the APS. Transforming government organisations internally with Indigenous employees returns two potential benefits. One, achieving equitable career opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in a workplace free of racism, prejudice, and stereotypes will support equitable career actualisation for Indigenous employees. Two, embedding an Indigenous strength-based epistemology into APS workforce capability will enhance the APS as an employer of choice for Indigenous employees. Both of these potential benefits are at the heart of this thesis.

1.4. Repositioning cultural competence in the APS to transform government operations

Considerable variation is found in the literature on what cultural competence means. An often-cited definition (Blessett, 2018; Boyd-Swan & Molina, 2018; Gallegos, Tindall, & Gallegos, 2008) adopted for this research project defines cultural competence as,

A set of congruent behaviours, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enable that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations (Cross, Barzon, Dennis, & Issacs, 1989, p. iv).

Words matter, and they have influence but alone do not make anyone effective in working across cultures. Cultural competence is to be understood as it was initially presented – that is, as a holistic systems and ongoing developmental approach to support practical cross-cultural relationships. Any desire to supersede cultural competence with other cultural concepts risks tinkering with lower-level outcomes while missing out on the benefits of broader cultural change for organisations. Poor discipline in applying cultural competence concepts demonstrates this practice. For example, as the National Academy of Social Workers in the United States of America (USA) advocates, ‘cultural humility’ is not an alternative for ‘cultural competence’ but an integral aspect of cultural competence (National Association of Social Workers, 2015, p. 28).

From an Indigenous researcher’s perspective, it makes sense that if I was going to study the effects of unconscious bias on Indigenous employment in the APS, then I needed to consider the impact of unconscious bias through a lens of cultural competence. However, as an Indigenous researcher in applying the concept of cultural competence, I must also apply an Indigenous epistemology and axiology (Henry & Foley, 2018) when investigating how unconscious bias impacts Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the APS. Otherwise, as Henry and Foley (2018) argue, my contribution as an Indigenous researcher will fail to contribute to Indigenous self-determination, giving way instead to the traditional dominant Western epistemological view of knowledge of Indigenous peoples (Bargallie, 2020; Larkin, 2014). Jacob, Augustine, Hodge, and James (2014) argue that it is important to

turn from applying the dominant non-Indigenous epistemological approach to studying Indigenous peoples to one that supports self-determination from an Indigenous framing of research in the following statement.

Too often, Indigenous peoples and cultures are ignored, further contributing to Western education as a form of structural violence that undermines Indigenous efforts to build strong, healthy, and self-determined Indigenous communities (p. 144).

Fundamentally, culturally competent practice remains a concern in the APS where the default position in developing Indigenous cultural knowledge in the APS is found in initiatives such as face-to-face cultural awareness training, NAIDOC Week, and Reconciliation Week activities (APSC, 2019). Therefore, the objective of my research was to turn the organisational focus inward onto the APS itself to examine how a lens of cultural competence can help to address unconscious bias in striving for a culturally inclusive workplace for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. Hopefully, strengthening the acceptance of Indigenous research focus in academic research domains as Smith (2012, p. 141) argues.

Limited research considers what cultural competencies and experiences (or lack of) exist in the APS regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs. A lens of cultural competence provided a guiding organisational approach to examine personally held beliefs and understanding between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and managers in the APS. To date, most available literature on cultural competence has focused primarily on the health and education sectors. Missing still is research that considers the cultural competency of the APS from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee's perspective.

1.5. Importance of addressing unconscious bias

The APS is committed to providing all employees a culturally safe and inclusive working environment. The *Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020–24* (the Strategy) aims to advance social and economic outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. A key deliverable of the Strategy is developing an

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employee Value Proposition*⁴ (EVP) as recommended by Faulkner and Lahn (2019). Understanding how unconscious bias manifests in Indigenous employees' workplace experiences can improve the design and implementation of an EVP. That is, an EVP that values the diverse range of strengths and capabilities that Indigenous employees bring to the APS (Faulkner & Lahn, 2019, p. 1).

Difficult to identify, unconscious bias can manifest as subtle acts of prejudice and racism. Without a sophisticated appreciation of how implicit attitudes can lead to outward expression, unconscious biases can continue to transition into institutional culture through policies, processes, and procedures. Larkin (2014) alluded to the existence of unconscious bias as an unseen phenomenon expressed by Indigenous employees in the following statement,

It seemed to me that these conversations were accounts of experiencing racism, but the stories of these experiences were not describing blatant racist acts. Instead, it was something more insidious and subtle (p. 48).

Of particular interest for this thesis was investigating the 'subtle' as suggested by Larkin in identifying the impact of unconscious bias on the workplace experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, central to this is understanding how unconscious bias was perceived and experienced by both Indigenous employees and managers.

1.6. Applying a constructionist grounded theory approach for this thesis

The decision to apply a constructionist grounded theory approach was made due to the limited available epistemological research that considered the voice of Indigenous employees alongside managers in a public administration context. Neuman (2014) in quoting Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 24), defines grounded theory as 'a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductive theory about a phenomenon'. Perry and Vandenabeele (2015), in their article *Public Service Motivation Research: Achievements, Challenges and Future Directions*, call for researchers to use

⁴ An employee value proposition refers to the overall level of attractiveness an organisation presents in attracting and retaining employees. An EVT can be interpreted as the rewards and benefits offered to the employee (Phungula, et al., 2022, pp. 46-47).

grounded theory to understand better what drives public sector motivation across cultures and political institutions. They suggest that the dearth of formal research studying public service motivation requires researchers to remedy this deficiency in our knowledge base (Perry & Vandenabeele, 2015).

My research sought a grounded theory constructionist approach by applying a bottom-up approach to investigating how unconscious bias is experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and managers in the APS. I was particularly interested in understanding how cultural competence could inform culturally inclusive employment practice in mitigating the effects of unconscious bias in the APS.

To the best of my knowledge, limited scholarly research considers the voice of Indigenous employees and managers alongside each other in a public administration context. One notable example found in the literature is that of Alang, Stanton, and Trau (2020), whose research offers ground-breaking insight into implementing Indigenous employment policies in large government agencies in the Vietnamese civil service. My research followed a similar approach, capturing the voice of Indigenous employees alongside those of managers in the APS in addressing the following three research questions:

1. Does unconscious bias exist in the APS and if so, how is it experienced in the Australian Public Service?
2. To what extent is cultural competence supporting an inclusive Australian Public Service workplace?
3. To what extent is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee experience in the APS congruent with expectation of APS employment practice?

A constructionist approach resonated in addressing these three research questions. Fundamentally, constructionism's centre is the distinction between asking the 'what' and 'how' questions to understand social reality better. In this sense, instead of following a naturalist approach to building a deep understanding of what is reality, I also sought to understand how reality was created and experienced in the employment experience for APS

employees. Holstein and Gubrium (2008) illustrate how constructionism differs from naturalism in the following statement.

Whereas naturalistic ethnography aims to delve deeply into social worlds, constructionist impulses promote a different perspective. One way of describing the difference is in terms of what we call what and how questions. Whereas the naturalistic impulse in fieldwork is typically to ask 'What is going on?' with and within social reality, constructionist sensibilities provoke questions about how social realities are produced, assembled, and maintained. Rather than trying to get inside social reality, the constructionist impulse is to step back from that reality and describe '*how* it is socially brought into being (p. 374).

As a constructionist, my goal was to focus on how unconscious bias was experienced and how the lens of cultural competence could improve workplace inclusion for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and managers. This analysis ensured I considered a balanced investigation of employee and manager responses to my three research questions.

1.7. Thesis structure

The remainder of this thesis is structured as follows. **Chapter 2** sets out a revised framework for inclusive culturally proficient practices with an example of microaggression, which demonstrates how to apply the framework in relation to addressing unconscious bias.

Chapter 3 discusses the prevailing literature associated with unconscious bias and cultural competence. Gaps in the literature are identified, and lessons from previous research help to argue why addressing unconscious bias remains an important issue in the context of understanding employment equity in the APS for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. This literature also discusses the concept of race, drawing attention to why race matters in Indigenous employment.

Chapter 4 presents the mixed research methodology applied for this thesis. The quantitative element revolves around measuring levels of unconscious bias in a comparative case study of unconscious bias in the APS with a broader Australian population study. The quantitative element of this thesis combines two processes consisting of thematic analysis and Modern

QFD to create a process in determining a range of ranked workplace needs for Indigenous employees and managers.

Chapter 5 presents the results of the comparative unconscious bias study comparing APS findings with unconscious bias levels reported in a broader Australian population research project reported by Shirodkar (2021). Insight from previous APS-related research are combined with comparative findings to identify and discuss implications for Indigenous employees in the APS.

Chapter 6 presents the findings of the qualitative research process applied to identify the 10 top workplace needs for Indigenous employees and managers for each research theme of unconscious bias, cultural competence or workplace congruence. The workplace needs are presented to show the level of importance and overall weight of each need in its hierarchy of needs. The discussion focuses on the top three workplace needs for each research theme for Indigenous employees and managers, providing insight into implications for future Indigenous employment policy.

Chapter 7 brings all research discussions together to present a way forward for the APS to strengthen Indigenous employment policy and practice in the APS. The discussion addresses implications for Indigenous employment – in particular, how best to advocate for inclusive Indigenous employment practice in the APS, and importantly how this practice is essential to supporting the APS to transform its operations to support Priority Reform 3 outcomes.

Chapter 8 concludes the thesis with a summary of key findings, identifying key challenges ahead for the APS in repositioning the APS's commitment to a culturally inclusive APS workplace, outlining future Indigenous employment policy implications, and identifying further areas for research.

Chapter 2 Cultural competence: Barrier or enabler for Indigenous employment

2.1. Disrupting to reposition Indigenous workplace inclusion in the APS workplace.

Cultural competence remains a patchy, misaligned and only partially understood philosophy in the APS. This chapter argues that cultural competence is pivotal in achieving equitable workplace inclusion for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the APS. This is particularly so in mitigating the adverse effects of unconscious bias on the employment experience of Indigenous employees. Cultural competence is more than pinning hopes on embracing cultural concepts such as cultural safety, responsiveness, capability, or integrity as enablers of workplace inclusion.

While these concepts and others remain essential, it is vital to understand these cultural concepts are not a replacement or substitute for cultural competence, but have a specific role and function to perform within the broader framework of cultural competence. Understanding this distinction provides a clearer understanding of how these cultural concepts operate in relation to each other to fit into an ongoing developmental commitment to change. That is a change process that operates as an organisation behavioural response to build cultural competence capability through people, structures, and technical aspects within organisations.

Defining and measuring cultural competence in public administration in the USA has proven difficult, despite being introduced in the field of practice in the 1980s (Carrizales, Zahradnik, & Siverio, 2016, p. 129). I would argue the same confusion has been applied in the Australian context in public administration. A renewed commitment embracing a clearer understanding of cultural competence will assist in delivering improved government services whilst also supporting diversity in the workplace (Carrizales, 2019, p. 30).

Indigenous employees face inequality in terms of career and developmental opportunities when compared to their non-Indigenous counterparts (Biddle & Lahn, 2016; Lahn, 2018; Leitch, 2017). For example, Indigenous employees exit the APS at greater rates and with less years of service compared to non-Indigenous employees (Lahn, 2018, p. 1). These outcomes suggest something structural in the APS is preventing Indigenous employees from realising

their employment aspirations. This chapter offers a culturally informed argument for disrupting existing Indigenous inclusion practice in the APS by adopting an Indigenous epistemology through one that applies an Indigenous standpoint perspective.

2.2. Background

The APS is a key employer of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Over 5,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians work in the APS, making it the third-largest employer of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in Australia (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2021). Although the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the APS has trended upwards over the previous 20 years, attrition and representation remain ongoing concerns. Increasing the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees across all levels of the APS remains a core driver of employment equity in the APS (APSC, 2020c, p. 3).

Lahn and Ganter (2018, p. 145) conclude that governments entering into a richer dialogue and relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees is vital to understanding the unique institutional and cultural challenges faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the APS. For example, understanding how Indigenous employees experience representation in the APS as well as understanding the aspirations of Indigenous employees, will significantly assist the relationship building between Indigenous employees and the bureaucracy (Lahn & Ganter, 2018, p. 145). Larkin (2014, pp. iii-iv) argues that Australia exists as a white racial dominant culture reflected through the 'racial hierarchy' in the APS, which helps explain why the APS continues to experience ongoing attrition of Indigenous employees. Bargallie (2020, p. xii) echoes similar concerns to those expressed by Larkin, arguing instead that the employment experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the APS exists as a 'construct', which she labels as a 'racial contract', and that this racial contract needs to be broken in order to transform the APS workplace that has hitherto privileged non-Indigenous peoples. All three authors illustrate how the employment experience of Indigenous employees in the APS is complex and can be directly impacted by the cultural clash between the culture of the APS and Indigenous cultural identity.

The APS's commitment to providing a culturally safe and inclusive working environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees is found in the *Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020-24* (APSC, 2020c). The Strategy aims to 'accelerate improvements in closing the gap in social and economic outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians,' adding to the APS's preceding Indigenous employment strategy (APSC, 2020c, p. 2). A key deliverable of the 2020–24 Strategy is developing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander EVP, as Faulkner and Lahn (2019) recommended.

An EVP for APS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment provides a welcomed clarity in positioning Indigenous employment strategy for the APS. However, suppose the APS adopts a consistent understanding of an EVP for Indigenous employment. In that case, a closer investigation of unconscious bias and cultural proficiency is required because unconscious bias suggests the need for a more nuanced and culturally proficient informed policy response to racism. In particular, unconscious bias can manifest as an insidious form of discrimination through verbal and non-verbal communication (Turner, Higgins, & Childs, 2021, p. 1). Moreover, adopting an organisational response to cultural proficiency can mitigate the effects of bias by examining institutional practices where discrimination and oppression are observed (Balcazar, Suarez-Balcazar, & Taylor-Ritzler, 2009, pp. 1157-1158).

The following four sections in this chapter set the scene for discussion in later chapters. First, an overview sets out the broad international and national context for Indigenous employment before summarising Indigenous employment in the APS. The second section combines the methodology and discussion of key racism, unconscious bias, and cultural competence concepts. As prominent themes from the literature, they help to understand the experience of Indigenous employees in the workplace, providing insight into why disparate attrition and representation rates of Indigenous employment exist in the APS. The third section presents a proposal for a cultural proficiency framework for the APS based on a conceptual framework provided by Lindsey and Lindsey (2016). In working through practical examples of microaggressions, the fourth section demonstrates how to apply the proposed cultural proficiency framework to address unconscious bias behaviour while highlighting implications for Indigenous employment in the APS.

As an Indigenous researcher, I aim to apply an Indigenous epistemology to deepen the understanding of personal and organisational impediments to achieving equitable employment outcomes for Indigenous employees in the APS. Adding to formative research undertaken by Bargallie (2020) and Larkin (2014), two Indigenous ex-APS employees and researchers, I seek to add to their knowledge by continuing to apply an Indigenous standpoint perspective. In doing so, I identify a strengths-based Indigenous epistemology in responding to the employment needs of Indigenous employees in the APS. Through this process, a revised framework for cultural proficiency adds to the body of literature on how Indigenous agency and organisational practices intersect with unconscious bias, race, and cultural competency in the APS workplace, where subtle and hidden instances of discrimination and racism can thrive if left unchecked.

2.3. Overview of Indigenous employment

Much literature discusses economic, social, cultural, and political issues facing Indigenous peoples worldwide, including in Australia. Narrowing the focus to Indigenous employment in government bureaucracies provides considerably less literature.

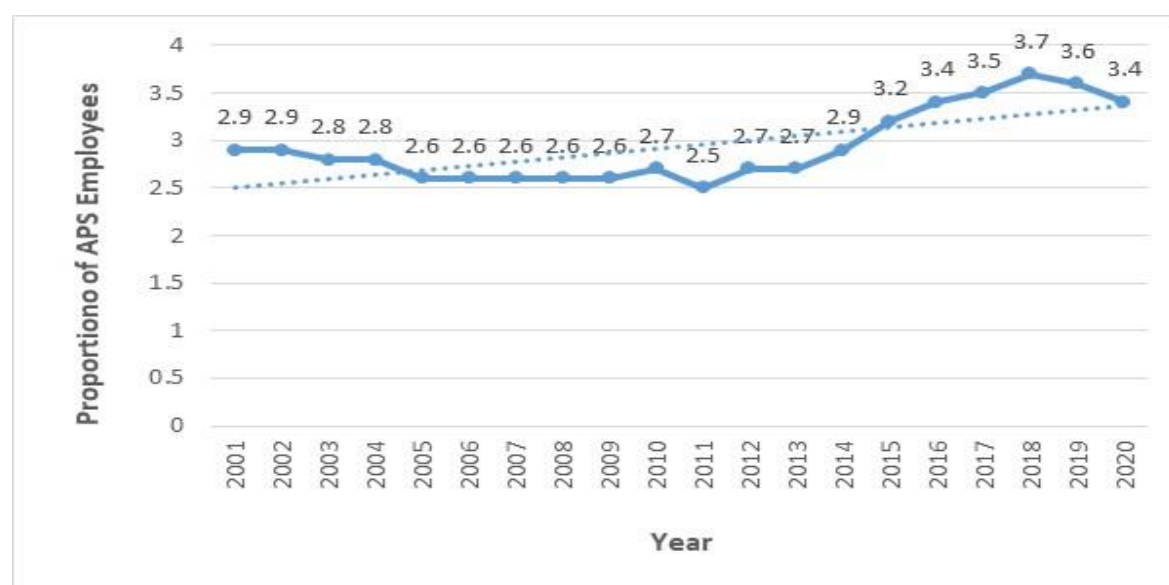
Common themes pervading the literature include self-determination, racism, prejudice, cultural assimilation, and equity (Alang et al., 2020; Jordan, 2018; Julien, Somerville, & Brant, 2017; Leitch, 2017). One international example that offers relevant insights into the experiences of Indigenous employment in the APS is Alang et al. (2020). Their research explores the perspectives of Indigenous employees alongside those of managers in Vietnamese government agencies, identifying policy and organisational concerns preventing genuine inclusion and participation of Indigenous employees. Their approach is one of the first of its kind, making their contribution innovative and ground-breaking. They find equal employment opportunity increases workplace participation for Indigenous employees, and racism undermines the understanding of Indigenous employees in bureaucracy (Alang et al., 2020, p. 556).

In another international example of work-life views, Indigenous Canadian employees continue to experience ongoing conflict in maintaining cultural identity and self-determination with mainstream pressure to assimilate into the broader Canadian culture

(Julien et al., 2017). Similar findings are echoed in Australian workplace experiences of Indigenous APS employees (Bargallie, 2020; Ganter, 2016; Larkin, 2014; Lea, 2008). For example, Bargallie (2020) and Larkin (2014), two Indigenous ex-APS employees, argue that senior leaders in the APS apply a colour-blind view of race, imposing an APS dominant cultural norm that denies and devalues cultural identity and self-determination.

The employment level of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the APS between 2001 and 2020 improved slightly from 2.9% in 2001 to 3.5% as of 30 June 2021 (APSC, 2021e). Since 2011 when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation was at its lowest level in the last 20 years, representation had steadily increased to 3.7% in 2018 before trending downward to 3.4% in 2020. Figure 2.1 below shows Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation rates from 2001 to 2020.

Figure 2. 1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in the APS 2001–2020



Source – APSC 2021b

In 2011–12, Indigenous employees left the APS at almost double the rate of non-Indigenous employees at approximately 13% per annum (Australian National Audit Office, 2014, p. 55). At the same time, separation rates also showed Indigenous employees leaving the APS had on average less than three years of service (APSC, 2018a). Since 2012, the APS has sought to be an active employer of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Five broad goals have focused on: (a) recruitment, (b) retention and career development, (c) cultural awareness capability, (d) better understanding through data analytics, and (e)

networking and sharing information. For recruitment, four specific strategies are available for Indigenous employees to seek employment with the APS:

- general mainstream recruitment activities are open to all Australians
- use of Identified Positions for roles requiring a demonstrated understanding and knowledge of Indigenous issues and the ability to communicate sensitively and effectively with Indigenous communities and peoples
- use of Special Measures (affirmative action) recruitment actions identified under the Commonwealth *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* where only Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can apply
- specific entry-level development programs attract Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entrants to the APS (Note – this is an application of Special Measure recruitment action) (APSC, 2021c).

The Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020-24 across the APS. Each APS organisation is autonomous and can apply any or all of the above recruitment strategies. In addition, Reconciliation Actions Plans and Indigenous employment strategies provide APS organisations with the strategic policy commitment for the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. Western Australia, Victoria, Tasmania, and New South Wales state jurisdictions have similar state-wide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategies. Essentially, these workforce strategies reflect similar commitments to those identified in the Commonwealth strategy.

Representation parity with non-Indigenous APS employees still eludes the APS. Most APS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are represented at APS 3-4 levels – approximately 46%, whereas the same representation for non-Indigenous employees is less at around 37% (APSC, 2021g, p. 121). By comparison, the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees at Executive Level (EL) and Senior Executive Service (SES) levels is approximately 7%. In contrast, representation for non-Indigenous employees is

considerably higher at around 36%. In 2021, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are still leaving the APS at a far higher rate than non-Indigenous employees: 9.1% compared to 5.9% of non-Indigenous employees (APSC, 2021g, p. 121). Data for Indigenous employment attrition and representation suggests something contributes to these outcomes beyond the seen. Larkin (2014) acknowledged similar concerns, meaning part of this unseen phenomenon expressed by Indigenous employees is likely to be elusive instances of racism (Larkin, 2014, p. 48).

Two specific issues discussed later in the chapter are gender equality and the effectiveness of unconscious bias training. Female employees are at higher risk of being unduly influenced through subtle acts of unconscious bias when seeking opportunities for career advancement. The reliance on unconscious bias training presents a worrying trend in the APS unless more is known about what would constitute effective training, particularly in measuring how to demonstrate the effectiveness of training.

2.4. Discussion of key concepts

2.4.1. Racism

Race is a fundamental concept of cultural identity discussed in Indigenous studies. Two Indigenous Australian researchers who have studied Indigenous employment in the APS are Larkin (2014) and Bargallie (2020). Significantly, both Larkin and Bargallie are former APS employees. Both offer first-hand insight into Indigenous employment in the APS. Both Larkin and Bargallie apply race theory to examine structural and societal impacts manifested in the APS, to critique the lived experience of Indigenous employees in the APS. Larkin (2014, pp. iii-iv) argues that Australia is a white racial dominant culture reflected through the racial hierarchy in the APS. This dominance helps explain why the APS continues to experience ongoing attrition of Indigenous employees. Bargallie (2020, p. xii) identifies similar concerns to that of Larkin, but argues the employment experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the APS exists as a construct, which she labels as a racial contract, and that this racial contract can be broken in order to transform the APS workplace that historically privileges non-Indigenous Australians. International literature identifies racism as contributing to workplace participation (Alang et al., 2020; Dwyer, 2003; Julien et al.,

2017). For example, Radcliffe and Webb (2015, p. 262) note that for Indigenous employees in the Chilean public service, any attempt to incorporate socio-cultural differences was met with anti-Indigenous, racist-stigmatising, and exclusionary impacts. The following discussion discusses Critical Race Theory (CRT) from the perspective of empowering Indigenous voice⁵.

CRT originated in response to colour blindness within critical legal studies in the USA (D. Bell, 1992; Crenshaw, 1988; Delgado, 1989) and posits that race is socially constructed and not a natural, biologically grounded feature of physical appearance. CRT revolves around the tenet that white people establish racial inequality through social, economic, and legal differences to continue disparities between people of colour and white people (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2021). Proponents of CRT in the USA have applied CRT to draw attention to how institutional and societal discriminatory practices continue to impact people of colour. CRT is also growing in popularity elsewhere, such as in the United Kingdom (Meghji, 2021) and Australia. Researchers (including Indigenous researchers) in Canada, the USA, and Australia have embraced CRT as a theory to further Indigenous self-determination (Brayboy, 2006; Julien et al., 2017); Moreton-Robinson (2015). For example, Aileen Moreton-Robinson, a leading Australian Indigenous scholar and researcher in CRT, explains why race matters,

Race matters in the lives of all peoples; for some people, it confers unearned privileges, and for others, it is a mark of inferiority. Daily newspapers, radio, television, and social media usually portray Indigenous peoples as a deficit model of humanity. We are overrepresented as always lacking, dysfunctional, alcoholic, violent, needy, and lazy (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. xiii).

Moreton-Robinson (2015) argues that researchers to consider race beyond a discursive discussion of culture that classifies culture as a category of existence to one that considers the more complex Indigenous lived existence within modernity. That is, countering the hegemonic representation of Indigeneity in Indigenous research (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. xv). Moreton-Robinson calls researchers to view race through a lens of white

⁵ Empowering Indigenous voice simply refers to expressing one's existence fairly and equitably within a dominant mainstream setting that otherwise would possibly prevent, limit, or devalue the uniqueness of cultural identity in supporting self-determination.

possession as she expresses concern for how past Indigenous studies relies upon a patriarchal white dominant and radicalised view of possessiveness. This Moreton-Robinson claim prevents Indigenous scholarship from being applied from an Indigenous standpoint (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. xiii). Instead, she calls for the continuation of an epistemological shift of Indigenous studies away from conducting research that designates Indigenous people as the objects of study. Instead, researchers analyse the conditions of our existence and the disciplinary knowledge that shapes and produce Indigeneity (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, pp. xvii-xviii).

Moreton-Robinson (2015, pp. xiii-xviii) claims this epistemological shift needs to be actioned in responding to the lack of 'race blindness of Indigenous studies' and that scholars accept that 'race matters'. Indigenous Australians are arguably one of Australia's most researched groups, if not the most. Indigenous research needs to be done on Indigenous terms, where the unique cultural traits of identity and belonging in modernity inform all research methodologies regardless of the researcher. Seeing race through the eyes of a minority perspective ensures that the colour blindness of the dominant culture does not form academic boundaries to knowledge.

2.4.2. Unconscious Bias

Bias tends to favour someone or something and is often characterised as stereotypes about people based on the group people belong to or some form of a physical characteristic, e.g., appearance, gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation (Psychology Today, 2021). Heuristics and cognitive biases often are used interchangeably, but it is important to note both concepts overlap and are nuanced. Heuristics are mental shortcuts that we use to solve problems and make judgments quickly and efficiently. However, heuristics can also lead to cognitive biases – repeated patterns of thinking that can lead to inaccurate or unreasonable conclusions (Psychology Today, 2021), which results in unconscious biases. Greenwald et al. (1998, p. 1464) define implicit (or unconscious) bias as implicit attitudes stating, 'Implicit attitudes are manifest as actions or judgments that are under the control of automatically activated evaluation, without the performer's awareness of that causation'. It is important to note that implicit attitudes and implicit (or unconscious) bias are different. Implicit attitudes are the associations we form under automatically activated evaluation. Implicit or

unconscious bias is the manifested actions resulting from our implicit attitudes. Balfour and Larson (2017, p. 788) identify that it is critical to understand that unconscious bias becomes more evident when 'policy problems are complex, contested and polarised' and that avoiding cognitive dissonance can hide one's awareness of unconscious bias.

Evans, Edwards, Burmester, and May (2014) find that barriers facing women in progressing to senior leadership positions are in some form entrenched into institutional practices. Acknowledging a stark gap in Australian public administration literature, the authors respond by considering a range of cultural and systemic barriers affecting the recruitment, retention, and promotion of women in six APS departments (Evans et al., 2014, p. 501). They find evidence of unconscious bias reinforced through structures and cultures within the APS posited as entrenched power imbalance favouring males. The authors particularly emphasise perceptions of subjective recruitment practices. Women are assumed to be less committed and less reliable because of institutional structures and culture processing unconscious biases against women and favoring men with requisite attributes (Evans et al., 2014, pp. 505-506).

Akram (2018, p. 121), seeks to understand how the concept of agency (gender equality in the APS) reproduces inequality in bureaucracies and has argued for a deeper understanding of the role between the conscious and unconscious aspects of agency. Akram focuses on the interrelation between the unconscious and reflexivity, decision-making in the habitus⁶ (Akram, 2018, p. 126). In building on findings identified by Evans et al. (2014), Akram (2018) responds to what she identifies as a gap in representative bureaucracy theory in public administration literature. That is, the 'unconscious dimension of active representation and, more specifically, the role of unconscious bias in representation' in reproducing inequality (Akram, 2018, p. 119). Akram's results suggest that understanding aspects of unconscious agency can provide a greater understanding of inequality and its unconscious drivers of discrimination.

⁶ Pierre Bourdieu in his book *Outlining a Theory of Practice*, presents a framework to help understand the way in which cultural settings are produced and reproduced and examining the effect of both production and reproduction on a particular subject of a particular habitus (Gillespie, 2019). In his words, Bourdieu refers to *habitus* as 'a subjective but not individual system of internalised structures, schemes of perception, conception, and action common to all members of the same group or class' (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 86).

Further research into APS gender equality conducted by Williamson and Colley (2018) provides another perspective on how unconscious bias impacts gender equality in the APS. Recruitment and selection processes at both individual and organisational levels result in gendered outcomes similar to those identified by Evans et al. (2014). Performing a qualitative analysis through interviews and discussion groups, Williamson and Colley (2018) conducted a case study of one large APS department to critique its response to gender equality in the department's gender employment strategy. While they found initiatives to 'redo gender' include a more liberal feminist approach, they suggest the APS remains gendered in its structures. Williamson and Colley (2018, p. 585) describe redoing gender as the practice of dismantling occupational segregation of gender in the workplace, but while redoing gender initiatives in the APS have liberalist feminist elements, redoing gender practices still enables a masculine expression of gender in the APS. Instead, they conclude gender in the APS needs to be disrupted to transform institutional practices and not the individual women, if any real and lasting change is to be achieved (Williamson & Colley, 2018, pp. 593-594).

Seemingly subtle instances of unconscious bias have noticeable impacts on women's equality. Examples include the application of merit in recruitment, selection processes masking unconscious bias, and training to combat unconscious bias in selection and recruitment processes (Williamson & Colley, 2018, pp. 587, 591-582). Williamson and Colley conclude that gender equality will remain entrenched in the APS without strategic intervention, furthering gender preference in favour of men (Williamson & Colley, 2018, p. 594).

Williamson and Foley (2018), in their qualitative review of academic literature and case study of APS gender equality strategies, warn against relying on unconscious bias training as the 'silver bullet' solution to gender equality. In referring to Paluck and Green (2009), the authors identify a lack of evidence indicating the effectiveness of unconscious bias training in reducing bias levels (Williamson & Foley, 2018, p. 356). They find evidence in the literature suggesting that, in some cases, training may have the opposite effect and increase unconscious bias (Apfelbaum, Sommers, & Norton, 2008). Messages claiming unconscious bias to be involuntary and widespread normalises bias, resulting in further prejudice and not less (Duguid & Thomas-Hunt, 2015; Williamson & Foley, 2018). Findings from interviews of

APS managers point to concern further where unconscious bias training was perceived as 'lip-service' to gender equality (Williamson & Foley, 2018, p. 356). Williamson and Foley suggest that the APS needs to review how and why it uses unconscious bias training as a gender equity strategy. Williamson and Foley (2018, p. 357), in referring to Huet (2015), express concern that unconscious bias training requires carefully considered evaluation; otherwise, its effectiveness will continue to be unknown.

Returning to Indigenous employees, Faulkner and Lahn (2019, pp. 32-35) provide insight to help understand how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees may experience unconscious bias in the APS. Suggestions include institutional biases and the need for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to engage in two worlds. These two realities influence how an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee experiences workplace inclusion and career and development opportunities when balancing personal cultural obligations with the obligations of a public servant. Fitzgerald (2016, p. 205), referring to Moreton-Robinson (2000), identifies a criticism of the literature in labeling women of colour as one homogenous group, which can result in negating their distinctiveness as Indigenous women. Seeing Indigenous women as one homogenous group becomes even more challenging for Indigenous women aspiring to leadership roles in the APS. Indigenous women represent two-thirds (67.5%) of the total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander APS workforce (APSC, 2020a), with the vast majority in lower APS classifications.

2.4.3. Cultural competence

Three decades of research have generated a large body of literature dedicated to cultural competence across counselling, education, healthcare, organisational management, psychology, and social work (Danso, 2018, p. 415). Minor literature exists in the domain of public administration. My purpose here is to focus on the fundamental nature of cultural competence, as Cross et al. (1989) asserted, to illustrate the importance of developing a consistent application of cultural competence for Indigenous employment in the APS. The definition of cultural competence, as defined by Cross et al. (1989, p. iv) places cultural competence in a systems approach for organisational change (Lopez-Littleton & Blessett, 2015, p. 561). The Cross et al. (1989) definition of cultural competence focuses on gaining congruency between behaviours, attitudes, and policies applied in a holistic system

approach where becoming culturally competent is seen as a development process (Cross et al., 1989, p. 8). Many writers favour the Cross et al. approach (Blessett, 2018; Boyd-Swan & Molina, 2018; Gallegos et al., 2008), noting the difficulty but also the importance of integrating both individual and organisational elements of cultural competence. However, in both practice and literature, the myriad of definitions and hazy defining of cultural concepts have not helped.

For Whaley (2008, p. 215), concepts such as cultural sensitivity, cross-cultural competence, cross-cultural expertise, cross-cultural effectiveness, cultural responsiveness, cultural awareness, and culturally skilled have all presented jumbled and confusing meanings. For example, he discusses how cross-cultural counselling and psychotherapy literature created confusion in research due to a lack of knowledge or understanding of cultural competence. Specifically pointing to the criticism that one cannot be knowledgeable about all cultures, he posits that this is 'symptomatic of the lack of definitional clarity' in understanding competence (Whaley, 2008, p. 216).

Fast forward to more recent literature, and confusion remains on this issue (Danso, 2018; Greene-Moton & Minkler, 2019; Kim, 2019). For example, Greene-Moton and Minkler (2019, p. 143) point to several critics who argue we cannot become fully competent in someone else's culture. Critics argue that this implies that if one is not culturally competent, one must be culturally incompetent (Greene-Moton & Minkler, 2019, p. 143), an argument debunking the concept of cultural competence. This position demonstrates an inability to grasp a fundamental premise of what cultural competence is meant to be. That is, cultural competence requires engaging in a continual learning process, accepting not knowing, to understand peoples from diverse cultures (Danso, 2018, p. 416). There is no assertion or indication one has to become fully competent in another's culture to satisfy being fully competent. When Cross et al. (1989) address the issue of competency, their definition of cultural competency is placed within a cultural proficiency continuum where cultural competency is understood as an enabling function achieved through various stages of competency. I argue that this fundamental tenet of cultural competence has been sidelined in the literature over-time.

Cultural concepts adopted by the APS in addition to those identified by Whaley (2008, p. 215) include cultural safety, cultural capability, cultural integrity, cultural knowledge, and cultural blindness. The APS has yet to develop a consistent understanding of cultural competence, particularly in determining each concept's meaning concerning the other. The APS has also contributed to this confusion in practice in its application of cultural concepts in Indigenous employment.

An example where confusion in practice has occurred is the APS *Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework* (APSC, 2015). In this framework, cultural capability is identified over 30 times without any definition that describes what cultural capability means. Cultural competence suggests that something failed to meet the required benchmark for a strategy specifically supporting the APS to work effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The result is a strategy potentially informed by a biased and incomplete understanding of cultural competence. This example demonstrates how agents can directly impact Indigenous workforce policy. If not adequately told through a culturally competent perspective, there is a high risk of this becoming a dominant APS cultural response that suppresses Indigenous culture and self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

There is no denying that cultural competence has a significant function in increasing diversity and inclusion play for cultural minorities in workplaces (Alexander & Stivers, 2014, p. 588). Cultural competence can confront established workplace biases, including unconscious biases, forming an integral step toward inclusion (Blessett, 2018, p. 426). Increasing the cultural competence of the APS will lead to increased employee satisfaction. This hypothesis would require further research, but it offers a promising field for future research.

Cross et al. (1989, pp. 13-16) clarify the developmental nature of cultural competence, referring to a continuum of cultural proficiency with six stages of growth ranging from destructive behaviours to cultural proficiency. Critical to adapting the continuum, Cross et al. (1989, p. v) state five essential elements are required to assist organisations in acquiring cultural competence at every level of the system (attitudes, policies, and practices) towards cultural proficiency. They are:

- i. value diversity
- ii. the capacity for cultural self-assessment
- iii. being conscious of the dynamics inherent when cultures interact
- iv. institutionalised cultural knowledge, and
- v. developed adaptations to diversity.

The Cross et al. (1989) emphasis on placing cultural competence in a systems approach applies as much today as in 1989. Regardless of which cultural definition or concept is used or created, it is crucial to acknowledge that cultural competence operates in a systems environment where capability ultimately is measured along a continuum of growth towards cultural proficiency.

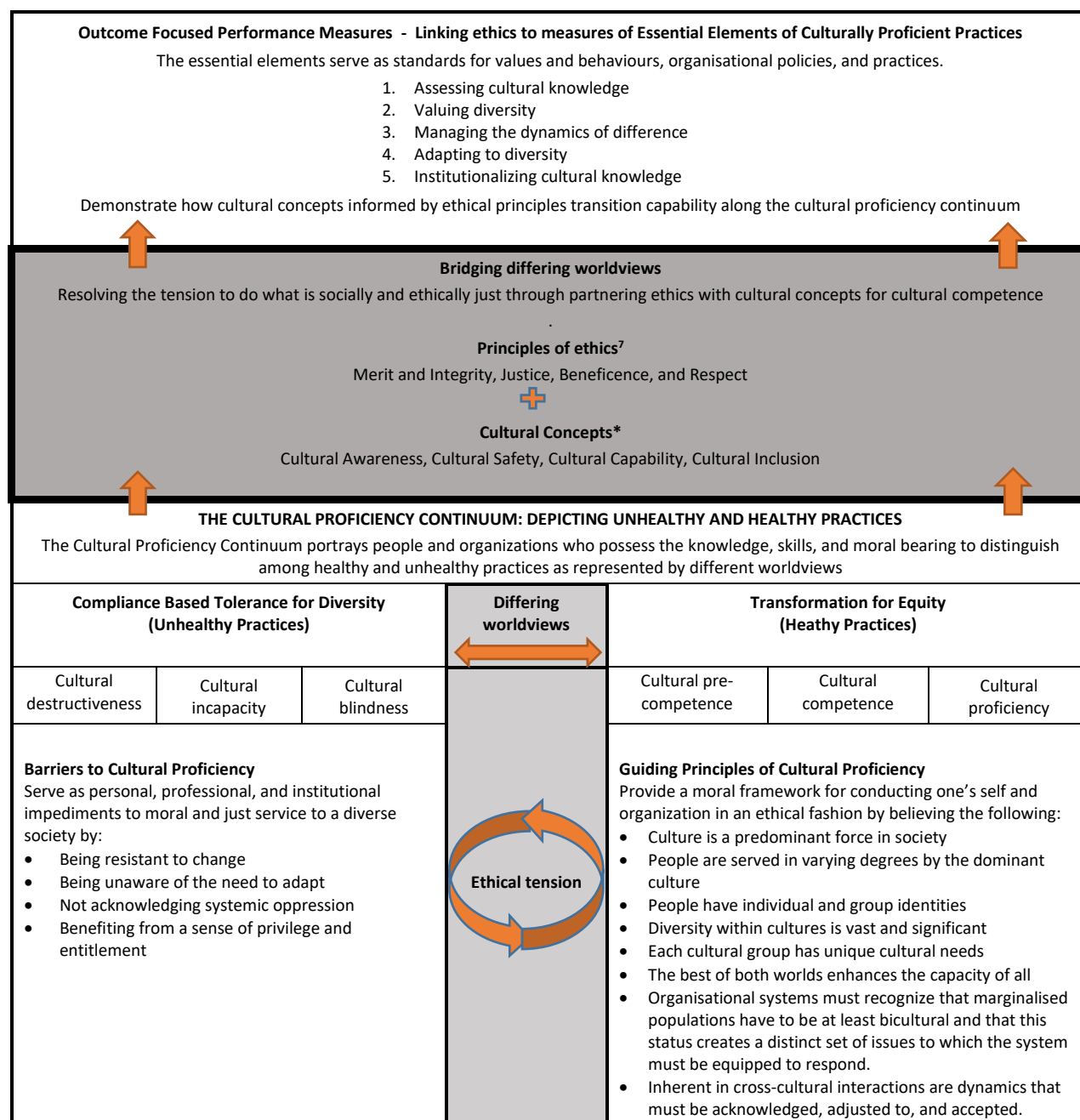
Placing the identified cultural concept/s within a framework of cultural proficiency to match the needs of the organisation is the challenge. For Indigenous employment in the APS, cultural competence is a necessary and important building block in mitigating bias, where cultural competence leads initiatives to stress both opportunities and challenges of a culturally competent public sector (Carrizales, 2019, p. 28). The goal is a culturally informed lens to address covert and subtle effects of discrimination and the potential for racism, presuming no one sets out to be deliberately racist in the workplace. Cultural competence, unconscious bias, and racism intersect through agency and institutional behaviour. As individuals, we all have unconscious biases that are expressed through our attitudes. In the APS, where multiculturalism and diversity are hallmarks of workplace inclusiveness, having the ability to gauge, test, and re-test for unconscious bias is a fundamental need. Including the voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees should inform this process morally and ethically (Leitch, 2017; Lindsey & Lindsey, 2016). This intersectionality is explored further by applying the proposed conceptual framework in the following section.

2.5. A framework of cultural proficiency for the Australian Public Service

Lindsey and Lindsey (2016, p. 52) provide a Conceptual Framework for Culturally Proficient Practices based on the cultural proficiency continuum developed by Cross et al. (1989). Lindsey and Lindsey's (2016) adaptation includes providing clarity on each of the six stages of cultural competence. The authors separate the first three stages of the continuum, which they categorise as unhealthy barriers to cultural proficiency, and the last three stages as healthy guiding principles of cultural proficiency. Appendix A further explains unhealthy and healthy practices for each of the six stages of the cultural proficiency continuum. Lindsey and Lindsey (2016, p. 52) note a gulf between barriers and principles where ethical tensions between differing worldviews reside. In essence, this ethical tension between differing worldviews is cultural.

Adding to Lindsey and Lindsey's (2016) framework to support the gap (ethical tension) between unhealthy practices and healthy practices, I add a new section titled Bridging Differing Worldviews. This new section (see grey section, Figure 2.2) partners principles of human research ethics with identified core cultural concepts to help determine a range of culturally informed ethical responses for Indigenous employment. Although the framework specifically applies to APS Indigenous employment in this instance, the framework can be equally adapted to any minority group within public administration or the private sector. All that is required is to identify appropriate ethical principles and cultural concepts for the user. In adding this new section, I rename Lindsey and Lindsey's (2016) framework as, *An Inclusive Framework for Developing Culturally Proficient Practices* (the Framework). The Framework consists of three sections (see Figure 2.2).

Figure 2. 2 Inclusive framework for developing Culturally Proficient Practices



*For definitions of the four cultural concept examples listed above, refer to Appendix B.

Source: Adapted from Lindsey & Lindsey 2016

To interpret the Framework, commence at the bottom and progress through to the top of the Framework. The three sections of the Framework consist of The Cultural Proficiency

⁷ The principles of ethics provided in Figure 2.2 are those identified in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (Universities Australia, 2018 pp. 10-11).

Continuum, Bridging Differing Worldviews, and Essential Elements for Cultural Proficiency.

When applying the Framework, five considerations are required, consisting of:

1. Where on the continuum is the organisation, and where do you aspire to be?
2. Which of the five essential element outcomes of cultural proficiency required demonstrating?
3. What business need drives the need for cultural competence, e.g., recruitment, employee development, supervision skills, etc.?
4. Which core cultural concepts do you need to demonstrate? Where multiple cultural concepts are identified, be clear on what each concept means in relation to each other to avoid potential overlap and confusion.
5. Which principle of ethics will apply in aligning both the business need with the cultural concept/s?

In the following section, an example of a microaggression taken from Faulkner and Lahn (2019) will demonstrate how to apply the Framework.

2.6. Microaggressions as a form of unconscious bias

The limited research does not identify any definitive reason why Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees decide to leave the APS. Instead, themes emerge to indicate a more comprehensive range of possible concerns. These include role modelling, cultural obligations, career development, skills recognition, stereotypes, prejudices, racism, harassment and bullying, pigeonholing, and lowered workplace expectations (Biddle & Lahn, 2016; Faulkner & Lahn, 2019). While not blatant, Larkin (2014, p. 48) believes these experiences were insidious and subtle acts of racism – microaggressions (researcher's claim). The following microaggression of ethnocentric bias will demonstrate the intersectionality between unconscious bias and that of agency and institutional behaviour.

First coined by Crenshaw (1991), the theory of intersectionality provides a framework for visualising mentally a group of people impacted by discrimination and disadvantage, taking

into account overlapping identities to better understand the complexities of discrimination experienced by people (Oxford English Dictionary, 2017). Microaggressions are defined as ‘a statement, action, or incident regarded as an instance of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination or prejudice against members of a marginalized group such as a racial minority’ (Oxford English Dictionary, 2021). Members of minority groups experience microaggressions daily that the receiver will often internalise as a devaluing of identity (Applebaum, 2018; Bourne, 2019; Kapai, 2019; Turner et al., 2021).

It appears reasonable then that if one is not aware their behaviour can result in subtle discriminatory or biased acts, as Larkin (2014) suggests, such actions may become insidious. Worse, they may become institutionally entrenched through relationships, processes, and procedures. I want to clarify that I am not implying the APS condones racism. The APS places great emphasis on a workplace that fosters inclusiveness for all minority groups and is particularly committed to being an employer of choice for Indigenous Australians.

Instead, as argued in this chapter, understanding race is central to framing how we can better understand the effect of unconscious bias and cultural competence on the workplace experiences of Indigenous employees. Maximising the opportunity for learning and education requires adopting an epistemological shift to view colour blindness through an Indigenous pedagogy, not that of the dominant mainstream cultural practice (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. xv). Applebaum (2018, p. 134) explains that ‘Though the effects of microaggressions are subtle, they are still significant as pernicious as overt forms of racism’, and add to this, covert manifestations of unconscious bias. Personal and institutional biases in the APS can present as institutional, cultural barriers to career progression for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. Adopting the five considerations as suggested above will assist in determining a culturally inclusive response to microaggressions.

The following microaggression example of ethnocentric bias has been taken directly from Faulkner and Lahn’s (2019) report titled *Navigating to senior leadership in the Australian Public Service: Identifying barriers and enablers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the APS*. They argue that entrenched ethnocentric bias can manifest ‘as prejudice (as well as intolerance, bigotry and racism)’. The microaggression, as related by a participant in the research, reads as follows,

Barriers are other people's view of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, perceptions that aren't true, you know, all of those things. You know, and there's a – not so much now, but there is a stigma that Indigenous staff aren't good enough, you know, and you've always got to fight that fight
(Faulkner & Lahn, 2019, p. 24).

In this example, microaggression is experienced as an individual instance of bias that arguably demonstrates cultural ignorance and or apathy. However, as discussed previously, individual behaviour can transition into unconscious bias in institutional processes, procedures, and policies for gender equality. As identified by Faulkner and Lahn (2019), stigmatisation presents as a barrier to career progression for Indigenous employees in the APS. So much so that the participant in the above example states, 'you've always got to fight the fight' in breaking down non-Indigenous-held views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

2.7. Applying the Inclusive Framework for Developing Culturally Proficient Practices

Applying the Framework to respond to microaggressions of unconscious bias requires addressing a series of questions. Although simplistic, the example response provided in Table 2.1 demonstrates a deliberate decision to increase Indigenous cultural education in the workplace. It is vital commitment incorporates appropriate led and informed cultural knowledge and input. Eight considerations in Table 2.1 guide the reader in applying the example of microaggressions in the Framework.

Table 2. 1 Reflection on microaggressions: an example of ethnocentric bias in Faulkner and Lahn (2019, p. 24)

Considerations	Explanation
1. What type of bias is being experienced?	‘Ethnocentrism is a term applied to the cultural or ethnic bias—whether conscious or unconscious—in which an individual views the world from the perspective of his or her own group, establishing the in-group as archetypal and rating all other groups with reference to this ideal. This form of tunnel vision often results in: (1) an inability to adequately understand cultures that are different from one’s own, and (2) value judgments that preference the in-group and assert its inherent superiority, thus linking the concept of ethnocentrism to multiple forms of chauvinism and prejudice, including nationalism, tribalism, racism, and even sexism and disability discrimination (Baylor, 2019).’
2. Where on the cultural proficiency continuum is your starting point, and where on the continuum is your end goal?*	Want to move from cultural blindness to cultural pre-competence on the continuum provided in Figure 2.2
3. What is your business need?	To establish a shared understanding within the workplace of how stigmatism can influence individual thought processes and lead to organisational processes devaluing someone’s cultural identity.
4. Which essential element of cultural proficiency best applies to your business need?	Valuing diversity (responding to a lack of awareness of what constitutes Indigeneity)
5. What cultural concept/s will best guide a strength based approach to demonstrate growth in cultural competence?	Cultural safety (for a definition of cultural safety, refer to Appendix B)
6. Which principles of ethics can partner with your cultural concepts/s to ensure an inclusive culturally informed response? In this instance, Respect.	‘Respect for human beings is a recognition of their intrinsic value. In human research, this recognition includes abiding by the values of research, merit and integrity, justice, and beneficence. Respect also requires having due regard for the welfare, beliefs, perceptions, customs and cultural heritage, both individual and collective, of those involved in research (Universities Australia, 2018 :10-11).’
7. What practical initiative will you adopt in achieving your business need?*	To provide a series of independent and Indigenous led team discussions on what cultural safety means in identifying and responding to conscious and unconscious influences of ethnocentric bias.
8. How will you measure your performance?	Level of cultural knowledge and understanding that demonstrates how valuing diversity has assisted in reducing perceptions of ethnocentric bias (pre and post-evaluation).

*The location on the cultural proficiency continuum provided in the above microaggression example is for illustrative purposes only. In reality, determining the current level of cultural competence is required to identify where the microaggression is located on the continuum and which point of the continuum will become the end goal in addressing the microaggression.

**The initiative identified in response to the microaggression example is fictitious. In reality, identifying the initiative can be determined from any number of sources or processes.

Source: Figure 2.2 based on Lindsey & Lindsey 2016.

The first consideration is to identify what form of bias is being experienced. The microaggression example provided in Table 2.1 presents as a form of unconscious bias. The result is a lack of cultural proficiency, 'cultural blindness'. Cultural blindness is defined as 'pretending not to see or acknowledge the status and culture of marginalised communities and choosing to ignore the experiences of such groups within the school and community' (Lindsey & Lindsey, 2016, p. 53). Cultural blindness is characterised as favouring a cultural deficit approach. Furthermore, cultural blindness leads to dominant cultures ignoring the cultural strengths of minorities in order to encourage assimilation (Victorian Public Sector Commission, 2019).

The second consideration requires identifying your starting point on the continuum and where you want to be. In this example, 'cultural blindness' is the starting point, and 'cultural pre-competence' is the desired minimum end point along the continuum. Cultural blindness represents the first stage along the cultural proficiency continuum from which to bridge the gap (ethical tension of competing worldviews) between unhealthy and healthy practices for culturally proficient practices. Bridging this gap requires increasing awareness to accept what you do not know about working with marginalised communities (Lindsey & Lindsey, 2016, p. 53). Cultural pre-competence begins with adopting a strengths-based inclusive approach, acknowledging others, irrespective of their race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, sexual identity, special needs, or faith communities (Lindsey & Lindsey, 2016, pp. 52-53).

The third and fourth considerations require identifying what will be your 'business need' or desired outcome and which of the five 'essential elements' of cultural proficiency will best facilitate the business need. In this instance, the business need is to establish a shared understanding of how stigmatism can influence individual behaviour that can be experienced as unconscious bias behaviour. The essential element of 'valuing diversity' has been identified as the best placed of the five essential elements to show how addressing stigmatism can support the business need.

The fifth and sixth considerations are considered together also. That is, which cultural concept will best support a strengths-based approach to demonstrate growth in cultural competence, and which ethics principle, when combined with the cultural concept/s, will

ensure a culturally inclusive response in the design and development of any responding initiative? For this example, cultural safety was identified as the appropriate cultural concept together with the ethical principle of respect. Cultural safety is defined as ‘an environment which is safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity and experience’ (Victorian Public Sector Commission, 2019). The ethical principle of respect is defined in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* as follows,

Respect for human beings is a recognition of their intrinsic value. In human research, this recognition includes abiding by the values of research merit and integrity, justice and beneficence. Respect also requires having due regard for the welfare, beliefs, perceptions, customs, and cultural heritage, both individual and collective, of those involved in research (Universities Australia, 2018 p. 11).

The seventh consideration in working through the previous six considerations from Table 2.1 now identifies the actual practical response in addressing microaggressions of ethnocentric bias in team settings. In this example, the action is to develop a series of independent and Indigenous-led team discussions on what cultural safety means in identifying and responding to conscious and unconscious influences of ethnocentric bias.

Finally, with the eighth and last consideration, it is now possible to determine the appropriate performance measure/s to demonstrate the achievement of the outcome. The determined performance measure/s reflects a holistic application of cultural proficiency. Applying this simple but structured response avoids duplicating the lazy and blurred definitional concepts in existing literature and practice. The result is a response that can measure pre and post-levels of culturally informed knowledge and understanding in arriving at the desired business need. In summary, working through the Framework provides a flexible approach that addresses the intersectionality of unconscious bias/racism with individuals and institutional bias. The Framework is not limited to any one response, nor is the Framework limited to Indigenous employment in the APS. Equally able to be applied to other minority groups in either public or private sector workplaces, future researchers or practitioners are encouraged to build upon the Framework in striving for workplaces that reflect culturally inclusive and competent practices.

2.8. Concluding remarks

Race matters in the APS employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It may be uncomfortable for the APS to accept that unconscious bias can manifest as subtle and hidden instances of racism. Not blatant organisational practices, but practices influenced by personal tendencies of unconscious bias can become embedded into organisational culture and somewhat accepted as the norm. Gender inequality is one such area; attrition and representation are other areas. Addressing equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees is a legacy of historical practices.

The APS acknowledges that employment inequity exists in the APS and has committed to reversing this inequity, most recently articulated in the *Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020-24*. The good news is the APS has identified a vital element for repositioning the value of APS Indigenous employment in the Strategy; that is, agencies develop and articulate a clear EVP for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (APSC, 2020c, p. 23). This is a momentous outcome and a big step in moving in the right direction. However, a culturally competent approach will require an equally central coordinating aspect to guide the proposition's development. It is feared that individual agencies with the best intentions are at risk of perpetuating the legacy of ongoing confusion in applying cultural competence in multiple formats across the APS. In this regard, determining a single agreed overarching EVP is critical. Embracing an epistemological shift away from designating Indigenous people as objects of study, as argued by Moreton-Robinson (2015, p. xviii), to one that embraces knowledge on an Indigenous worldview is the challenge facing the APS.

Chapter 3 provides a literature review of extant literature with the concept of cultural competence at the centre of discussion in Chapter 2, and the concept of unconscious bias, the core research theme of this thesis.

Chapter 3 Literature review

3.1 Purpose

The aim of this literature review is to discuss the concept of cultural competence combined with developing an understanding of how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and managers might experience unconscious bias in the APS. Larkin (2014) identified that racial ignorance prevented senior executives from achieving an adequate level of cultural competence. In turn, senior executives were leading to a racially distorted understanding of what constitutes the effectiveness of a senior non-Indigenous executive in discharging responsibilities.

To position my review, I apply the concept of cultural competence to examine unconscious bias to help determine, inspect, and reflect on implications for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in the APS. Reviewing unconscious bias in the APS through a lens of cultural competence is necessary to guide the required research reflection. It would be neglectful and disrespectful not to consider unconscious bias through a lens of cultural competence, especially in light of the recent and continuing worldwide movement of 'Black Lives Matter'. Here in Australia, the Black Lives Matter movement (Bond, Whop, Singh, & Kajlich, 2020; Dejmanee, Millar, Lorenz, Weber, & Zaher, 2022; Swannell, 2020) has thrust racial disadvantage into the public spotlight, somewhat poignantly reminding all Australians of the hardship and social inequalities so often experienced by the vast majority of Indigenous families.

3.2 Overview

The following discussion comprises four distinct but related sections. The first section discusses race, which includes a focus on Indigenous studies. The second contribution of this literature review seeks to understand unconscious bias and public administration awareness of unconscious bias. The third section examines the implications of cultural competence for the APS. The final section discusses gaps in the literature.

Content was primarily sourced through three online searches of scholarly and peer-reviewed journal articles and grey literature identified through the ANU Library's online database for 10 years up to 2020. The search parameters did not specifically seek or exclude any particular journals. However, as the literature specifically applying to an Australian Indigenous research perspective from an APS perspective is minor, grey literature from government and public sector organisations was also included. The three online academic journal searches were restricted to terms of unconscious bias, cultural competence, and ethics/cultural competence. Disciplines of government were applied to all three online ANU Library searches. The search subject terms included: Commonwealth, cultural competence, ethics, government, philosophy, public administration, public sector, race, and unconscious bias. The literature search period for cultural competence was extended from 1998 to 2020 due to the relatively small amount of literature available applicable to government and public administration. All three searches resulted in 275 responses. Of these 275 articles, approximately 70 articles were excluded that offered no relevant insight into an employment context for public administration or government context. Examples sourced from among the remaining articles identified a range of insights for Australian Indigenous employment, adding to the scant literature relating to Indigenous employment generally.

3.3 [Developing a deeper engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees](#)

The Australian Government's CtG policy aims to overcome the entrenched inequality between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C), 2020). The policy acknowledges preceding attempts have not achieved the anticipated equitable life outcomes for Indigenous Australians. Central to implementing the National Agreement on CtG is the Australian Government's commitment to engage with all state and territory governments and the National Coalition of Peaks in a full and genuine partnership (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C), 2020).

This is a welcomed commitment, particularly in having the Coalition of the Peaks as the national voice of community-controlled Indigenous organisations at the

table with governments. This commitment presents the APS as the Australian Government's administrative arm with an opportunity to extend the principle of full and genuine partnership internally to its APS workforce.

Biddle and Lahn (2016) provide insight into how an APS can engage more effectively and inclusively with Indigenous employees to support the CtG policy commitment. However, they warn of a cultural conflict between the culture of the APS and Indigenous employees entering the APS that could threaten the ability of the APS to achieve a culturally inclusive CtG policy response. That is, they identify the importance of an APS workforce improving its cultural awareness to support an increasing Indigenous employee workforce, where the APS workplace should change itself and not expect new employees to have to compromise their own cultural values in order to suit the culture of the APS (Biddle & Lahn, 2016, p. 16). Therefore, engaging in a fuller relationship with Indigenous peoples for CtG delivery is not just an external relationship with Indigenous stakeholders, rather, the APS should consider its own relationship with Indigenous employees to support a culturally diverse and inclusive workplace in fulfilling the Australian Government's refreshed CtG commitment.

Human capital is recognised as being an organisation's most important asset (Muthuku, 2020, p. 15). It would be generally accepted that the best person to speak for someone with similar interests would be the person who has the knowledge and subject matter expertise of the issue at hand. For example, if you are ill, you speak with a medical expert. If you require legal advice, speak with a legal expert, or if you are seeking financial security, you speak with a financial consultant. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees collectively possess a depth of expertise and knowledge that can assist in delivering on the Australian Government's CtG commitment. Dillon and Westbury (2007, p. 197) identified in their review of many years of Australian Government engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that 'policies and programs that ignore Indigenous perspectives and social constructs inevitably fail'. As argued by Biddle and Lahn (2016) and Lahn (2018), it makes sense that engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees will help increase the effectiveness of the APS's ability to deliver programs and services in support of the CtG agenda.

Larkin (2014) in his PhD dissertation on Indigenous employment in the APS argues that race, or dominance of white bureaucrats in positions of power, inherently disadvantages Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees becoming a contributing factor to high attrition rates of Indigenous employees from the APS (Larkin, 2014, p. 4). In Larkin's conclusion, he offers the following statement to help explain how the bureaucracy of the APS limits its ability to view and value Indigenous employee perspectives.

The APS, as a white racial hierarchy organisation, puts this racial dominance into operation through its systems, corporate cultures, values, structures and processes designed to ensure a whole-of-organisation commitment to white mainstream imperatives. White executives can, thus, rely on the provision of racial advantages and privileges without ever having to be conscious of them, as these spoils are invisible by design (Larkin, 2014, p. 271).

In the above statement, Larkin (2014) is setting out how a non-Indigenous view of race can lead to the APS's dominant cultural position. Referring to hierarchy, Larkin (2014) says that white senior executives in the APS are operating in a dominant cultural structure where white privilege not only favours their participation but also discourages critical reflection of attitudes and beliefs of race beyond this context. White senior executives may not even be aware that their decision-making ability is affected by white privilege and are unaware of its impact. As a result, racial dominance adversely influences the employment experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

While the CtG has at its core the foundation of engaging in a deeper partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders. The same commitment to engagement should also extend to its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee workforce, requiring a genuine discussion of the relationship between employee and manager. Why? One of the four Government actions listed in the CtG Priority Reform 3 action is 'Governments commit to challenge unconscious biases that result in decisions based on stereotypes' (National Indigenous Australians Agency, 2022).

3.4 Race matters

Race is an important concept fundamental to the present study. As an Indigenous researcher, I cannot consider the effect of unconscious bias on the employment experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the APS without considering the concept of 'race'. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees have had to experience greater hardship and prejudice than the average Australian because of their identity, which, unfortunately for too many, is as a result of being marginalised and disadvantaged in society. For example, the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians continues to widen in indicators such as life expectancy and unemployment (Davis, 2015, p. 35). This lived experience has meant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have had to demonstrate resilience and adaptability in maintaining an existence that absorbs disturbance while retaining the ability to function (Muir, Rose, & Sullivan, 2010).

My purpose is not to delve deeply into CRT, as this would be beyond the methodological scope of the study, but rather to discuss race as a fundamental base to frame unconscious bias through a lens of cultural competence. Is race socially constructed? This seems to be a fair question. CRT can help here. CRT is defined as an:

Intellectual and social movement and loosely organised framework of legal analysis based on the premise that race is not a natural, biologically grounded feature of physically distinct subgroups of human beings but a socially constructed (culturally invented) category that is used to oppress and exploit people of colour (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2021).

The above explanation places race as a social construct that allows white people to maintain their interests at the expense of people of colour. Likewise, Onwuachi-Willig (2016) also sees race as being socially constructed. She suggests that 'race is not biological. It is a social construct. There is no gene or cluster of genes common to all blacks or whites'. In her online post, Onwuachi-Willig (2016) points out that her view of race is experienced through interracial relationships and that this experience is determined by an accepted societal base of white privilege. Moreton-Robinson would appear to share a similar perspective but argues for repositioning how race is adopted as a lens of research,

one that moves beyond an 'Indigenous endogenous approach to knowledge' whose unintended result has been the 'reification of cultural difference' informed by western disciplines (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. xv).

Bargallie (2020) is one of two Indigenous researchers that specifically consider CRT discourse as it applies to the APS. She uses the racial contract as an abstract concept to explore white privilege and black discrimination in the APS. Earlier work is found in Larkin (2014). Larkin also reviews Indigenous employment in the APS through a lens of race. He finds a social distance between Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees in the APS similar to that between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians (Larkin, 2014). This gap, Larkin posits, allows white executives to assume a neutral racial position that implicates race through ignorance of colour-blindness. 'Race is fully embedded in its [APS] institutional structures and processes and cannot be fully understood through the colour-blind omission of race' (Larkin, 2014, p. 245). Larkin (2014, p. ii) argues that white executives in the APS who assume an unracialised position manage issues implicated by race but do so through an alternative colour-blind position. This observation helps to provide insight into why so many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees may decide to leave the APS.

Criticisms of CRT are evident in both academic and political literature. While all CRT criticisms cannot be covered in this chapter, major criticism of CRT are addressed. Critiques of CRT argue that it lacks reasonable evidence, preferring to draw upon socially constructed realities through storytelling in the absence of law. Farber and Sherry (1998) is best known for this criticism. In further academic legal objections, CRT turns 'its back on the Western tradition of traditional inquiry, forswearing analysis for narrative' (Posner, 1997:42). Kozinski (1997) also makes similar objections to that of Posner (1997). However, he argues that CRT scholars are radical multiculturalists whose views raise insurmountable obstacles to achieving shared beliefs where meaningful dialogue in determining truth is impossible. It can be argued that both Posner (1997) and Kozinski (1997) objections are outdated in today's contemporary world, but the debate endures. For example, consider a recent case here in Australia. Senator Pauline Hanson, a right-wing politician well known for her divisive policy beliefs, tabled a motion in the Australian Senate calling for the Australian Government to reject CRT. Senator Hanson's concerns included, amongst

others, that the national education curriculum had become preoccupied with discrimination and struggles of Australian Indigenous peoples (Anderson & Gatwiri, 2021). I will now focus on Cabrera (2018), who claims that CRT in its current state is not a theory.

Although Cabrera's (2018) concerns specifically refer to CRT in higher education, he suggests elements also refer to CRT in sociology and law. He claims CRT is not a theory that can provide a critical inquiry into racism without having a mental model of racism embedded into CRT (Cabrera, 2018, pp. 214-215). The basis for his claim is that critics of CRT fail to accept CRT's reliance on narrative storytelling as forms of data that can offer testable hypotheses. In Indigenous culture, storytelling as a personal narrative is essential for expressing and maintaining cultural identity. Consequently, it requires an explicit theory of racism embedded in CRT. Brayboy (2006), a Native American Indigenous researcher, saw limitations in CRT: it offered only a binary view of race between African Americans and Caucasian Americans.

Tribal CRT addresses Cabrera's critique in terms of including a mental model of racism embedded in CRT, which is interesting in itself; it is worth noting that Brayboy developed Tribal CRT in 2006 well before Cabrera (2018). Based on CRT, Brayboy developed his nine tenets of Tribal CRT (Brayboy, 2006). Based on epistemology and ontology founded in Indigenous Native American communities, Brayboy believes his Tribal CRT is also flexible in accommodating differences between Indigenous communities and individuals (Brayboy, 2006, p. 427). However, Tribal CRT, like CRT, more broadly values personal narrative accounts and testimonies as crucial sources of data, which controverts Cabrera (2018). Brayboy explains why storytelling is an essential source of data for Native American peoples: 'Listening seriously involves an ability to make connections between traditional community values and those of larger societal institutions like courts or schools' (Brayboy, 2006, p. 428).

The inclusion of storytelling or yarning in Tribal CRT makes it a distinctively Indigenous Theory. Storytelling narrative is a fundamental cultural knowledge trait amongst Indigenous peoples, and careful listening is a requirement for good social research regardless. Any attempt to exclude the use of personal narrative as actual data in CRT, particularly from an Indigenous researcher's view-point, perpetrates a continuation of

racial assimilation. Understanding this requirement of CRT in Indigenous studies will influence how other societal levels of race interact by drawing attention to the importance storytelling has in the lived experiences of cultural expression.

3.5 Seeing colour in diversity

The concept of colour blindness suggests that valuing diversity is central to avoiding negative stereotypes and to perceptions of minority races in dominant cultures. Faulkner and Lahn (2019), in their review of barriers and enablers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in the APS, identify three key barriers that indicate colour blindness is a real concept:

- non-Indigenous employee preconceptions that value normative behaviour⁸ through ethnocentric lenses
- Indigenous employees being burdened with having to explain to colleagues what cultural identity is and having to deal with the negative consequences of stereotypes of what an Indigenous person is supposed to look like, and
- pigeonholing Indigenous employees in preconceived roles and functions where perceptions of capability are lessened (pp. 22-25).

Bargallie and Larkin both argue that senior executives unknowingly contribute to the loss of Indigenous employees from the APS. Bargallie argues this practice goes unnoticed and unaddressed by senior executives who are set in their identities as white Australians (Bargallie, 2020). This result, she argues, helps to show how 'Indigenous employee disappointment translates to despair' (Bargallie, 2020, p. 78). Larkin (2014, p. 12) claims senior white executives are not aware of how their own race privileges them in the APS through power relations that contribute to negative employment outcomes disadvantaging Indigenous employees. Both Larkin and Bargallie argue for a marked change in how the APS

⁸ Definitions for normative behaviour differ in the literature. For easy of reference for this chapter, normative behaviour is defined 'as behaviour resulting from norm invocation, usually implemented in the form of invocation messages which carry the notions of social pressure, but without direct punishment, and the notion of assimilating to a social surrounding without blind or unthinking imitation' (Elsenbroich & Xenitidou, 2012, pp. 114-115).

engages with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. Seeing differences of colour and valuing this is paramount to this change. Racism, as argued, is not just explicit but also often masked or hidden in institutional practices. In the following statement, Larkin provides insight into how Indigenous senior executives in the APS experience institutional racism because of colour.

The reference to the organisational practice of 'sidelining', interpreted as the removal of Indigenous executives from high-status roles and functions to those less important, gives effect to the perception that Indigenous executives were systematically devalued on the basis of their race (Larkin, 2014, p. 227).

Furthermore, Larkin argues the impact of racism that 'sidelines' employees from high-status roles to lower roles directly impacts the perceived value of Indigenous employees:

This takes the form of an overall devaluing of Indigeneity so that Indigenous employees are judged in negative terms as a cultural collective. With notions of Indigenous deficit seemingly entrenched in the imaginations of non-Indigenous staff, Indigeneity becomes the 'root' cause of any problems with programs or policies (Larkin, 2014, p. 228).

Bargallie (2020, p. 262) concludes in her response to dismantling racism in the APS that 'the colour-blind approach in the APS means that the institution turns a blind eye – that it does not see racial difference – therefore does not see racism'. Here Bargallie is arguing that the Westminster structure of the APS is by default valuing colour through a non-Indigenous value base. Despite the best of intentions, failing to see colour contributes to racism in the APS. For example, the lack of senior Indigenous executives in the APS means the minimum opportunity is being presented in which Indigenous perspectives are shared amongst their peers. A common theme hopefully portrayed clearly through the above discussion is that unconscious bias is complex and can be manifested in institutionalised practices encompassing both human and organisational behaviour overtly and covertly.

Indigenous leaders continue to express concern about the ability of the Australian Government to respond to evidence-based policy reform, at least from a perspective that seeks the voice of Indigenous Australians. This concern refers to criticisms of governments

that have failed or have chosen not to listen genuinely to the voice of Indigenous leaders. Perche (2018) discusses a new policy design for Indigenous self-determination flowing from the 2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart (Uluru Dialogue, 2017). In her paper, Perche (2018) asks the reader to consider if the existing administrative arrangements of the APS fit the purpose of Commonwealth Indigenous affairs policy. Perche (2018), quoting Megan Davis, a respected senior Indigenous lawyer and leader, in summing up the extent of concern, refers 'For Indigenous Australians the system is broken' and 'Australia has failed the First Peoples' (Davis, 2016, pp. 84, 87). 'These criticism are persistent, widespread, deeply felt, and they are well informed' (Perche, 2018, p. 29).

3.6 Unconscious bias

3.6.1 What is unconscious bias?

Unconscious bias, also known as implicit bias, can be regarded as the social stereotypes that affect our understanding, influencing our actions and decisions of others in an unconscious manner (Navarro, 2019). The literature offers many different definitions of unconscious bias. There is no one agreed universal definition in use. It may be that the diversity of meanings of unconscious bias is indicative of the variety of environments in which unconscious bias is researched and applied. Yet another definition, provided by Evans et al. (2014, p. 502) in referring to Piterman (2008) and the Australian Institute of Management NSW & ACT (AIM) (2012) states that unconscious bias is 'where perceptions of individuals affect an individual's behavior without conscious knowledge'.

A common thread running through these definitions is that our subconscious thought processes are automatic responses and that our behaviours, as a result, are directly externalised in our attitudes. Kapai (2019) argues that this attitudinal impact of unconscious bias as being quite different from explicit bias in the following statement.

Within the field of the study of bias, there is a distinction between explicit (or overt) bias, which is more closely aligned with discriminatory conduct, and implicit (or unconscious) bias, which is broadly cast as attitudinal (Kapai, 2019, p. 8).

She draws the distinction between bias that is applied overtly through such practices as policy rules or requirements, which results in discrimination, to bias formed by our attitudes that often develop prejudices leading to inaccurate stereotypes of associations for a particular group or individual (Kapai, 2019).

Akram (2018, p. 124) also supports similar views of unconscious bias to that of Kapai, stating that unconscious (implicit) bias 'results from cognitive processes (implicit attitudes and implicit stereotypes) that operate at a level below conscious awareness and without intentional control'. Brownstein, Madva, and Gawronski (2020) agree on the role that attitudes have in predicting unconscious bias if assessing a person's attitude also includes other attitudes about the person's beliefs, context, and facts associated with the behaviour being considered. This more expansive attitudinal framework has implications in measuring unconscious bias, which argues for caution and includes understanding the broader context of attitudes.

3.6.2 Unconscious bias expressed through behaviour

Unconscious bias itself is not inherently bad or damaging. When unconscious bias impacts another person adversely, unconscious bias becomes damaging, but there can also be a deleterious impact of unconscious bias on the person who holds such bias. Unconscious bias influences our attitudes even when we are unaware of its causation (Greenwald et al., 1998, p. 1464). In a study of unconscious bias implications for equality in Hong Kong ethnic communities, Kapai (2019) acknowledges this concern as she suggests unconscious bias resides in everyone, even when one agrees that prejudice and discrimination are wrong. Whilst unconscious bias resides in everyone, unconscious bias becomes 'more present when policy problems are complex, contested and polarised' (Balfour & Larson, 2017, p. 788). The effects of unconscious bias, if left unchecked, can serve as a self-serving function that bolsters an in-group's position over that of an out-group such as minority groups – resulting in institutional harm and damaged societal morale (Kapai, 2019). This illustrates how unconscious bias, if not addressed, can become embedded into everyday institutional practices and processes beyond an individual's perceptions, stereotypes, and attitudes. That is, unconscious bias gives way to legitimacy, discrimination and prejudices at an organisational level. If left unchecked, the effects of unconscious bias will only deepen with

the risk of associated behaviour becoming further entrenched in organisational culture. The result is that considerable effort and resourcing may be required to deal with the fallout of unconscious biased behaviour.

3.6.3 Insights from literature for gender equality

Examples in the literature suggest that unconscious bias in gender equality is ingrained in institutional practice. Gender equality is a priority outcome area for the APS and is enshrined in the *Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy 2016–2019* (APSC, 2016). Unconscious bias is commonly expressed as a contributing factor for women who experience disadvantage through existing meritorious recruitment practices in the APS. Evans et al. (2014) attempt to shed light on the perceptions of senior men and women in the APS to the cultural and systemic barriers that prevent equitable outcomes for women. They suggest that while the existence of barriers is generally accepted in gender inequality, understanding the nature of these barriers is not (Evans et al., 2014, p. 502). At the time, Evans et al. (2014) noted a stark lack of empirical studies relevant to the APS context. Instead, they drew upon insights found in grey literature. Three particular studies identified by Evans et al. (2014) help to explain how unconscious bias influences institutional practice:

- firstly one agency identified a male-dominated culture that makes it difficult for women to break into the ‘boys club’, being confronted instead with gender stereotypes
- secondly, another agency acknowledged the lack of a ‘critical mass’ – of women resulted in high levels of occupational segregation that prevented equitable consideration for career advancement for women, and
- thirdly, another agency identified the need to understand ‘how people think’ and that unrecognised bias impacts leadership styles (Evans et al., 2014, p. 503).

Fast forward to 2019, M. Foley and Williamson (2019, p. 36) – in referring to Śliwa and Johansson (2014) – back-up the claim by Evans et al. (2014) that critics argue meritorious recruitment practices can conceal an inequitable flow of opportunities to particular groups. Furthermore, M. Foley and Williamson (2019) maintain that whilst an assessment of merit is

an individual response, opportunities for advancement can be restricted through organisational processes simply because women are stereotyped and are being subconsciously excluded from opportunities (M. Foley & Williamson, 2019, p. 36).

Chamberlain (2016) suggests specific strategies are required to examine biases and beliefs, including processes to understand how verbal and non-verbal communications send implicit cues borne from or reflecting bias. She offers five specific strategies to build awareness at the individual level of unconscious bias when interviewing and hiring employees. These strategies range from checking-in on one's first impression and understanding how first impressions can limit assessment of capability to establishing a checklist to help uncover personal biases (Chamberlain, 2016, pp. 200-202).

Williamson and Foley (2018, p. 355) argue that Western governments concerned with gender equity are mistakenly seeing unconscious bias training as the 'silver bullet' to achieve gender equity. The APS has women in senior management as a critical response initiative, with 17 of 18 departments with a gender equality action plan committing to the delivery of unconscious bias training (Williamson & Foley, 2018). While there appears to be a very high uptake among APS departments, they believe the likely success of unconscious bias training without any critical measurement of its success will be limited (Williamson & Foley, 2018). International research also points to the likelihood that unconscious bias training may not effectively reduce racism in the workplace, leading instead to unintended negative consequences by taking the focus away from embedded structural biases in organisations (Noon, 2017, p. 198).

Applebaum (2018) expresses similar concerns to that of Williamson and Foley (2018) in arguing that there is a danger in organisations willingly embracing unconscious bias training as the solution for changing institutional culture. She builds on the idea of epistemic injustice by applying a critical analysis of microaggressions within universities in the USA. Applebaum (2018, p. 133) refers to microaggressions as subtle and minor instances of racism that on their own may seem inconsequential but, when combined, can manifest as a pattern of behaviour that is 'relentless and repetitive and that has harmful effects over time'. Institutionally, she says, universities must adopt a high commitment to social justice to expose the dominant frameworks and the microaggression practices that protect them

(Applebaum, 2018, p. 130). Williamson and Foley (2018) in referring to Noon (2017) emphasise the importance of not forgetting the role of organisational structure of unconscious bias training. 'Structures are hugely important in embedding racial disadvantage, sometimes labelled institutional racism, and making organisations resistant to agendas for change' (Noon, 2017, p. 204). Unconscious bias training should address individual behaviour and the systemic organisational restrictions that can encourage discrimination.

3.6.4 Unconscious bias training must consider institutional practices

As demonstrated above, understanding the impact of unconscious bias is required beyond individual behaviour to include organisational functions, structures, and processes (Williamson & Foley, 2018, p. 357). For example, educating actors to increase awareness of unconscious bias in applying meritorious recruitment practices alone is not enough, nor should organisations defer to unconscious bias training too hastily as the solution (Williamson & Foley, 2018, p. 356). M. Foley and Williamson (2019, p. 42) also identify that educating managers on unconscious bias on merit practices will not be enough without also an evaluation of understanding how biases prevent objective assessment in merit processes.

A case in point in relation to unconscious bias awareness in the APS is the objective of the principle of merit in recruitment practices. In the APS *State of the Service Report 2017–18*, Dr Peter Wilenski⁹ AC, former Chairman of the Public Service Board (1983–87) highlights the need to overcome recruiting for sameness or similarity through embracing a deeper practical application of the merit principle:

The tendency of organisations to recruit, train and select for similarity ... has become widely recognised ... organisations become comprised of a very narrow range of skills, experience, background, values and styles of behaviour and work. This... tends to result in organisations that are unaware of the diversity of community needs and values and lacking in innovation (APSC, 2018b, p. 50).

⁹ Speech to the Federation of Australian University Staff Associations' Conference on 'Women in Post-Secondary Education: Issues and Strategies 1975–1995', 30 March 1985, Sydney.

The literature identifies the need for a critical assessment of unconscious bias to go beyond individual assessment of merit and training (Atewologun, Cornish, & Tresh, 2018; Evans et al., 2014; M. Foley & Williamson, 2019; Kapai, 2019; Williamson & Foley, 2018). For example, Kapai (2019, pp. 112-113) calls for greater attention to institutionalising anti-bias measures to go beyond ‘dismissing racism, sexism and other isms’ previously associated with individuals, to consider strategies to build institutional reform, including appropriately sustained training regimes for unconscious bias.

3.6.5 Reflecting genuine representation in addressing unconscious bias

Akram (2018) considers that the intersectionality of representation with unconscious bias remains poorly understood in bureaucracies, with much of the available commercial literature lacking theoretical grounding. Here Akram (2018) argues that the concept of unconscious bias requires a greater sophisticated understanding, one that acknowledges that unconscious bias is highly contested and has to include understanding its function within an agency’s operations.

It suggests a need to refocus diversity agendas away from identifying ‘bad’ people, who make discriminatory decisions, to identifying well-intentioned people who are unaware of the unconscious factors that affect their decision-making (Akram, 2018, p. 121).

Further, unconscious bias can still be perpetrated through good intentions when decision-making unconsciously leads to discriminatory behaviour.

When unconscious bias is embedded into institutional practice, it becomes far more difficult to identify; the result can be institutional racism. As argued by (Patel, 2021, p. 93), institutional racism ‘is structured in the organisational culture, fabric and practices within institutions’ the effects of which are difficult to detect becoming sophisticated in guise as subtle, indirect, and hard to observe acts of racism.

Bourne (2019) distinguishes how unconscious bias incorrectly absolves institutions of their role in removing institutional racism.

Returning racism to individual attitude (if unconscious) means not distinguishing between the ways in which racism affects classes and communities differentially, not distinguishing between 'the racism that kills' and 'the racism that discriminates', and suggests, wrongly, in a non-materialist way, that bias creates rather than reflects structured and institutional racism (p. 70).

Bourne (2019) draws on the criticisms behind 'racism awareness training' (RAT) in the USA, where critics argue RAT incorrectly failed to distinguish between attitudes of individuals, which, when acted on, led to discrimination giving authority to the state creating the conditions for racism. What concerns Bourne is the apparent direction of literature that seeks to wipe institutional racism from national consciousness, replacing it instead with the explanation of racism as the domain of attitudes (unconscious bias) of individuals and not the reflection of bias created by institutions (Bourne, 2019).

Research by Seabrook and Wyatt-Nichol (2016) further supports the later findings of Bourne (2019) on the role institutions play in perpetrating racism through oppression. Their research focused on the overlap of oppression, structural racism, and implicit bias evident in stereotypes and perceptions to examine the context of institutional oppression of African American males and the American criminal justice system. Seabrook and Wyatt-Nichol (2016) contend that institutional oppression and racial injustice continue today because of racism and unconscious bias in institutional practices (Seabrook & Wyatt-Nichol, 2016). They conclude institutional racism is learned; it is 'a reflection of the external environment operating under established structures that reflect the values and beliefs of those in power' (Seabrook & Wyatt-Nichol, 2016, p. 39).

Views of institutional racism in the criminal justice system have once again come to the fore. Recent public sentiment in the wake of the tragic circumstances surrounding George Floyd's death in the USA, and the subsequent Black Lives Matter movement around the world, illustrate this. In Australia, Aboriginal men in Western Australia are incarcerated at far higher levels in terms of people per 100,000 than non-Indigenous men a multiple of 22.3 times (Martin, 2015, p. 4). Furthermore, 80% of Aboriginal people who have been incarcerated are repeat offenders (Martin, 2015, p. 6). Almost 30% of Australia's prison

population are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, despite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples only making up 3% of the total Australian population (Creative Spirits, 2020). At addressing a national conference in Melbourne in 2017, the Australian Racial Discrimination Commissioner spoke about institutional racism as, 'It [incarceration] cannot be explained away by just socio-economic location. It is indicative of some institutional racism' (Soutphommansane, 2017, p. 3).

Achieving equitable outcomes for marginalised minority groups means treating everyone fairly (but not equally or the same). Equality and equity have separate and distinguishable meanings. Equality means everyone has the same item regardless of whether it is required or not, whereas equity (fairness) means everyone has the same opportunities – and equity needs to be established before equality can be obtained (Wood, 2011). A nationwide survey of public health procurement in New Zealand points to the realities of policy delivery. Despite government procurement policy where all providers are treated equitably, the reality is that gaps between policy rhetoric and operational practice are resulting in health inequities for New Zealand Maori peoples. Racist practices influenced by bias are reflected in institutional practices. Came, Doole, McKenna, and McCreanor (2018, p. 133), in concurring with Paradies (2007), state 'that definitions of (institutional) racism are not dependent on the intentions of those working within institutions; rather on practices and outcomes'. Maori academics challenge the New Zealand health sector to turn their focus away from a deficit approach to one that monitors government behaviour in procurement practices. Came et al. (2018) advocate for senior managers to take greater responsibility for Maori health procurement activities to include:

...having systems in place that identify, prevent and remove institutional racism within the administration of the system... where actions could be branded an anti-racism or equity intervention enabled discreetly through existing quality assurance activities (p. 138).

3.7 Cultural competence

3.7.1 Defining cultural competence

To recap, Cross et al. (1989) define cultural competence as,

... a set of congruent behaviours, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enable that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations (p. iv).

Many writers tend to favour this definition (Blessett, 2018; Boyd-Swan & Molina, 2018; Gallegos et al., 2008). However, several alternative descriptions or variations to Cross et al. (1989) are also used. For example, Carrizales et al. (2016, p. 127) see cultural competence as 'specific organizational actions and policies that enable the organization to more effectively serve its culturally diverse populations'. Brach and Fraserirector (2000, p. 183), in another interpretation, define cultural competency as an 'ongoing commitment or institutionalization of appropriate practices and policies for diverse populations'. Bush (2000, p. 177) defines cultural competency as 'respect for, and understanding of, diverse ethnic and cultural groups, their histories, traditions, beliefs, and value systems in the provision and delivery of services'. Lastly, Universities Australia (2011) applies its own definition of cultural competence in higher education as follows.

Student and staff knowledge and understanding of Indigenous Australian cultures, histories and contemporary realities and awareness of Indigenous protocols, combined with the proficiency to engage and work effectively in Indigenous contexts congruent to the expectations of Indigenous Australian peoples (p. 3).

3.7.2 Preferred research position for this thesis

I adopt the definition by Cross et al. (1989) of cultural competence to provide a grounded position for understanding cultural competence for the APS, as their definition places cultural competence in a systems-wide approach for change. This means any response to cultural competence considers organisational elements together holistically and not in insolation and is guided by five essential elements: assessing cultural knowledge, valuing diversity, managing the dynamics of difference, adapting to diversity, and institutionalising cultural knowledge (Lindsey & Lindsey, 2016, p. 54). Researching the effects of unconscious bias in the employment experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the APS, requires a holistic culturally informed approach. An Indigenous cultural perspective of cultural competence is critical for this purpose. The Cross et al. (1989) definition of cultural competence focuses on gaining congruency between behaviours, attitudes, and policies that

are applied together as a holistic system to work effectively across cross-cultural situations. However, in both the literature and in practice, the many varied definitional uses of cultural competence and interpretation of cultural competence have given rise to confusion (Danso, 2018, p. 410).

The APS also has contributed to its own confusion. Unfortunately, concepts like cultural safety, cultural capability, cultural awareness, cultural integrity, cultural knowledge, cultural blindness, etc. are used interchangeably across the APS. This practice has aided agencies in misinterpreting the meaning and purpose of cultural competence. Instead, they adopt their own interpretation of cultural competence and, in doing so, blur one cultural concept into another cultural concept. The proliferation in the practice of these variations has evolved independently and separately to being placed in a framework of understanding cultural competence as originally defined by Cross et al. (1989). The present investigation will attempt to place these variations with the Cross et al. (1989) systems definition of cultural competence to construct an evaluation logic to place cultural competence strategically in an organisational model.

3.7.3 [Becoming culturally competent](#)

Why the need for cultural competence? This simple question is addressed in the following excerpt taken from Balcazar et al. (2009).

Becoming culturally competent is an intentional endeavour, a journey, and a life-long process. The development of cultural competence means our willingness to engage in a series of activities such as examining the institutional biases of traditional practices and services of the agencies we work for; being open and willing to accept individuals from other cultures; trying non-traditional interventions or changing standard procedures to better address individual needs; and challenging racist practices, discrimination and oppression when observed (p. 1158).

Many Australian Government organisations have identified face-to-face Cultural Awareness Training (CAT) as a fundamental and foundational development initiative for developing cultural competence. As well as CAT, various other initiatives also aim to increase individual (and by default corporate) cultural knowledge and capability in the APS, including:

- NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week activities
- cultural immersion programs
- eLearning education
- Indigenous business procurement, and
- Indigenous community partnerships.

However, perhaps the APS has been overly reliant on face-to-face CAT. The reason for this concern is the lack of ability to measure the effectiveness of CAT beyond the individual level. Participants complete the training by gaining valuable and insightful knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures, and communication protocols. Taking this new-found personal knowledge and injecting it into workplace behaviours at a corporate level has proven elusive in the APS. As identified by Balcazar et al. (2009, p. 1155), one possible reason for this is the 'limited number of available validated conceptual frameworks and measures' from within the literature to assess cultural competence.

The same absence applies to the APS in that no available validated critical measure integrates cultural competence into organisational behaviour beyond individual reflection. Organisational culture is determined by individuals, structures, processes, and policies that come together to function as a system. The guiding theme pursued in the following discussion is the positioning of cultural competence within an organisational system.

Gallegos et al. (2008) acknowledge that disagreement exists in the literature on whether cultural competence reflects the basis of social theory that allows for testing a hypothesis through observations. I, like Gallegos et al. (2008); prefer to view cultural competence from as a social perspective rather than as a social theory. Cultural competence becomes a lens through which to consider social interactions through organisational behaviour. Gallegos et al. (2008), rightly argues that the corner stone of cultural competence appears to be empowerment (Gallegos et al., 2008, p. 58). Empowerment suits the viewing of cultural competence from a social perspective as the purpose of cultural competence is to achieve equitable outcomes for cultural minorities.

3.7.4 Diversity: Rethinking race in a culturally competent way

Alexander and Stivers (2014, p. 578) acknowledge the concept of race as a complex and challenging social force when considering its role in public administration. They reject the perspective of many commentators who see race as being no longer required, instead reminding commentators to move away from the fear of playing the 'race card' to seeing the value of race through a lens as a mark of respect for racial minorities (Alexander & Stivers, 2014, p. 579). Instead of being fearful and reluctant to mention race in dialogue at the risk of being labelled 'racist', they call for a more open and honest discussion that considers the 'unique relationships between the patterns of administrative practice and racial minorities' (Alexander & Stivers, 2014, p. 579).

It is generally accepted that managing diversity for social equity in public administration has created an organisational culture that values diversity through education, training, and inclusiveness. Alexander and Stivers (2014) point out that literature on managing diversity in public administration is appealing as it lessens the sensitivity of addressing the concept of race in place of culture and appears more palatable. In practice, the cultural dominance of the APS is informed by a non-Indigenous perspective of diversity. Decision makers who are predominantly of non-Indigenous heritage would not expect to share the lived experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. For example, Leitch (2017, p. 403) argues that the understanding of race in the APS operates in an unequal environment of power dominated by non-Indigenous APS officers, which remains largely invisible to non-Indigenous APS officers, where cultural inclusion policies are thought to be culturally objective'. Unless race is reflected in culturally competent diversity practice, why expect organisational behaviour to change?

The Australian demographic is changing, and the minority-majority population is growing, increasing the demand for greater inclusion of minority perspectives in decision-making in the APS. Minority-majority population means the majority of the population consists of several minority groups within the whole population. The changing demographics in Western countries, including Australia are moving towards a growing minority-majority population, and through the retirement of baby boomers, a younger profile of entrants to the workforce (Johnson & Borrego, 2014). By 2056 Australia's population is projected to be

between 30.9 million and 42.5 million people (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008). Australia's migration program will play a significant role in meeting this projected population growth (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2019, p. 8). Johnson and Borrego (2014) have identified a public administration concern that will add further pressure for future APS workplace diversity. Moving forward, diversity will have to meet the unique challenges of growing minorities in the Australian population. This will mean decision-making will be less informed by white privilege and more informed by minority diversity. Johnson and Borrego (2014) note that the growing population trends raise important considerations for countries in this regard, not only for relationships between majority and minority groups but also for relationships between minority groups.

While Australian Indigenous communities share cultural traits, they are not one homogenous group. Australian Indigenous communities also consist of numerous minority groups. Too often, this distinction is subsumed by the need for administrative convenience when developing policy and program responses for Indigenous Australians. Craven et al. (2016) draw attention to this practice noting the imperative for considering what success looks like for a group of people as diverse as Aboriginal Australia as opposed to what governments respond with in order to achieve administrative efficiency.

Diversity is vital to society for several reasons, including social harmony and a sense of belonging for all community members. Diversity in the APS workforce is governed by three key strategic frameworks: disability, gender equality, and Indigenous employment. The *Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020–24* (the Strategy) (APSC, 2020c) is an active and purposeful document with its stated commitment to,

...ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees play a greater role in contributing to building a diverse Commonwealth public sector workforce capable of responding to the needs of the Australian community (p. 11) .

The Strategy is based on three key strategic focus areas: Cultural Integrity, Career Pathways, and Career Development and Advancement. The inclusion and focus on cultural integrity in the Strategy is welcomed. However, it is still unclear how cultural integrity fits

into the broader discipline of cultural competence. Cultural integrity in the Strategy (APSC, 2020c) is defined as,

...improving and embedding the understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture in the workplace to support the development of culturally-safe workspaces and services, and creating a more inclusive Commonwealth public sector (p. 12).

As discussed above, in the literature and in practical application, confusion is common when attempting to determine what cultural competence means, resulting in numerous variations and/or alternate sub-elements of cultural competence being applied loosely. In the above definition of cultural integrity, we see this continued overlapping of understanding – a culturally safe work space. That is, a definition of culturally safe is missing from the Strategy. In practice, no one definition of cultural competence is used. The lack of this conceptual clarity for cultural competence is concerning for the following two reasons:

- 1) Multiple variations of cultural competence have led to a mixed interpretation of cultural competence and hence mixed understanding and value of what is meant as culturally competent practice in public administration.
- 2) Therefore, the ability to critically assess and measure culturally competent performance is largely absent.

It is time for diversity practitioners in the APS to reconsider their understanding of what Cross et al. (1989) proposed in their framework for cultural competence.

3.7.5 Cultural competence and ethics: an underutilised relationship

Ethics¹⁰ offers a revised platform to improve citizen legitimacy and trust in governments. The APS Values and APS Code of Conduct govern ethics in the APS. Value congruence through an improved understanding of ethics offers the APS an opportunity to revise its philosophy of workplace diversity, where cultural competence can provide a more

¹⁰ 'Ethics refers to the philosophical study of the concepts of moral right and wrong and moral good and bad, to any philosophical theory of what is morally right and wrong or morally good and bad, and to any system or code of moral rules, principles, or values' (Singer, 2021).

inclusive workplace value. Value congruence refers to how well an individual's values align with those held by organisations (Edwards & Cable, 2009). Boyd-Swan and Molina (2018) add that because values are representative of our preferences, standards, and expectations that inform our behaviours and attitudes, values become directly relevant to the study of cultural competence in institutions. This is particularly so for addressing individual biases in workplace behaviours. For example, Wells (2000, p. 193) noted that cultural values and beliefs become internalised and socialised through practices, resulting in an 'unconscious tendency toward ethnocentric behaviour'.

Alexander and Stivers (2014) explore the concept of race to help determine an outline of ethical administrative practice. They argue that race has been marginalised as irrelevant and counterproductive in scholarship resulting in longstanding policies and procedures with racist implications (Alexander & Stivers, 2014). This statement suggests value unity in the APS may be based on longstanding practices in the APS that are perhaps perpetrating (consciously or unconsciously) racist practices. If so, what are the ethical implications for the APS if it embraces a culturally competent paradigm? Whose values will guide public administration practice?

Alexander and Stivers (2014) maintain that professional ethics in public administration are inherently conservative, bounded by logic governed by formal rules and processes. The APS operates within a conservative administrative environment where shared administrative values are formalised to ensure compliance of its workforce. However, whose values are being relied upon to inform the policies and processes for ethical practice? Does a non-Indigenous senior executive share the same understanding of cultural diversity as those whose existence in the APS is directly attributable to race, such as people of colour who have been employed in an Indigenous-specific or identified position? The APS is a large organisation that genuinely strives to represent the broader Australian population. However, research recently published by Shirodkar (2019, p. 3) suggests that most Australian participants 'on average – regardless of background – hold an implicit bias against Indigenous Australians'.

As identified by Boyd-Swan and Molina (2018), a large body of work examines how well an individual's values align with organisational values, and the impact this has on cultural

competence of public administrators. However, the lack of formal measures in the APS to measure cultural competence means that drawing a causal link between value congruence and cultural competence is difficult to determine. Further still, the APS uses no shared understanding or definition of cultural competence, which only adds to this difficulty. Cram and Alkadry (2018) acknowledge the absence of a critical assessment of cultural competence and provide an option to address this gap that combines value congruence with virtue ethics.

Virtue ethics 'emphasizes the virtues, or moral character, in contrast to the approach that emphasizes duties or rules (deontology) or that emphasizes the consequences of actions (consequentialism) (Hursthouse & Pettigrove, 2018)'. Cram and Alkadry (2018) provide insight into how a future public service workforce can embrace cultural competence and ethics. Their positioning of cultural competence supports Cross et al.'s (1989) definition of cultural competence, a favourable and welcomed position that provides clarity and authority. Cram and Alkadry (2018) argue, as identified earlier by Denhardt and Denhardt (2000), for a service-oriented approach of theories and practices for cultural competence to improve service delivery. There is 'an argument that public administrators are ethically obliged to be culturally competent and that public service employees are suitably skilled in being culturally competent' (Cram & Alkadry, 2018, p. 522).

Molina (2015) in his research exploring the virtues of a public service, argues similarly to that of Cram and Alkadry (2018) noting the importance of virtues for public administration,

A virtue ethics approach rooted in the concept of a practice is a particularly helpful way of understanding public service values as a contextualized set of attitudes, skills, and behaviours that enable us to realize the goods, ends, and standards of excellence internal to the practice of public administration (p. 49).

He considers virtue ethics in a framework to consider how it can bring purpose to specific values (virtues) considered crucial to public service. He identifies a clear role for public administrators he identifies as a 'virtuous administrator', one that is a 'mediator; steward; magistrate; and advocate' (Molina, 2015, p. 66). In summarising his approach, he argues a virtue ethics framework can be a beneficial way of thinking about the role that public

service values play in the practice of public administration (Molina, 2015). While public servants bring their sense of what is morally right in performing their role, virtue ethics, as identified above, provide a way forward to consider a holistic moral perspective for bringing cultural competence into public administration. Further still, Alexander and Stivers (2014, p. 589) suggest integrating virtue ethics with a pragmatic philosophy can help to dissolve the tension between ‘what should we do’ and ‘how should we do it. Blessett (2018) claims that public servants as students, through self-reflection exercises, can know their racial identity and thereby are better able to address racism in their role as public servants.

The application of virtue ethics goes to the intention of cultural competence as it would apply to the individual. That is, the personal attributes an individual brings to their role instead of those attributes an organisation may add through a public servant’s performance of their role. Decision-making in virtue ethics is not a simple binary decision-making process. Rather as argued by Blessett (2018), decision-making falls along a continuum where administrations need to appreciate the difference of a diverse citizenry. Similarly, Cram and Alkadry (2018) also acknowledge the implications of decision-making, calling for public servants to think critically on the back of conscious development of what it means to be a virtuous public administrator. That is, being an effective public administrator, more often than not, involves critically reflecting cultural competence with ethics, as identified by both Blessett (2018) and Cram and Alkadry (2018). This relationship between cultural competence and ethics is fundamentally at the centre of engagement with Indigenous peoples, particularly in acknowledging the diversity of Indigenous nations across the country.

3.7.6 Leadership: moving beyond education

As highlighted above, cultural competence education is necessary to improve cultural competence in public administration, but alone it is insufficient. In APS practice, this statement is equated with the traditional role of cultural education only applying to individuals. The following discussion will examine the implications for leadership of taking responsibility to move beyond this conventional application of cultural competence education to a strategic application of cultural competence. Cultural competence implementation requires integration into all areas of the organisation, including quality

improvement processes, to ensure changes are measured and reported (Carrizales et al., 2016).

When defining cultural competence, Cross et al. (1989, p. 59) acknowledge that leadership has a 'significant role in the institutionalisation of cultural competence in a system or organisation' and not just in the ethics of individuals. Carrizales et al. (2016) add to this call by identifying the inclusion of cultural competency advocacy in codes of ethics, working groups, separate diversity initiatives, and accrediting standards. In their study of barriers to career progression for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the APS, Faulkner and Lahn (2019) also identified senior leadership's role in addressing the institutionalised sense of disconnect that exists in employees' minds between Canberra and state and regional offices. This sentiment is eloquently portrayed in the following excerpt from a research participant in the Faulkner and Lahn (2019).

There's always a disconnect. We had regional offices saying to state offices you don't understand us. State offices were saying the same back to the regional offices but the same thing will apply national office to state office and the same sort of hierarchy. So we have to develop systems, processes, relationships, communication channels and understand what the priorities are for us to work together because no one will know what's happening in every place. You need to have people that will represent the department in these regions and by the very fact that the regions are different, people's understanding will be different so yes, we don't understand each other (p. 21).

The above statement highlights not only the existence of organisational cultural restraints, it also suggests that leadership has a critical role in maintaining a clear and consistent sense of what Indigenous belonging means in regional locations for cultural competence. This requires leadership to drive a shared sense of unity and purpose between state and regionally based locations.

3.8 Gaps arising from the above literature review

3.8.1 Cultural competence

Assessing and measuring the effectiveness of cultural competence remains a major gap identified in the literature. Diverse views and applications of what constitutes cultural competence have added confusion in this regard. The vast bulk of cultural competence literature is located in the health and education sectors, where many variations of working elements of cultural competence are derived. The APS has contributed to confusion surrounding cultural competence as well. For example, in the *Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework* (APSC, 2015) (the Framework) does not provide any indication of what cultural competency means, despite being it being highlighted in the Framework. Instead, the Framework focuses on cultural capability, often referring to cultural capability, also without providing a definition of what cultural capability actually means.

The absence of a clear definition of cultural capability is a fundamental weakness in the Framework. This confusion in meaning goes to the Boyd-Swan and Molina (2018, p. 427) argument for ‘determining the degree of fit between the values of citizens and public administrators’ in determining value congruence. In this instance, there is little (if any) evidence to suggest that cultural competence from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective was incorporated in the framework’s design. This absence poses a fundamental question: whose value congruence underpins the Framework? Unfortunately, the answer suggests value congruence is that of non-Indigenous employees, the dominant ethical and cultural perspective within the APS Framework. Not only is the meaning of cultural competence not equally shared across the APS, but the APS’s guiding agency, the APSC, charged with responsibility for positioning the APS workforce for the future, also falls short in its understanding of cultural competence.

The lack of any overarching definition of cultural competence in the literature has continued to encourage confusion in both meaning and practice, which has translated into APS practice. This failure is likely due to not fully comprehending the purpose of cultural competence as an enabling framework to empower equity in diverse communities. Too

often in the APS, cultural competency has been mistakenly restricted to the limited practice of providing cultural awareness training. The APS has relied heavily on cultural awareness training for acquiring individual knowledge of Australian Indigenous cultures for APS employees. The application of cultural awareness training is delivered primarily through agency-specific initiatives with little or no ability to embed participant learning beyond individual learning outcomes. However, this absence presents an opportunity to institutionalise an Indigenous-led approach for cultural competence. Developing such an approach offers the opportunity to establish a baseline to assess future efforts when assessing APS culturally competent diversity practice. Sabharwal, Hijal-Moghrabi, and Royster (2014) go on to suggest cultural competence is an essential skill required to serve an increasingly diverse citizenry. It should be considered the fourth pillar of public administration supporting other pillars of effectiveness, efficiency, and social equity. The potential impact of viewing cultural competence as the fourth pillar of public administration would benefit from further academic discourse.

Alexander and Stivers (2014) posit a dearth of academic literature exists to show how race manifests in the decision-making of public administrators. They say this absence of scholarly debate has ‘contributed to maintaining long-standing policies and practices with racist implications’ (Alexander & Stivers, 2014, p. 578). Instead, they suggest an alternate ethical framework developed through a pragmatic approach is required. Future researchers must take up this challenge to view race from an Indigenous cultural perspective. Seeing race through the eyes of a minority perspective ensures that the colour blindness of the dominant culture does not impose academic boundaries. It is this change in perspective that Moreton-Robinson (2015, p. xvii) argues for when calling for an epistemological shift in Indigenous studies.

3.8.2 Unconscious bias

Unconscious bias remains a partly understood concept in the APS. Diversity and inclusion are core platforms adopted by the APS to ensure the APS reflects a diverse citizenry in its policies and practices. Therefore, understanding the impact of unconscious biases on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment requires a culturally competent perspective where race matters. Fortunately, the literature has highlighted the over-reliance

on unconscious bias training – with it being seen mistakenly as the all-providing panacea. Gender equality in public administration demonstrates this over-reliance. Williamson and Foley (2018, p. 355) raise the reliance on unconscious bias training warily in stating that its effectiveness ‘is likely to be limited unless accompanied by sustained interventions to address discrimination’. This view is supported further by Atewologun et al. (2018), who note additional research is required to determine the effectiveness of unconscious bias training. Apart from unconscious bias training, there is little else currently applied by the APS to offer insight into how hidden biases in Indigenous affairs impact workplace satisfaction for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. Using unconscious bias training to address APS Indigenous employment practice alone is not sufficient. Instead, what is required is a systematic approach, one that allows researchers and practitioners to look beyond individual practice to consider institutional practices. Finally, ethics in Indigenous affairs in the APS is potentially heading toward forced change. As community sentiment and political will grows for Indigenous recognition in the Australian Constitution, the APS will need to fully grasp what this recognition potentially means for Indigenous employment in the APS. Should this become a reality, a drive for practical responses from within Indigenous leadership will demand more significant political intervention from elected officials? Applying virtue ethics with a pragmatic research philosophy can offer a deeper appreciation for identifying where cultural competencies are required, allowing the APS to be better prepared to meet the future needs and expectations of all APS employees.

3.9 [Lessons from previous scholars](#)

This research builds on previous literature discussing Indigenous employment in the APS (Bargallie, 2020; Faulkner & Lahn, 2019; Ganter, 2016; Larkin, 2014; Lea, 2008). Lea (2008) and Ganter (2016) examined the impact of the public service bureaucracy on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the Northern Territory from two different but intertwined perspectives. Lea (2008) adopted an anthropological review of the complex, conflicting, and contradictory government bureaucratic response to health policy and service delivery in the Northern Territory. In contrast, Ganter (2016) applied representative theory to view the engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in public bureaucracy. That is, how agency and representation present competing and conflicting tensions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in performing their work, and if

any, what this tension means for developing a culturally competent APS workplace free from the adverse effects of unconscious bias. I sought to gain further insight into this perspective when capturing the voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and managers.

Larkin (2014) and Bargallie (2020), two Indigenous ex-APS employees and academic researchers, provided further critical insight into the lived experiences of APS employees, choosing to underpin their research through a lens of race. Larkin (2014), in his PhD dissertation on Indigenous employment in the APS, found that race, or dominance of white bureaucrats in positions of power, inherently disadvantaged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees from contributing.

Bargallie (2020), similarly to Larkin (2014), argues that contemporary racism in the APS prevents Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees from breaking through the glass ceiling of the SES. When Indigenous employees represent only 1.2% of the SES workforce (APSC, 2019), one has to consider the possibility of a racialised workforce. Bargallie (2020, p. 262) concludes in her response to dismantling racism in the APS, 'The colour-blind approach currently taken in the APS means that the institution turns a blind eye – that is it does not see racial difference – therefore does not see racism'. Here she is arguing that the dominant Anglo/Celtic structure of the APS is by default valuing colour through a non-Indigenous value base. For example, the lack of senior Indigenous executives in the APS means little opportunity is being extended to Indigenous employees because of a dominant racial view of capability. Indigenous perspectives are not being shared amongst non-Indigenous peers, and – despite the best of intentions – non-Indigenous SES employees are failing to see that as a result of a dominant Western cultural view of Indigenous employees, whiteness contributes to racism in the APS.

3.10 Concluding remarks

The discussion presented in this literature review illustrates that understanding and applying cultural competence effectively will be essential in addressing unconscious bias in the APS for Indigenous employment in the APS. Developing a deeper relationship with Indigenous employees will assist in achieving an APS that is capable of critically challenging its dominant position of race and in turn,

help to prepare the APS to meet the needs of a growing minority-majority Australian population more generally.

The methodology presented in **Chapter 4** applies an innovative mixed methods research approach adding to the body of research conducted into the workplace experiences of Indigenous employees in the APS. This is achieved particularly by applying a similar Indigenous epistemology to that adopted by previous Indigenous scholars Bargallie (2020), Larkin (2014), and Leitch (2017) where Indigenous employee voices are heard through an Indigenous-led research application.

Chapter 4 Methodology

4.1. Background

Before discussing the research methodology, it is essential that I briefly discuss the guiding epistemological lens applied to the research project. That is, the lens of Indigenous standpoint. As an Indigenous researcher where Indigenous employees are subjects of and are participants of the research, applying an Indigenous standpoint perspective seems necessary for objective analysis. Nakata. M (2007, p. 11) explains the purpose of adopting a standpoint 'as a method of enquiry... utilised by a diversity of marginalised groups whose accounts of experience were excluded or subjugated within intellectual knowledge production.' Indigenous research in Australia has its foundation in a western interpretation of what constitutes scientific knowledge. This knowledge has become fixed into a dominant western acceptance of Indigenous research, largely ignoring Indigenous input (D. Foley, 2003, p. 44). Accepted scientific principles of objective social science research in academia have not always regarded or accepted Indigenous Australians' knowledge base.

Suppose one can accept that an Indigenous Australian's way of perceiving reality is unique where experiences of being excluded or oppressed have existed within the production of intellectual knowledge. What is the implication of an Indigenous standpoint perspective for conducting scientific knowledge? Indigenous Standpoint Theory considers how 'knowledge and understanding of Indigenous Peoples is located within societal constructs' comparable to non-Indigenous people, which 'recognises the ongoing tensions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people go beyond priori assumptions' (Coates, Trudgett, & Page, 2021, pp. 1453-1454). Nakata. M (2007, p. 11), in describing an Indigenous standpoint as a method of enquiry clarifies that 'the standpoint of people's everyday experience is not the aggregation of stories from lived experience. It is not the endless production of subjective narrative to disrupt objectified accounts'. Rather it is where the knower (researcher) seeks to position oneself by maintaining objectivity that goes beyond simple observation or a simple perspective on the world, 'but is achieved by struggling to understand one's experience through a critical stance on the social order within which knowledge is produced' (Pohlhaus, 2002, p. 285).

As described by Pohlhaus (2002), D. Foley (2003), Nakata. M (2007), Coates et al. (2021) above, I sought to position myself as an objective researcher by applying an Indigenous standpoint to understand and appreciate the perspectives of research participants. Particularly I have sought to apply an objective scientific pursuit of knowledge, one that considers Indigenous employees' unique knowledge base within the dominant cultural setting of the APS. That is, how an Indigenous employee's perspective is framed because of the structures of working within the APS.

This chapter, integral to this thesis, details the mixed methods research methodology applied in gathering and analysing data. Mixed methods research refers to a research model combining quantitative and qualitative research elements. The purpose is to provide a more significant investigation and integration of research methodologies in arriving at a research outcome. The quantitative research element of this thesis applied the Australian Aboriginal Implicit Association Test as the basis for an Australian Public Service Unconscious Bias Survey (APSUBS). The qualitative research element consisted of applying a combination of thematic analysis of interview transcripts and a second qualitative data process of Modern Quality Function Deployment (Modern QFD). Section 4.6 provides an explanation of what Modern QFD is and its evolution from its predecessor QFD.

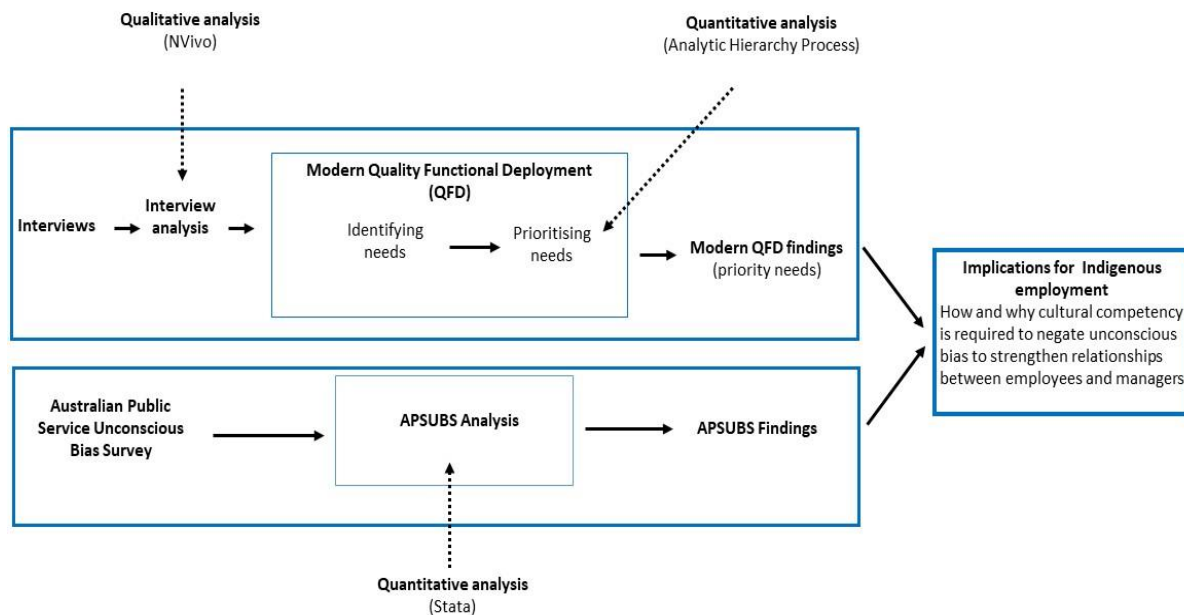
Though primarily qualitative, Modern QFD also utilises the quantitative element of the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP). Using AHP in Modern QFD, identified a series of quantifiable weighted prioritised workplace needs. The combination of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies provided a rich perspective in understanding how unconscious bias impacts the workplace experiences of Indigenous employees in the APS, and how cultural competence can seek to strengthen relationships between employees and managers in the APS workplace.

Combining both qualitative and quantitative research methods helped to apply the theoretical triangulation to provide a richer, more comprehensive understanding of unconscious bias. The objective of triangulation in research is to build into the research model the opportunity to view a social phenomenon from multiple points to improve accuracy (Neuman, 2014, p. 166), that otherwise might not be available from a quantitative or qualitative research model alone. Figure 4.1 provides an overview of the mixed method

research model adopted for this thesis, showing the parallel nature between both qualitative and quantitative data methodologies and the integration of the quantitative element of AHP within Modern QFD.

Figure 4. 1 Mixed methods sequential and parallel research design

n



The chapter is presented in two sections. The first section provides an overview of the recruitment process and data analysis applied for the quantitative research element of the APSUBS. A more detailed explanation and application of the APSUBS is provided in **Chapter 5**. This chapter's second and larger contribution discusses the qualitative analytic aspects of NVivo thematic and Modern QFD methodologies.

The source of qualitative analysis applied through both methodologies is a series of interviews conducted with Indigenous employees and managers. As an Indigenous researcher, I sought to apply an Indigenous epistemological and ontological

Identifying a list of priority-weighted workplace needs for Indigenous employees and managers for all three key research themes of unconscious bias, cultural competence, and workplace congruence is a primary research outcome of the qualitative research methodology applied in this thesis. Due to the technical nature of demonstrating the

analytic elements of Modern QFD in determining priority needs, an example of an actual comparison matrix applied in the research is used to demonstrate each step involved. This outcome forms an important basis for discussion found later in the thesis at **Chapter 6**, which presents and discusses the top three workplace needs for Indigenous employees and managers for each research theme.

4.2. Quantitative data analysis – Australian Public Service Unconscious Bias Survey

4.2.1. Recruitment of participants

Four APS government organisations participated in the research project: The Department of the Treasury, Department of Social Services, APSC, and Services Australia. During November and December 2020, 1,544 APS employees successfully participated in the APSUBS from a participating agency population of 35,792.¹¹ Participation was via a self-nominating process where employees were directed to a secure third-party online portal to register their participation. Due to privacy requirements, recruiting employee participation directly was not possible. Instead, an Invitation to Participate and Participant Information Sheet was distributed to employees via their respective agency's corporate area.

The APSUBS used the internationally recognised Implicit Association Test (IAT) administered by Project Implicit of Harvard University, more specifically, the Australian Aboriginal variant of the IAT¹². Eligibility for participating in the APSUBS was limited to APS employees with three or more years of service. This requirement was to ensure employees who completed the IAT had a minimum level of work experience as public servants on which to draw when completing the IAT. Employees with less than three years of service would potentially be biasing their participation on lived experience from outside the APS.

Participants included employees from all four participating APS agencies ranging from APS 3 classifications to SES level positions. Female employees comprised the most significant

¹¹ The population figure 35,792 represents the total number of ongoing and non-ongoing employees of all four participating agencies as at 30 June 2019 (APSC, 2020b: Table 78 & 79).

¹² For further information on project Implicit, refer to <https://www.projectimplicit.net/>

proportion of participants in the APSUBS at 67%. Table 4.1 below shows the demographics of APSUBS participants and the proportional comparison between APSUBS and APS.

Table 4. 1 Australian Public Service Unconscious Bias Survey participants

APSUBS Employee cohort	Female	Male	Total observations
Indigenous	178	58	236
Non-Indigenous	860	410	1270
Choose not to identify	-	-	38
Total	1038	468	1544*

Employee proportion	Female	Male	Total employees
APSUBS*	67%	30%	1,544
All four participating agencies combined	70%	30%	35,792
APS**	60%	40%	150,362

*Includes 38 participants who chose not to identify gender or Indigeneity.

**Source: APSC 2020b: Table 78 &79

4.2.2. Data analysis

One sample t-test of APSUBS, and AustUBS datasets provided for comparative analyses of mean IAT scores, referred to as the IAT score (dependent variable). Independent variables consisted of age, APS classification, APS length-of-service, gender, and Indigeneity. A t-test analysis of APSUBS data was conducted, allowing for the possibility of unequal variances across both Indigeneity and gender. IAT scores in the APSUBS were benchmarked to the broader Australian Unconscious Bias Survey (AustUBS) and the Community and Personal Service Sector from within the AustUBS, as being the most similar in structure to the APS. (See Chapter 5 for a fuller comparative analysis of APSUBS IAT data.)

4.3. Qualitative analytic analysis: Thematic analysis and Modern QFD

4.3.1. Two stage sequential qualitative data process

Qualitative data analysis for this thesis adopted a process of combining the two qualitative processes of NVivo thematic analysis and Modern QFD need analysis. The basis for both

processes was 37 semi-structured interviews. Applying NVivo thematic analysis first, identified references from interview transcripts were coded and analysed to identify various themes of interest. Following the completion of thematic analysis, the second qualitative data methodology of Modern QFD allowed a deep dive to identify stated and implied needs important to both Indigenous employees and managers. Once identified, these needs were ranked to show comparative levels of importance as an indicator of potential future focus for Indigenous employment.

4.3.2. Recruitment of interview participants

As similarly identified for respondents that participated in the APSUBS, privacy concerns of interview participants prevented a conventional random sampling process in recruiting interview participants. Instead, APS participants (Indigenous employees and managers) with three or more years of service were recruited as follows:

- a) each agency's corporate area was provided with an Invitation to participate in the research project and a Participant Information Sheet

corporate areas of each participating agency generated small random email blocks of eligible employees to be invited to participate in the research

- b) an Invitation to Participate and a Participant Information Sheet was emailed to employees identified in the small email blocks on behalf of the principal researcher until a sufficient number of interviewees were secured.

Initially, the plan was to attract 48 participants for interviews equally split between Indigenous employees and managers. However, 37 employee participants were secured, consisting of 20 managers (EL 1 and above classifications), and 17 Indigenous employees (APS 3 to EL 1 classifications).

Table 4. 2 shows the proportional representation of participants by Indigeneity and gender, as well as the proportional representation by gender for all four participating agencies combined.

Table 4. 2 Representation of interview participants by Indigeneity and gender

Cohort	Female	Male	Total
Indigenous employees	6	11	17
Managers*	11	9	20
Total	17	20	37
Participating Agencies			
Australian Public Service Commission	5	2	7
Department of Social Services	3	7	10
The Treasury	3	6	9
Services Australia	6	5	11
Total	17	20	37
Proportion			
Interviewed participants (n = 37)	46%	54%	
Gender proportion of all participating agencies (n = 35,792)**	70%	30%	

*Managers cohort included Indigenous managers that self-nominated, i.e. six of the manager cohort identified as Indigenous.

**Includes ongoing and non-ongoing employees.

Source: (APSC, 2021h; Department of Social Services, 2021; Department of the Treasury, 2021; Services Australia, 2021)

4.3.3. Interview guide

An interview guide provided a systematic method for conducting one-on-one semi-structured interviews, including nine questions and a series of prompts (see Appendix C). Semi-structured interviews typically follow a relaxed but somewhat structured logic, where questions are designed to make the participant feel comfortable in order to transition to key questions effectively. Key interview questions and accompanying prompts assisted with conducting interviews.

Examples of questions are:

- Please tell me a little about yourself, who you are, your experience and your current role in the Australian Public Service (introductory question)?
- What do you understand to be unconscious bias (transition question to allow probing for participant understanding of what they think is unconscious bias in order to provide a clear description of what unconscious bias actually is)?
- Do you think unconscious bias exists in the APS, why or why not (focused question)?

4.3.4. Semi-structured interviews

In late 2020, 37 interviews were conducted over a two-month period. All interviews with the exception of one, were conducted virtually via Microsoft Teams or through Zoom due to Covid-19 restrictions and were between 45 minutes and one hour in duration.

Given the disproportionate representation between female and male participants when compared to gender representation in all four participating agencies, findings presented in this thesis should be viewed as insights and not generalisations. Furthermore, three caveats should be noted. First, the depth and richness of the individual experiences of participants can never be fully represented in any form of data display. Second, power imbalances between Indigenous employees and manager participants in the APS, and the need to be mindful of APS values, may possibly influence experiences shared by participants at interviews. Third, the methodology applied to this research project is the first of its kind.

4.4. From thematic analysis to identifying priority needs – a six step process

Six processes form the analytic approach applied in arriving at the list of prioritised workplace needs. The six processes are:

- 1 NVivo thematic analysis
- 2 Modern QFD: qualitative data analysis
- 3 Modern QFD: developing the AHP matrices
- 4 Modern QFD: developing the AHP questionnaire
- 5 Modern QFD: determining geometric means
- 6 Modern QFD: AHP Hierarchy of Needs.

Each of these processes are now discussed.

4.5. NVivo thematic analysis

Thematic content analyses in NVivo requires constructing a hierarchy of nodes in which to classify various sections of text taken from interview transcripts (i.e., coded references). For the thematic analysis, I developed a node hierarchy of three cascading levels: parent, child, and grandchild nodes for each of the three research themes.

Each lower level of the node hierarchy is able to concord up to its immediate higher-level node within the coded hierarchy. For example, the parent node of 'unconscious bias' consisted of eight child-level nodes and, in turn, were further represented by a number of additional grandchild-level nodes. In this way, it is possible to trace how a particular subset of coded references contributes to its immediate higher-level node and ultimately up to its parent node in the hierarchy. This results in being able to identify a local and global weight for all grandchild nodes. How the hierarchy was created will now be discussed.

4.5.1. Creating the coding hierarchy in NVivo

Six broad steps provided the initial qualitative analyses utilising NVivo. In order these six steps were:

1. Identifying the parent node consisted of determining one node for each of the three key research themes: unconscious bias, cultural competence, and workplace congruence.
2. Carrying out an initial first reading of interview transcripts to identify a series of sub-themes for each parent node. These themes became the labels for child nodes.
3. Carrying out a second reading of interview transcripts to identify various references to assign to each child node. However, in order to categorise these references, a third level of node (grandchild node) was created. Individual references were then coded (assigned) to a grandchild node for each child node. In the process of identifying and assigning references, flexibility remained to remove or reassign identified references to grandchild nodes, or if required, to rename child nodes.

4. On completion of identifying and assigning references to grandchild nodes, a cluster analysis was performed comparing word similarity utilising Jaccard's similarity coefficient¹³ as a metric to measure word similarity¹⁴. A cluster analysis requires at least two nodes or relationships in order to work. Appendix D provides a summary of cluster analysis outcomes showing associated Jaccard's coefficients.
5. The final query applied to coded data in NVivo was a Matrix Coding query¹⁵. A matrix query enabled me to identify coding intersections between two lists of items. The matrix coding query consisted of listing employee and manager references to grandchild nodes, and identifying the number and origin of references allocated to each grandchild node.
6. Referring only to paired comparisons that returned the highest Jaccard's coefficients for each cluster analysis, corresponding references in the matrix query were recorded in a separate spreadsheet for Indigenous employees and managers. References identified in this step were later integrated with the process of Modern QFD (see below).

4.5.2. Determining Jaccard's coefficient for word similarity

The formula to calculate Jaccard's coefficient applied in NVivo is:

$$\text{Jaccard's coefficient} = (\text{the number in both sets}) / (\text{the number in either set}) * 100$$

In formula notation, it is written as $J(X,Y) = |X \cap Y| / |X \cup Y|$. The symbol $\cap$ represents the overlap of two different sets of data or the common shared data between both sets of data.

¹³ The Jaccard's Index, also known as the Jaccard's similarity coefficient (originally called *coefficient de communauté* by Paul Jaccard) is a statistic used for comparing similarity and diversity of sample sets (Edhlund & McDougall, 2019). That is, it provides a measure of similarity between two different sets of data ranging from 0% to 100%

¹⁴ Three different similarity metrics are offered in NVivo to measure the level of word similarity: Pearson correlation coefficient, Jaccard's coefficient, and Sørensen's coefficient. For further information refer to <https://help-nv11.qsrinternational.com/desktop/welcome/welcome.htm>.

¹⁵ A matrix query in NVivo allows the user to ask a range of questions about patterns in data and to gain access to that content. For example, comparing what different demographic groups have said about an experience, attitude, or issue. For further information refer to <https://helpnv11.qsrinternational.com/desktop/welcome/welcome.htm>

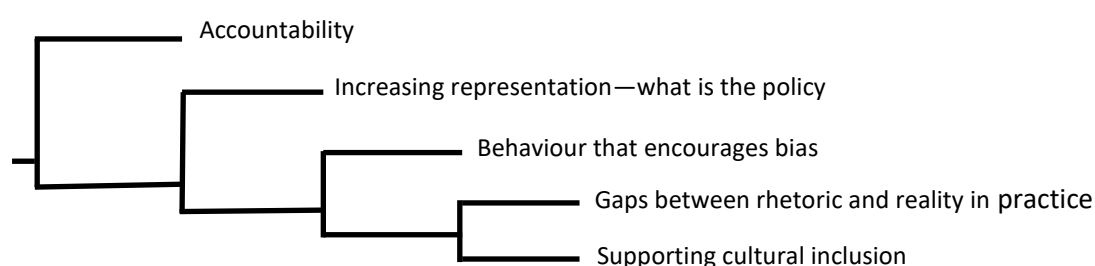
The symbol U represents the data in both sets of data not shared, that is, data only found in either data set.

The X and Y referred to in the above formula for determining Jaccard's coefficient are two grandchild nodes being compared to each other in the cluster analyses. The number of comparisons contained in the cluster analysis is determined by the number of grandchild nodes located under each child node. NVivo then displays the results of applying Jaccard's coefficient for word similarity in a cluster analysis in two forms:

- 1) As a dendrogram to show hierarchical relationships of compared nodes (refer Figure 4.2). The shorter the length of the lines on the dendrogram, the greater the order in which the cluster was determined. This would indicate a greater level of word similarity.
- 2) As a metric of Jaccard's coefficient to show the level of intersection between grandchild nodes compared.

Figure 4.2 shows an example of a cluster analysis dendrogram produced for grandchild nodes contained under the child node of Barriers for the parent node Cultural Competence.

Figure 4. 2 Dendrogram grandchild nodes clustered by word similarity



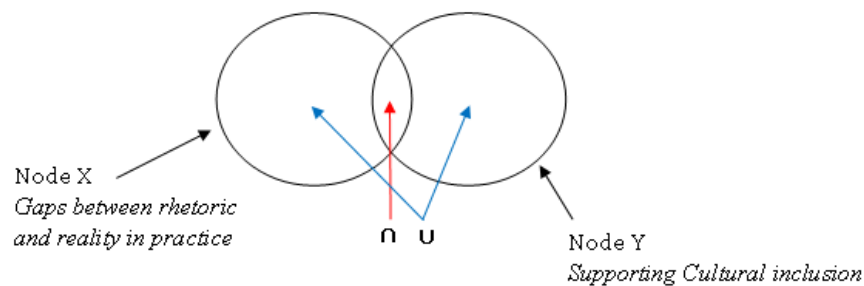
Source: Appendix D

The dendrogram in Figure 4.2 illustrates that the greatest returned word similarity was found in the comparison of grandchild nodes, *Gaps between rhetoric and reality in practice* and *Supporting Cultural inclusion*. Figure 4.3 shows the Jaccard's coefficients for word similarity for the above dendrogram.

Figure 4.3 Representation of Jaccard's coefficient between two grandchild nodes

Jaccard's coefficient = (the number in both sets) / (the number in either set) * 100

$$J(X,Y) = |X \cap Y| / |X \cup Y| = 0.23 \text{ (23\%)}$$



Source: Glen 2016

Figure 4.3 shows the proportion of words found in both nodes X and Y when applying Jaccard's coefficient metric for determining word similarity was determined to be 0.23, meaning 23% of words in both nodes X and Y were rated similar in each node.

4.5.3. Applying word similarity in a cluster analysis using NVivo

A cluster analysis is an exploratory technique, which can be visualised as a hierarchical dendrogram to show patterns of text, grouping sources or nodes that share similar words, and attribute values, and where the degree of similarity is depicted as sources or nodes appearing closer or further apart in the dendrogram (QSR International Pty Ltd, 2020a). However, in preparing a cluster analysis, the user must specify two elements – what to cluster by and what similarity metric will be applied. For the first element, word similarity was chosen over coding similarity and attribute similarity. The reason for choosing word similarity was to allow for words contained in all grandchild nodes assigned under their respective child nodes to be compared for similarity (i.e., how similar are selected nodes in terms of content coded). The second element requires the user to choose from one of three similarity metrics (Pearson, Jaccard's or Sørensen's coefficients) to determine a weighted metric for the selected cluster analysis. In this instance, Jaccard's coefficient was chosen as the preferred metric. Jaccard's coefficient is a statistic that measures the similarity of words between two data objects to determine which words are shared and which words are distinct (Karabiber, 2021). Calculated by dividing the number of words in selected grandchild nodes, the Jaccard's coefficient determines the size of the intersection between grandchild

nodes for word similarity. The larger the coefficient, the greater the word similarity between identified nodes.

4.5.4. Checking for inter-rater reliability of Nvivo coded references

A coding comparison query allows for comparing coding undertaken by two or more different coders of the same NVivo project. This process is an essential requirement to measure inter-rater reliability or the level of agreement between the two coders of the same NVivo project. NVivo provides two measures of inter-rater reliability or the degree of agreement between two coders when testing for reliability, that is, a percentage level of agreement, and a Kappa coefficient (QSR International Pty Ltd, 2020a). QSR International Pty Ltd defines proportional agreement as ‘the number of units of agreement divided by the total units of measure within the data item, displayed as a percentage’. Although the level of agreement shows the overall percentage of agreement or the effective proportion of agreement, neither considers the agreement that would have otherwise been expected to occur by chance (Sim & Wright, 2005). However, the Kappa coefficient considers the likelihood of the agreement between coders occurring by chance. Sim and Wright (2005, p. 258) explain that the Kappa coefficient ‘indicates the proportion of agreement beyond that expected by chance. That is, achieved beyond-chance agreement as a proportion of the possible beyond-chance agreement’. The Kappa coefficient is stated as,

$$(1) \quad K = \frac{\text{observed agreement} - \text{chance agreement}}{1 - \text{chance agreement}}$$

in formula notation this is,

$$(2) \quad K = \frac{P_o - P_c}{1 - P_c}$$

where P_o is the relative observed agreement¹⁶ of coded references among raters, and P_e is the hypothetical probability of chance agreement¹⁷, using the observed data to calculate the probabilities of each observer randomly seeing each category. If the raters are in complete

¹⁶ Observed agreement refers to the level of agreement both coders agree about which source content (coded references) should be coded at the same node (QSR International Pty Ltd, 2020b).

¹⁷ Chance agreement refers to the possibility two coders of the same NVivo project coding to the same node occurring by chance (QSR International Pty Ltd, 2020b).

agreement then $K = 1$. If there is no agreement among the raters other than what would be expected by chance (as given by P_e), $K = 0$.

As the Kappa coefficient calculation considers the likelihood of the agreement between coders occurring by chance, the Kappa coefficient can return a low measure even though the percentage agreement is high (QSR International Pty Ltd, 2020b). This is because of two possible reasons that concern how much of a source code has not been coded by both coder, and what actually was coded by either coder. QSR International Pty Ltd (2020b) explains how a Kappa coefficient can return a high measure,

If most of a source has not been coded at the node by either user, but each user has coded completely different small sections of the source at the node, then the percentage agreement between the users will be high. But since this situation would be highly likely to occur by chance (i.e., if the two users had each coded a small section at random), the Kappa coefficient is low. Conversely, if most of a source has not been coded at the node by either user, but each user has coded almost the same sections of the source at the node, then the percentage agreement between the users will again be high. But this situation would be highly unlikely to occur by chance, so the Kappa coefficient is also high.

The above two examples indicate why many researchers prefer the Kappa coefficient over the percentage agreement as a more useful measure of inter-rater reliability (QSR International Pty Ltd, 2020b). Sim and Wright (2005) also support the Kappa coefficient as an appropriate measure of reliability for both nominal and ordinal scale measurement, as with coding interview data. Consequently, a coding comparison analysis with an independent third party aggregating all nodes identified an inter-rater reliability Kappa coefficient of 0.40, which indicates fair to good agreement (see Table 4.3). QSR International Pty Ltd (2020a) provides the guide shown in Table 4.3 for interpreting the Kappa coefficients value when determining the inter-rater reliability measure.

Table 4.3 Interpreting the value of Kappa

Kappa value	Interpretation
Below 0.40	Poor agreement
0.40 – 0.75	Fair to good agreement
Over 0.75	Excellent agreement

Source: QSR International Pty Ltd (2020b)

Appendix E provides a copy of the data code book showing the complete parent/child/grandchild node hierarchy along with grandchild node definitions applied in performing an inter-rater reliability comparison in NVivo.

4.6. Modern QFD: Qualitative analysis

4.6.1. Building on NVivo thematic data analysis

Thematic analysis captured through NVivo comprised half the research project's qualitative data analysis. On its own, NVivo analysis could be considered sufficient for a standard interpretation when generally seeking to compare Indigenous employee and manager voices captured at interviews. However, the primary purpose of qualitative research in this thesis was to identify the genuine needs reflected in the perspectives of both Indigenous employees and managers perspectives for the three key research themes of unconscious bias, cultural competence and workplace congruence. The objective was to apply a process to quantify a series of weighted needs.

For this purpose, the multi-attribute tool of Modern QFD was adopted. The quantitative element of the AHP within the Modern QFD methodology provides the ability to derive and weight a series of prioritised pair-wise variables for each research theme of Unconscious Bias, Cultural Competence, and Workplace Congruence.

4.6.2. Evolution of Modern Quality Function Deployment

Modern QFD originated from the traditional methodology of QFD. QFD was designed to capture the voice of the customer (or client) and translate this voice into the development of products or services for improved profitability or functionality (Griffin, 1992). QFD is primarily a qualitative multi-attribute method and is defined as,

A customer-driven quality management system which incorporates the voice of the customer into appropriate company requirements at each product development stage, from product planning and process design to manufacturing and delivery, to create higher customer satisfaction for the product (Chan & Wu, 2002b, p. 24).

The application of QFD has being adopted widely with success in the manufacturing industry initially and expanded successfully to include the services sector. Testament to the level of success enjoyed by QFD is the fact that over 650 QFD-related publications were identified in a literature review of QFD spanning the manufacturing and services sectors (Chan & Wu, 2002a).

Criticism of QFD are well documented in the literature. Perhaps the most common criticism is that QFD methodology requires a complex process to collate and analyse large amounts of data sourced from customers, competitors, and cross functional teams etc. This has been identified as a major limitation requiring vast amounts of dedicated resources and time (Andronikidis, Jacques, Georgiou, Gotzamani, & Kamvysi, 2009). Central to this limitation is the collation and analysis of a series of quality tables referred to as House of Quality (HoQ) matrices to capture engineering design specifications the 'Hows', and customer need specifications 'Whats'. For the manufacturing sector, QFD traditionally uses four HoQ matrices for this process, whereas for services, this can be reduced to three (Gonzalez, Quesada, Picado, & Eckleman, 2004; Partovi & Corredoira, 2002; Pun, Chin, & Lau, 2000).

Capturing the voice of the customer is subjective, containing ambiguity and different meanings simply because not everyone will share the same perception of what a linguistic description means – making the setting of target values in HoQ subject to returning imprecise values (Andronikidis et al., 2009). In expressing their voice, customers will use language that is familiar to them and not necessarily language similar to service characteristics. This presents difficulties in translating customer demands into measurable service features (Chen, Chen, & Lin, 2004). Specifically, in identifying the level of importance for each customer and service characteristic, QFD uses absolute importance and assumes an absolute scale is available to that accurately representative data (Chuang, 2001).

The above limitations have driven new approaches to QFD methodology, one of which is Modern QFD. Modern QFD's methodology provides a more agile and structured adaptation of QFD, providing a sequential documented process to capture known and implied client needs. In this study, it involves capturing the voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and the voice of managers.

Modern QFD acknowledges that organisations want to maximise their investment in those service characteristics that will yield the greatest marginal return on investment. Five stages summarise the process of applying Modern QFD to the research project.

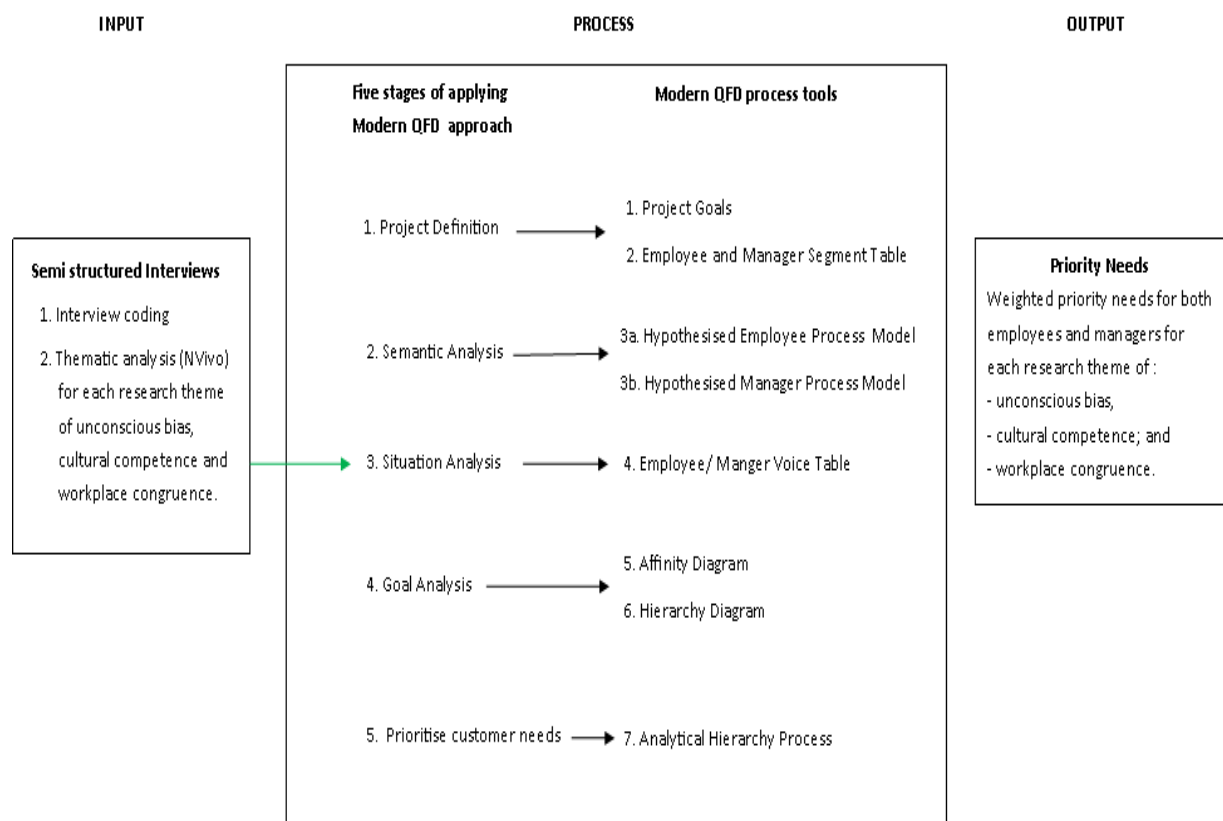
1. Project definition
2. Semantic analysis
3. Situation analysis
4. Goal analysis
5. Prioritising client needs.

In addition to the above five stages, two more additional stages are available: 'Project Strategy', and 'Downstream Deployment'. However, including these two final stages were beyond the scope of the present project. To pursue this further would require consideration and approval of individual government departments and agencies.

4.6.3. Integrating of NVivo data analysis with Modern QFD data analysis

Figure 4.4 illustrates how NVivo thematic analysis was integrated with Modern QFD data analysis in a framework of inputs, processes, and outputs.

Figure 4. 4 Integrating of NVivo analysis with Modern QFD process tools



Source: Mazur 2012 p. 5 for five stages of Modern QFD

Modern QFD applies a number of process tools in working through each of the five stages of Modern QFD to ultimately arrive at a hierarchy of stated and implied needs. Inputs consisted of NVivo thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews. The process consisted of working through the five stages of Modern QFD, applying a series of process tools designed to seek stated and implied needs expressed by both employees and managers. The output is a hierarchy of needs for each of the three research themes of Unconscious Bias, Cultural Competence and Workplace Congruence for weighting by managers and Indigenous employees.

The following section explains how Modern QFD process tool is applied to each of the five stages of Modern QFD, including how integration with NVivo thematic analysis was incorporated.

4.6.4. Modern QFD: Process Tools

Project definition

Two tools perform the function of defining the project for Modern QFD:

- the Project Goals Table, and
- the Employee and Manager Segments Table.

The project's three research questions (project goals) are:

1. Does unconscious bias exist in the APS, and if so, how is it experienced in the Australian Public Service?
2. To what extent is cultural competence supporting an inclusive Australian Public Service workplace?
3. To what extent is the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees congruent with the expectations required of APS employment?

The Project Goals Table (PGT) provides a high-level summary that strategises the research project's purpose and goals or success criteria. The PGT ensures each project goal is understood and adequately articulated in progressing through the Modern QFD process stages. Questions addressed in the PGT include identifying if a current measurement level is available and how this will be evidenced, determining what target level is required, when the target goal needs to be determined by, and who judges the project's success.

The Employee and Manager Segments Table (EMST) breaks each of the three project goals into separate sub-goal statements. Questions included in the EMST for each sub-goal include identifying information for each segment of employees, managers, and participating agencies related to the three project goals used in data collection. Typically questions such as: who, what, where, when, and how are applied for this purpose. Appendix F provides a copy of the PGT and EMST.

4.6.5. Semantic Analysis

A core principle of Modern QFD is capturing the voice of the client, in this instance employees and managers. Listening to the client's voice is not just to record what they say but also to analyse actual words. To help understand what they mean and why the words were said. Modern QFD refers to this process of capturing the voice of the client as 'Gemba' (Aktas & Demirel, 2019; Kabanize, 2022; Özdağoğlu & Salum, 2009). Gemba is a Japanese term meaning the 'real place', that is, the actual work environment that provides a richer environment in which to gather data as it is the place where the real work happens (Kabanize, 2022). However, due to the limited contact points provided in the research project's approved ethics protocol, conducting Gemba visits on-site with research participants was not viable. Instead, the Modern QFD process tool of Hypothesised Process Models for employee and managers were relied upon to help analyse and contextualise the role employees and managers perform in the APS. The objective here is to confirm what is known and not known in understanding the basic nature and structure of work roles in the APS.

Modern QFD allows Hypothesised Process Models to be developed by any research team member if sufficient knowledge exists of what the client does. In this instance, as a senior human resources (HR) practitioner in the APS, I developed Hypothesised Process Model for both employees and managers. A small group of three Indigenous employees and three managers individually validated the Hypothesised Process Models. This group was asked to review the models by adding to, changing, or deleting any proposed model element. All feedback received was summarised and incorporated into a final Employee Hypothesised Process Model and a Manager Hypothesised Process Model, which were used to guide probing questions when interviewing participants. A copy of the final Hypothesised Process Models for both Employee and Manager is available at Appendix G.

4.6.6. Situation analysis

Situation analyses seeks to understand what the client is trying to do (or unable to do), and where and when they try to do it by considering the obvious and spoken needs, as well as the hidden and unspoken needs (Mazur, 2012, p. 9). This is where NVivo thematic analyses derived from interview analysis was integrated into the process of Modern QFD. This step

requires developing and completing the Employee/Manager Voice Table complimenting the Hypothesised Process Models applied previously. The outcome of the Employee/Manager Voice Table is to identify individual stated and implied needs discerned from reference verbatim captured in thematic analysis. These need statements are articulated as a statement that would result in a direct benefit to either the employee or manager if achieved.

Completing the Employee/Manager Voice Table is summarised in the following process:

- Step 1: NVivo cluster and matrix analysis – Referring only to reference verbatim from paired comparisons returning the highest Jaccard's coefficients for each cluster analysis, record reference verbatim in a separate spreadsheet for both Indigenous employees and managers.
- Step 2: Determine the situation of Indigenous employees and managers – Reviewing reference verbatim recorded from Step 1 above, articulate what *tasks* and *situations* employees and managers are stating or implying. This process is conducted by reviewing each verbatim closely.
- Step 3: Determining needs – From Step 2, identify needs and articulate them into a need statement.

Step 3 performs a critical step in the situational analysis of the Modern QFD process. Needs are commonly expressed as: a statement or benefit to the client and focuses on the client not the product, and define value to the client by focusing on solving problems or identifying opportunities (Mazur, 2012, p. 9). An example showing how the Employee/Manager Voice Table is used to determine a need applying the above stated three steps for the theme of Unconscious bias is provided in Table 4.4.

Table 4. 4 An example of how situational analysis can identify needs

Task	Situation	Employee and manager narratives	Needs (effect)
<i>What job or task is the employee and/or manager trying to do?</i> I want to know I am working effectively with my peers	<i>What situation is the employee and/or manager in?</i> My work environment does encourage personal reflection	<i>What is wrong with the current state of affairs?</i> I am extremely time poor, I need to find time for understanding unconscious bias.	<i>Why is it required, what is the benefit?</i> I understand how unconscious bias can impact my decision-making

4.6.7. Modern QFD: Goal analyses

Creating the affinity diagram

This step in the Modern QFD process required organising needs identified from the previous process situational analysis (Section 4.6.6) into a hierarchy structure of primary, secondary and tertiary needs. An affinity diagram, also known as KJ Method, was applied after its inventor Jiro Kawakita. An affinity diagram organised all identified workplace needs into their natural relationships. The affinity diagram is completed as a brain storming exercise to group needs according to their affinity or similarity (American Society for Quality, 2022).

Modern QFD requests clients arrange needs taken from the ‘needs’ column of the Employee/Manager Voice Table into an affinity diagram. However, similar to the Hypothesised Process Model task discussed above, limited participant contact points in the research project’s approved ethics protocol prevented me from asking participants to complete the affinity diagram. Instead, following my initial construction of the affinity diagram, I sourced two observers with no connection to the research project to arrange all needs into the final affinity diagram structure. Both observers conducted the affinity diagram exercise silently and simultaneously as required by the Modern QFD’s approach. This process involved both observers vertically arranging a number of individual stated needs written on pieces of paper into individual groupings.

Creating the hierarchy structure

Creating the hierarchy consists of taking the grouped needs and arranging them into clusters based on similarity or likeness and positioning them within a hierarchy of needs (R. W. Saaty, 1987, p. 161). This process consists of taking the outcome of the affinity diagram exercise and rotating it 90 degrees horizontally to allow a more critical analysis of needs checking for structural problems within the hierarchy (Mazur, 2013, pp. 6-7).

The objective is to ensure the correct level of abstraction identified from the affinity diagram process is reflected in a full hierarchy structure. That is, reviewing the structure provided from the previous affinity diagram to look for any signs of missing or implied needs, overlapping needs, or wrongly grouped needs. For completeness of the hierarchy structure, all elements in one level (higher) must include all elements of succeeding levels (lower) as descendants (R. W. Saaty, 1987, p. 162). The result for the research project resulting in a three-tiered hierarchy of needs made up of primary, secondary, and tertiary needs.

Appendix H lists the completed AHP hierarchy diagram of all identified needs in table format for each research theme: Unconscious Bias, Cultural Competence, and Workplace Congruence.

4.7. Modern QFD – Prioritising client needs

4.7.1. Prioritising client needs by applying the Analytic Hierarchy Process

AHP has been validated and used effectively in numerous applications in decision-making where its flexibility has seen integration with other methods, including Modern QFD (Hepler & Mazur, 2007; Le Pira, Inturri, Ignaccolo, & Pluchino, 2015; Özdağoğlu & Salum, 2009; Vaidya & Kumar, 2006). (R. W. Saaty, 1987, p. 161)describes AHP as a ‘general theory of measurement... used to derive ratio scales or weights for a series of discrete and continuous paired comparisons’, which ‘may be taken from a fundamental scale that reflects the relative strength of preference’.

AHP uses a hierarchical cascading structure consisting of criteria and sub-criteria (or alternatives) to identify a number of alternatives in order of priority. This structural format is the primary process of AHP; that is, it takes a problem and breaks it down into an interconnected hierarchical structure of alternatives where elements can be compared and weighted to derive a prioritised list of alternatives. In doing this, AHP applies an eigenvalue¹⁸ approach to derive ratio scale priorities from pairwise comparisons (Vaidya & Kumar, 2006).

4.7.2. Constructing the AHP questionnaire

Following the outcome of determining the AHP hierarchy structure, pairwise matrices are constructed to reflect it. This process includes comparing needs at each level of the hierarchy in order to establish priorities for each pairwise comparison (Yadav & Jayswal, 2013). In order to assign a value for each pairwise comparison in the hierarchy, a value is assigned taken from a rating scale. The decision-makers, in this instance, were the research participants.

All interviewed participants were invited to complete an AHP questionnaire consisting of a series of AHP pairwise matrices where they could assign a value. Matrices varied in size from a two-by-two matrix up to a seven-by-seven matrix. An example of a three-by-three AHP pairwise matrix for the research themes of unconscious bias is provided in Figure 4.5.

¹⁸ Most commonly used in matrix equations, eigenvalues are a set of scalars associated with the system of linear equations to transform the eigenvector (BYJU'S, 2022a).

**Figure 4. 5 Constructing a three-by-three AHP questionnaire matrix (unconscious bias):
an example**

Goal: I am encouraged to develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of unconscious bias	Cultural competence capability is accepted as an ongoing process of development		All employees feel supported in committing to long-term capability-development		My agency adopts an open learning approach to understanding unconscious bias	
	Row	Column	Row	Column	Row	Column
Cultural competence capability is accepted as an ongoing process of development						
All employees feel supported in committing to long-term capability-development						
My agency adopts an open learning approach to understanding unconscious bias						

Note: The total number of row and column entries is equal to the number of returned questionnaires.

To complete the matrix, participants were provided with Saaty's fundamental nine-point scale (see Table 4.5) from which to assign their value for each pairwise evaluation comparison. In the example matrix provided in Figure 4.5, two comparisons are required and denoted by the orange arrows. Whether the participant voted the row or column variable as more important in relation to the other determined whether the participant placed their value taken from Saaty's scale in either the row or column box provided. Further explanation is provided at section 4.8.2.

Table 4. 5 Fundamental rating scale applied to needs

Intensity of importance	Definition	Explanation
1	Equal importance	Two activities contribute equally to the objective
3	Moderate importance of one over another	Experience and judgements moderately favour one activity over another
5	Essential or strong importance	Experience and judgement strongly favour one activity over another
7	Very strong importance	An activity is strongly favoured and its dominance demonstrated in practice
9	Extreme importance	The evidence favouring one activity over another is of the highest possible order of affirmation
2,4,6,8	Intermediate values between the two adjacent judgements	When compromise is needed, i.e. a rater is undecided on whether to apply the higher or lower bolded measure of intensity of importance.
Reciprocals	If activity <i>i</i> has one of the above numbers assigned to when compared with activity <i>j</i> , then <i>j</i> has the reciprocal value when compared with <i>i</i> .	
Rationals	Ratios arising from the scale	If consistency were to be forced by obtaining <i>n</i> numerical values to span the matrix

Source: Adapted from R. W. Saaty 1987 p. 163

4.8. Modern QFD – determining priority needs

4.8.1. Limitation

Out of the 37 participants who were interviewed, 19 returned completed questionnaires comprising nine Indigenous employees and 10 managers. For a small sample size of 19, it becomes important to determine the confidence one might have in drawing conclusions drawn from this study. That is, what is the statistical significance a sample size of 19 is able to detect (Brownlee, 2020)? To determine the statistical significance, a power analysis test is performed. Setting power at 0.8 and significance at 0.05 (typical values for each of those aspects of a hypothesis test), the question to ask is, what differences in weights between managers and employees can be detected with sample sizes that are approximately equal?

Utilising an online calculator for this scenario, the data will allow detection of a minimum difference in the weights between the two groups of about 0.7 (e.g., 0.9–0.2). This is quite a large difference, but as the number of eligible participants is small, this large difference presents as a limitation. Consequently, the final comparisons reported in this study should be considered as a case study providing insights into the perceptions of, and the differences between the perceptions of, Indigenous employees and managers, and not as

generalisations for the APS as a whole. Further research would be required to examine the perceptions of Indigenous employees and managers in the APS more fully.

4.8.2. Applying the Analytic Hierarchy Process to conduct pairwise evaluations

AHP applies an evaluation between each pairwise comparison. When making a pairwise evaluation, the question for participants becomes, which of the paired variables is preferred over the other? The only tricky part in this evaluation is considering which of the two paired variables presented in the row or column of the matrix is more important than the other. For example, suppose the row variable is determined to be more important than the column variable. In that case, the value chosen from the rating table is entered as an integer in the AHP matrix. If the reverse applies (i.e., the column variable is more important than the row variable), the value chosen from the rating scale is entered as a reciprocal (fraction).

To make the completion of the AHP questionnaire as simple as possible for participants when determining the pairwise comparisons, values chosen from the rating scale were entered as a whole number in the relevant row or column cell in the matrix. Where values were entered into column cells, these values were converted to their respective reciprocal value. Figure 4.6 shows an example of a completed matrix showing all values provided by Indigenous employees.

Figure 4. 6 Completed matrix (nine Indigenous employee responses)

Goal: I feel completely safe in a workplace that does not condone racial ignorance and apathy.	(A) I understand what white privilege means for minorities		(B) I can call out racism in the workplace without fear of retribution		(C) I feel strengthened and capable in responding to racist comments		(D) I work in an environment that condones racial comments in the workplace	
	Row	Column	Row	Column	Row	Column	Row	Column
(A) I understand what white privilege means for minorities								
(B) I can call out racism in the workplace without fear of retribution	7 7 6 5 5 5 9	0.14 1						
(C) I feel strengthened and capable in responding to racist comments	7 5 7 6 9 1	0.166 0.17 0.2	6 7 4 1	0.166 0.2 0.14 0.17 0.11				
(D) I work in an environment that condones racial comments in the workplace	5	0.166 0.5 0.14 0.14 0.33 0.2 1 1	5 1	0.166 0.5 0.2 0.14 0.17 0.2 1	6 5 9 1	0.166 0.2 0.14 0.17 0.25		

Note: The total number of row and column entries is equal to the number of returned questionnaires.
Source: Individual Indigenous employee AHP questionnaires

4.8.3. Introducing geometric mean

To consolidate all individual participant responses into one final completed matrix to determine one value from among multiple values, a geometric mean is applied. AHP allows for applying the geometric mean of a group of numbers when consensus cannot be obtained from among multiple values. A geometric mean is an average indicating the typical value of

a set of numbers by using the product of their values instead of the arithmetic mean, which uses their sum. 'In other words, the geometric mean is defined as the n th root of the product of n numbers' (BYJU'S, 2022c). The formula for a geometric mean is,

$$\sqrt[n]{x_1 x_2 \dots x_n}.$$

4.8.4. Applying geometric mean to consolidate AHP questionnaire responses

In order to aggregate all pairwise comparisons evaluations, values are aggregated by applying the geometric mean to determine the importance levels of needs and their categories. This process requires two separate steps. First, the geometric mean of all combined responses, as introduced in the previous section, is calculated in Excel. For example, referring to the first pairwise comparison shown in Figure 4.6 (*'I can call out racism in the workplace without fear of retribution compared with I understand what white privilege means for minorities'*), resulted in a geometric mean value equalling 3.30¹⁹.

The second step is to record the resulting geometric mean value of 3.30 into the AHP matrix (see bolded red value Figure 4.7) followed by determining the reciprocal value of the geometric mean, and recording this value in the corresponding column cell of the AHP matrix as shown below and to the left of the light pink shaded cells (see bolded blue value) in Figure 4.7. These results from 'ratio-scale priorities' and are also known as the '[right principle] eigenvector of the decision matrix to closely approximate priority' (Mazur, 2012, p. 12).

¹⁹ Excel applied the following command incorporating all nine returned row and column values as follows
`=GEOMEAN(7,7,6,5,5,5,9,0.14,1) = 3.3`

Figure 4. 7 Final geometric mean

I feel completely safe in a workplace that does not condone racial ignorance and apathy.	(A) I understand what white privilege means for minorities	(B) I can call out racism in the workplace without fear of retribution	(C) I feel strengthened and capable in responding to racist comments	(D) I work in an environment that condones racial comments in the workplace.
(A) I understand what white privilege means for minorities	1	3.30	1.61	0.43
(B) I can call out racism in the workplace without fear of retribution	0.30	1	0.63	0.42
(C) I feel strengthened and capable in responding to racist comments	0.62	1.60	1	0.72
(D) I work in an environment that condones racial comments in the workplace.	2.31	2.39	1.38	1
Total	4.23	8.29	4.62	2.57

Note: Comparing a variable with itself will always return a value of 1 as shown in light pink highlighted cells.
Source: Individual Indigenous employee AHP questionnaires

4.8.5. Process of normalising values to determine the priority vector

Following the determination of ratio scale priorities, AHP requires all priorities to be normalised. Normalising values of multiple decision-making points (e.g., multiple participants) allows the user of AHP to determine a common numeric range/scale in order to allow for aggregation of all values into a final score (Vafaei, Ribeiro, & Camarinha-Matos, 2016). In other words, the priority vector. A priority vector has two meanings. First, it provides a numerical ranking among alternatives indicating an order of preference. Second, the order of preference should reflect preference intensity as indicated by ratios of numerical values, remaining unique within a positive multiplicative constant (T. L. Saaty, 2003). Normalising values is completed by applying the Row Average of Normalised Columns (or RANC) method.

To normalise all column values in a matrix using the RANC method, three broad steps summarise what is required. First, determine the row average of all geometric and reciprocal values in the matrix. Second, sum all normalised row values. Third, determine the

row average (priority vector) for all rows. How these three steps are applied in calculating the priority vector is explained next.

4.8.6. Calculating the priority vector

The comparison matrix in Figure 4.6 is used as an example to compute the priority vector, (normalised eigenvector²⁰) of the matrix. The priority vector shows the relative weight between the variables compared in the matrix (Teknomo, 2006). For ease of explanation for the remainder of this section, Figure 4.7 is reproduced in a simple matrix format with capital letter identifiers replacing actual worded variables (see Figure 4.8).

Figure 4. 8 Simplified version of Figure 4.7 summed

	A	B	C	D
A	1	3.30	1.61	0.43
B	0.30	1	0.63	0.42
C	0.62	1.60	1	0.72
D	2.31	2.39	1.38	1

The next step is to normalise values shown in Figure 4.8 by applying the RANC method. This is completed by taking each value in column A, B, C and D and dividing each value by its column sum value to arrive at a normalised value. The sum of each normalised column equals 1. The results are shown in Figure 4.9.

²⁰ 'An eigenvector of a square matrix is defined as a non-vector in which when a given matrix is multiplied, it is equal to a scalar multiple of that vector' (BYJU'S, 2022b). That is, an eigenvector is a required representation of priorities found within a positive reciprocal pairwise comparison matrix.

Figure 4. 9 Normalised columns applying RANC method

					Normalised columns					
	A	B	C	D		A	B	C	D	Sum
A	1	3.30	1.61	0.43	A	0.24	0.40	0.35	0.17	1.15
B	0.30	1	0.63	0.42	B	0.07	0.12	0.14	0.16	0.49
C	0.62	1.60	1	0.72	C	0.15	0.19	0.22	0.28	0.84
D	2.31	2.39	1.38	1	D	0.55	0.29	0.30	0.39	1.52
Sum	4.23	8.29	4.63	2.57	Sum	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	4.00

Once the RANC method has been applied and completed, it is now possible to determine the priority vector for each row. Referring to the matrix of normalised columns (Figure 4.9), this is completed by taking the row sum value for A, B, C, and D and dividing it by the sum total to arrive at the priority vector for each of A, B, C, and D. The result is shown in Figure 4.10.

Figure 4. 10 Determining priority vector

					Normalised columns	
	A	B	C	D	Sum	Priority Vector
A	0.24	0.40	0.35	0.17	1.15	0.29
B	0.07	0.12	0.14	0.16	0.49	0.12
C	0.15	0.19	0.22	0.28	0.84	0.20
D	0.55	0.29	0.30	0.39	1.52	0.38
Sum	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	4.00	1.00

The normalised principle eigenvector becomes the priority vector. As the principle eigenvector is normalised, the sum of all priority vectors is equal to 1.

4.8.7. Requirement for matrices to be consistent

After normalising all column values to determine the priority vector, determining the consistency value of the matrix is required. At the centre of determining the consistency of a matrix is the transitivity assumption. This assumption holds that if a person A prefers A to B,

then that person should prefer A to C. This is the fundamental comparison discussed earlier in this section where employee and manager comparisons are being captured and summarised. To perform this calculation, AHP provides a method called the Consistency Ratio (CR), where a near consistent matrix meets AHP criterion requirements in order to be used for decision-making.

AHP allows for a CR tolerance of 10 %. Any value above 10 % inconsistency is generally held to be unacceptable for decision-making. The reasoning behind AHP allowing a 10 % inconsistency tolerance is explained below by R. W. Saaty (1987).

The priority of consistency to obtain a coherent explanation of a set of facts must differ by an order of magnitude from the priority of inconsistency which is an error in the measurement of consistency. Thus, on a scale from 0 -1, inconsistency should not exceed 0.10 by very much. Note that the requirement of 10 % should not be made much smaller such as 1 % or 0.1 %. The reason is that inconsistency itself is important, for without it new knowledge which changes preference order cannot be admitted. Assuming all knowledge to be consistent contradicts experience which requires continued adjustment in understanding. Thus the objective of developing a wide ranging consistent framework depends on admitting some inconsistency (p. 172).

A CR above 10% requires the user to revise the subjective judgement informing the construction of the non-normalised comparison matrix (e.g. Figure 4.6) to look for potential errors. If after revising the subjective judgements the CR remains above the 10% threshold, either the matrix is removed from the AHP decision-making process, or it is used but noted with limitations for decision-making. For this thesis, all AHP matrices were found to fall within the allowable CR tolerance of 10 %.

4.8.8. Determining consistency

Determining the consistency of a comparison matrix is calculated by applying the following formula $CR = \frac{CI}{RI}$. The element *RI* refers to the Random Consistency Index.

First though, determining the Consistency Index or CI is required. The CI is calculated through the following formula, $CI = \frac{\lambda_{\max} - n}{n - 1}$, where Lambda max ($\lambda_{\max}$) refers to the average of all weighted sum elements by priority vector for each weighed criteria, and n equals the number of rows (or columns) in a comparison matrix.

The CR is determined by comparing the CI with the appropriate set of numbers identified from a Random Consistency Index developed by Saaty, which he derived from a random sample size of 500 in a random generated reciprocal matrix using the scale 1/9, 1/8..., 1, ...8, 9 (R. W. Saaty, 1987, p. 171). Saaty's random consistency index for checking inconsistency is provided in Table 4.6 below.

Table 4. 6 Random Index table for checking inconsistency ratio

n	3	4	5	6	7	8
RI	0.58	0.9	1.12	1.24	1.32	1.41

Note: n = size of matrix and RI = Random Index

Source: R. W. Saaty 1987 p. 171

4.8.9. Demonstrating how to determine the Consistency Ratio

To identify the CI, one must first determine the value for Lambda max. Determining Lambda max, requires two steps. First, all values in the non-normalised pairwise matrix are multiplied by their corresponding priority vector (criteria weight) to determine their weighted value. Next, all weighted values (Sum/row average or Priority vector) are summed and averaged. The result is the value of Lambda max. With Lambda max now determined, the CI can be calculated as follows.

$$\begin{aligned}
 CI &= \frac{\lambda_{\max} - n}{n - 1} \\
 &= \frac{4.152 - 4}{4 - 1} \\
 &= 0.05
 \end{aligned}$$

With the value of CI determined to be 0.05, now all that is required is to calculate the CR. The value for RI is taken from the Random index table identified at Table 4.6 above. As there is four rows on the comparison matrix, the RI value is 0.9.

$$CR = \frac{CI}{RI}$$

$$CR = \frac{0.05}{0.9}$$

$$CR = 0.56 \text{ (5.6 \%)}$$

$CR = 0.56$, which is $< 10 \%$ (*Thus accepted to be used in decision making*)

Figure 4.11 shows the values for Lambda max, inconsistency index and inconsistency ratio for the worked example of Figure 4.6 through to Figure 4.10.

Figure 4. 11 Determining Lambda max, inconsistency index and inconsistency ratio

Non-normalised columns					Priority Vector						Sum	Sum/row average
	A	B	C	D		A	B	C	D			
A	1	3.30	1.61	0.43	0.29	A	0.29	0.40	0.34	0.16	1.19	4.15
B	0.30	1	0.63	0.42	0.12	B	0.09	0.12	0.13	0.16	0.50	4.08
C	0.62	1.60	1	0.72	0.21	C	0.18	0.20	0.21	0.27	0.86	4.11
D	2.31	2.39	1.38	1	0.38	D	0.66	0.29	0.29	0.38	1.63	4.28
Sum	4.23	8.29	4.63	2.57	1.00						Lambda max	4.15
											Inconsistency Index	0.05
											Inconsistency Ratio	0.06

4.9. Modern QFD: Representing prioritised needs in a hierarchy

The purpose of determining priority needs through AHP, as discussed above, is to decide where effort in commitment of time and resources should be best placed in delivering the greatest benefit, that is, where greatest marginal return of investment is most likely. Table 4.7 below shows the number and distribution of needs across all three research themes.

Table 4. 7 Distribution of needs hierarchy

Hierarchy level	Unconscious bias	Cultural competence	Workplace congruence	Total
Primary	5	4	5	14
Secondary	12	8	14	34
Tertiary	52	38	72	162

Source: Appendix H

Table 4.7 shows that applying the methodology of QFD resulted in identifying a total of 162 needs distributed across all three research themes. On their own, all 162 needs do not provide any intelligence in aiding decision-making. AHP provides this decision-making ability by allocating all 162 needs in a cascading three-tiered hierarchy – primary, secondary, and tertiary level needs. This hierarchy is constructed by taking all primary, secondary, and tertiary priority vector values and calculating their respective local and global priority weighting. Once this has been completed, it is possible to arrange needs into a hierarchy of needs linking primary with secondary, and secondary with tertiary level needs. The last step required is to rank all 162 needs to provide decision-makers with indications of where need is greatest.

Due to the large size of the hierarchy of needs generated in this case study, it is not practical to provide a copy of the completed need hierarchy to demonstrate the distribution of needs. Instead, Figure 4.12 shows the need hierarchy for the top 10 needs identified by Indigenous employees for the research theme of unconscious bias.

Figure 4.12 Indigenous employees top 10 unconscious bias workplace needs

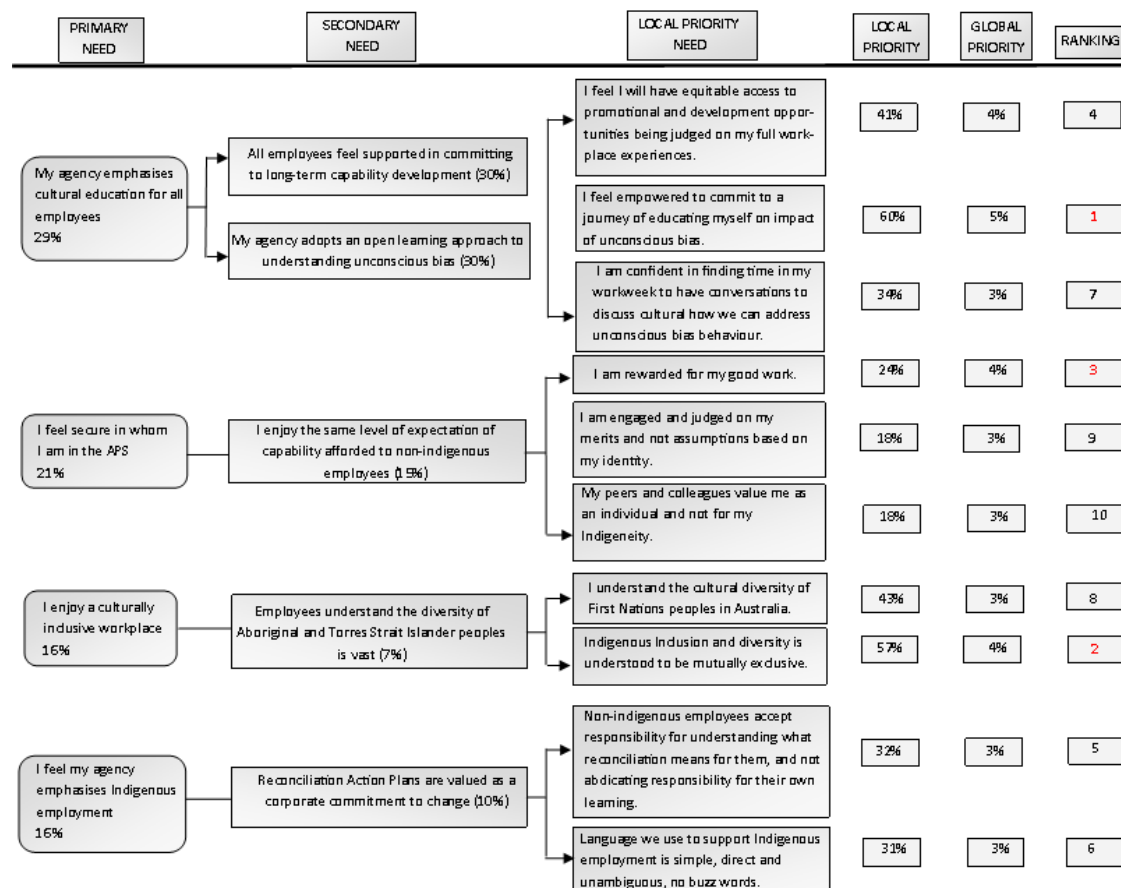


Figure 4.12 shows four primary level need categories, while five secondary level sub-need categories capture the top 10 tertiary-level needs for the theme of unconscious bias identified by Indigenous employees. Furthermore, the top three tertiary level needs of:

- *I feel empowered to commit to a journey of educating myself on impact of unconscious bias*
- *Indigenous Inclusion and diversity is understood to be mutually exclusive; and*
- *I am rewarded for my good work*

indicate where decision-makers should focus their response in addressing unconscious bias in the APS workplace. A further detailed explanation of findings provided in Figure 4.13 is provided in **Chapter 6**. In Chapter 6, manager and Indigenous employee narratives are identified for each of the top three priority needs to help tell the story behind the importance associated by managers and Indigenous employees to each top three priority need.

4.10. Concluding remarks

The methodology discussed in this chapter combining both NVivo thematic and Modern QFD analysis of interview transcripts provided a unique, thorough, and systematic means in which to identify a series of needs for both Indigenous employees and managers. The outcome of this resulted in being able to weight and prioritise all identified needs, i.e., to determine which needs ultimately demand the greatest attention.

In the following chapter (**Chapter 5**), attention turns to the quantitative research element of unconscious bias. This consists of a case study of unconscious bias in the APS that identified a number of implications for Indigenous employment. The basis of analysis and findings of the case study in Chapter 6 is an online Implicit Association Test introduced at Section 4.2.

Chapter 5 A case study of unconscious bias in the Australian Public Service: Insights for Indigenous employment.

5.1 Background

Previous research into Indigenous employment has provided insight into the workplace experiences of Indigenous employees in the APS. This body of work shows that Indigenous employee access to career and developmental opportunities is not equal to that of non-Indigenous employees in the APS. Despite considerable efforts to address these imbalances, there remains a lack of representation in senior ranks and overrepresentation in lower APS levels. This suggests that something more fundamental may be influencing the career aspirations of Indigenous employees in the APS – unconscious bias. This chapter seeks to understand how unconscious bias can impact the career aspirations of Indigenous employees, which may help explain why Indigenous employees report experiencing ongoing stereotyping, pigeonholing, and discrimination.

Drawing on a case study of unconscious bias levels in the APS captured through the Australian Aboriginal Implicit Association Test (IAT), findings suggest gender equality remains a concern for women's career prospects, particularly for Indigenous women – when two-thirds of Indigenous employees in the APS are women. Additionally, age and length of service provide further insights into the implications for a workplace free of discrimination and prejudice. For example, for Caucasian Australians, males have a higher preference level for Caucasian Australians than females across each successive age category. In this chapter, I compare results from the current study with those results found in an Australian study reported by Shirodkar (2019). The basis of both studies was the Australian Aboriginal IAT administered by Project Implicit²¹. Arguably most important for the APS will be the need to convince senior managers to accept and act on the discriminatory effects of unconscious bias in Indigenous employment. Any policy response will need an enhanced understanding

²¹ Project Implicit is a non-profit organisation operating out of the USA who is committed to educating the public about bias through a 'virtual laboratory' for collecting data via an online tool. Data is collected by Project Implicit by participants completing an online IAT. The IAT attempts to measure an individual's level of bias preference in favour of one group when compared to another.

of unconscious bias, including a broader knowledge of Indigenous culture and gender equity in the APS. The framework presented at the end of this chapter offers an opportunity to revisit the effectiveness of unconscious bias training for the APS.

5.2 Introduction

According to the Reconciliation Barometer 2020, 60% of Indigenous Australians agree that Australia is a racist country, with 52% experiencing at least one form of racism in the last six months (Reconciliation Australia, 2020, p. 5). Examples from Australian literature shows negative perceptions and attitudes towards Indigenous Australians continue to contribute to racism (Brookman & Wiener, 2016; Pedersen, Dudgeon, Watt, & Griffiths, 2007; Ramjan, Hunt, & Salamonson, 2016; Shirodkar, 2019). For example, Brookman and Wiener (2016) conclude that community perceptions of Indigenous Australians significantly predict punitive attitudes in determining Indigenous Australian incarceration rates. Negative attitudes towards Indigenous Australians have implications for post-colonial institutional frameworks in messaging portrayed by the media in Australia.

In examining participants' negative attitudes towards Indigenous Australians, Pedersen et al. (2007) reported similar findings. They found participants who held false beliefs like 'Money (is) handed freely for attending funerals' or 'They seem to get a lot of handouts, houses, cars, money for going to School' held considerably more negative attitudes towards Indigenous Australians than those who did not (Pedersen et al., 2007, pp. 88-90). The authors found a significant minority of participants believed Indigenous Australians receive special treatment compared to non-indigenous Australians. This belief was significantly related to negative attitudes, with more than one-third of participants indicating a negative view of Indigenous Australians (Pedersen et al., 2007).

Ramjan et al. (2016) explored predictors of negative attitudes towards Indigenous Australians in a large Bachelor of Nursing program in Western Sydney. They found that predictors for negative attitudes existed for domestic and international students but with notable differences. The media provides a more substantial

influence on negative attitudes for international students, but this is not surprising when international students' primary source of knowledge about Indigenous peoples is primarily influenced by what they see and hear in Australian media (Ramjan et al., 2016, p. 205). This level of media influence is concerning as Stoneham, Goodman, and Daube (2014, p. 4) reported over 70% of Australian media-related articles covering Australian Indigenous health issues are portrayed negatively. However, for domestic-born students, predictors of negative attitudes differ somewhat.

While media and school environments play a significant role in public perception of negative attitudes, they do so more in a subtle form of prejudice (Ramjan et al., 2016). This reference to 'subtle' (racism) was also identified by Larkin (2014) in his research into the employment experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the APS. The reference to 'subtle' expressed by Larkin (2014) and Ramjan et al. (2016) is concerning. If prejudice and/or racism is perpetrated through subtle expressions of the media and workplace behaviour, then as Larkin suggests, a more insidious issue confronts society. That is, 'everyday' influences and/or 'social relation dynamic' between Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees materialising in racialised forms to produce circumstances to encourage Indigenous employees to resign from employment (Larkin, 2014, p. 49). This is particularly concerning if negative attitudes contribute to or even potentially reinforce already negatively held views of Indigenous Australians.

Finally, as Shirodkar (2019) identified in his analysis of the Australian IAT dataset, most Australian participants 'hold an implicit bias against Indigenous Australians' (Shirodkar, 2019, p. 3). All examples show that negative attitudes toward Indigenous Australians in Australia exist. They impact how others perceive Indigenous Australians in everyday interactions, whether in society generally or in the workplace.

The public administration and safety sector is one of the country's largest employers of Indigenous Australians (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare,

2021). Over 5,000, or 3.5% of the total APS workforce, in the APS, are Indigenous Australians (APSC, 2021e). For the APS, I argue now is the time to look inwards to reflect on its understanding of unconscious bias critically to gain a deeper understanding of how implicit attitudes may lead to manifestations of prejudice and discriminatory behaviour. Doing so will only add value in building a deeper appreciation of diversity and inclusion in the workplace where a fuller relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait employees enhances the APS as an employer of choice, and strengthens the APS in delivering services for Indigenous citizens.

5.3 Overview

This chapter presents the findings of a case study of implicit bias of 1,544 APS employees captured in an Australian Aboriginal IAT, which I will refer to as the APSUBS. The structure of this chapter has seven sections.

First, I revisit what unconscious bias is followed in the second section with a brief discussion of significant criticisms of the IAT found in the literature. In the third section, I discuss some limitations of the IAT, particularly the difficulty of Aboriginal identity in a test like the IAT. Next, I discuss the APSUBS methodology. In the fifth section, I present the APSUBS findings where I control for gender, APS classification, Indigeneity, age, and length-of-service in the APS. The sixth section discusses previous Australian research identifying unconscious bias concerns in the APS. Lastly, I bring together the APSUBS and Australian-based research findings, highlighting gender equality as a priority concern for the equitable advancement of Indigenous employees in the APS. This section offers a new framework to reposition how unconscious bias training can be applied in the APS.

5.4 What is meant by unconscious bias?

‘Unconscious bias’, also known as ‘implicit bias’, can be regarded as the social stereotypes that affect our understanding, influencing our actions and decisions of others in an unconscious manner (Navarro, 2019). Understanding how implicit social cognition operates

in the human mind is necessary for understanding how unconscious bias is brought into being.

Social cognition can be thought of as how social information is explained, saved in memory, and recalled from memory as critical to understanding how we perceive and interact with others around us (Hunt, Borgida, & Lavine, 2012). How we make sense of the social world around us is influenced by myriad explicit factors such as our relationships and upbringing and implicitly through unconscious processes unaware to us. As Greenwald and Banaji (1995) introduced, implicit social cognition describes cognitive processes outside our conscious awareness or conscious control through social psychological constructs of attitudes, stereotypes, and self-esteem resulting in automatically activated evaluation. I will now briefly discuss implicit attitudes and social stereotypes before discussing how both constructs can manifest as actions or judgments of unconscious bias.

Implicit attitudes can be thought of as a memory that links an object (someone or something) and feelings or thoughts toward that object (Zimmerman, 2012). Similarly, Greenwald and Banaji (1995) posit that an implicit attitude exists when an existing attitude is unknowingly projected onto an original object. An implicit attitude projected onto someone or something because of internal or external stimuli unconsciously causes an automatically activated association in our minds. Importantly, we do not need to believe the association to be valid (Hunt et al., 2012). An example of an implicit attitude might be someone who is regularly exposed to negative ideas about people of colour and alcohol consumption. Consciously this person might disagree with the negative ideas maintaining a positive attitude concerning people of colour and their alcohol consumption. This negative information, as we will see shortly, may be stored subconsciously as associations between people of colour and alcohol consumption.

Social stereotypes refer to how we group our expectations of others into structures that we attribute to people belonging to specific social groups (Hunt et al., 2012). When we apply social stereotypes, we over-generalise beliefs about certain people or social groups. Stereotypes allow us to respond quickly; we apply mental shortcuts to situations based on similar experiences. However, social stereotypes ignore differences between people and social groups; what we think about people may not be true (McLeod, 2015). Implicit

stereotypes are considered to be 'introspectively unidentified (or inaccurately identified) traces of past experience that mediate attributions of qualities to members of a social category' (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995, p. 15). As similarly identified for implicit attitudes, this basis of false assumptions originates outside conscious cognition.

Implicit social cognitive processes operating outside our conscious awareness through social psychological constructs like implicit attitudes and implicit stereotypes can lead to forming in our minds as unconscious bias. The manifested action or judgment, as a result, can lead to discrimination, prejudice, or racism. Returning to the belief about the relationship of people of colour and alcohol consumption example above, consider the following scenario. You have been asked to convene a recruitment exercise for a position in your firm. You recognise the applicant at the interview as being from the group you observed drinking previously. You associate the applicant as an alcoholic, and your implicit stereotype immediately blocks your ability to assess the applicant's ability fairly. As a result, the applicant is unsuccessful. Later on, you find out the applicant is a non-drinker, and at the time you observed the group they were actually there to collect a family member to take home. This result is a direct form of prejudice and discrimination born from an implicit stereotype subconsciously guiding your actions.

5.5 Major criticisms of the IAT as a measure of implicit attitudes

Brownstein et al. (2020, p. 277) practice the common arguments that implicit measures of biased attitudes are poor predictors of behaviour, particularly the IAT. They argue that small correlation coefficients are expected ²² (Brownstein et al., 2020). In reviewing research into implicit measures, Brownstein and colleagues conclude that applying implicit measures like the IAT should not be abandoned, but that implicit measures can be better understood as revealing what is on somebody's mind at a given point in time – that are shaped by complex interactions of personal related situational factors. This, they posit, sees implicit bias research remaining as a relevant case study that focuses on complex but importantly

²² For example, comparing average correlation between individual scores of implicit measures and measures of behaviour et al ($r = .14$ to $r = .28$; Cameron, Brown-Iannuzzi, & Payne, 2012; Greenwald, Poehlman, Uhlmann, & Banaji, 2009; Oswald, Mitchell, Blanton, Jaccard, & Tetlock, 2013), constructs such as IQ and income ($r = .2$ to $r = .3$; Strenze, 2007), SAT scores and freshman college grades ($r = .24$; Wolfe & Johnson, 1995) and parental and their children socioeconomic status ($r = .2$ to $r = .3$; Strenze, 2007) (Brownstein et al., 2020, p. 278).

meaningful theoretical ways of explaining human thought and action, that is, ‘features of individuals (beliefs, traits, and virtues) and situational variables (wealth, culture, modes of production)’ (Brownstein et al., 2020, pp. 82-83). The following brief discussion on criticisms of the IAT, as for other implicit measures, illustrates the importance of considering fundamental questions about the architecture of the mind, mainly how mental states, attitudes, contextual factors, and individual interaction combines to produce behaviour when seeking to measure implicit attitudes.

Criticisms of the IAT fall into two main sets – the validity of the IAT to predict behaviour (predictive validity), and the reliability of the IAT to measure implicit bias over time. The debate concerning whether implicit or explicit measures are better predictors of social cognitive behaviour is at the core of these criticisms. While covering the sheer volume of discussion concerning both camps is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is undeniable that the IAT remains one of the most widely used measures in seeking to understand unconscious bias (Gawronski, 2002; Greenwald et al., 1998; Jost, 2018; Lane, Banaji, Nosek, & Greenwald, 2007).

Some researchers question the construct validity of implicit social cognitive research (Blanton & Jaccard, 2008; Buckwalter, 2018; Hermanson, 2018; Karpinski, Steinman, & Hilton, 2005). For example, Blanton and Jaccard (2008) criticise the IAT’s psychometric ability to provide a reliable indicator of implicit attitudes to support claims of unconscious racist attitudes. Their concern is that the IAT’s psychological priming method to measure response latency of implicit attitudes cannot discount the probability of activating consciously held beliefs of personally held social conceptions. Consequently, the authors argue that it is problematic to suggest the IAT measure assesses an unconscious attitude outside of conscious awareness (Blanton & Jaccard, 2008).

Moreover, Buckwalter (2018) critiques the linkage between behaviour and causation to understand implicit social cognition, purporting that the IAT’s ability to predict behaviour over and above other related factors offers no greater result than that of explicit measures. For example, in referring to Oswald et al. (2013), he draws attention to their research that shows explicit measures are more strongly correlated with behavioural outcomes than IAT scores are across several social domains.

IATs were poor predictors of every criterion category other than brain activity, and the IAT performed no better than simple explicit measures. These results have important implications for the construct validity of IATs, competing theories of prejudice and attitude–behaviour relations, and measuring and modelling prejudice and discrimination (Oswald et al., 2013, p. 171).

Consequently, Buckwalter (2018) does not believe implicit measures are any more effective at explaining discriminatory behaviour than explicit measures, stating:

correlations between implicit attitudes and explicit discriminatory behaviour can be explained mostly by explicit attitudes without necessarily needing to propose a causal relationship with implicit attitudes to explain the behaviour (p. 2970).

Karpinski et al. (2005) also believe evidence supporting the argument that the predictive validity of the IAT is weak. Similar to findings expressed by Buckwalter (2018), their research outcomes favour explicit attitude measures as better predictor of behaviours than the IAT.

Examples challenging the above criticisms of the IAT are also found in the literature (Brownstein et al., 2020; Gawronski, 2002; Hehman, Calanchini, Flake, & Leitner, 2019; Jost, 2018; Nosek, Greenwald, & Banajai, 2007). For example, Brownstein et al. (2020, p. 287) while acknowledging individual implicit measures remain problematic in predicting how people will act in any given circumstance, aggregated measures of implicit measures remain relatively stable over time. Jost (2018) posits a similar position, also stating that the IAT remains highly reliable at the aggregate level and is superior to many other measures of implicit attitudes. Both Jost (2018) and Brownstein et al. (2020) acknowledge that implicit measures remain essential to understanding socially sensitive behaviours such as intergroup behaviour and racial attitudes. Furthermore, implicit and explicit measures remain necessary, not in favour of the other. For implicit measures through context matters, reflecting the Lewinian concept of the ‘person in the situation’ for implicit measures is vital (Jost, 2018, p. 10).

Gawronski (2002) claims there is evidence arguing for the construct validity of the IAT in measuring the social domains of prejudice and stereotypes. His study tested for convergent and discriminate validity²³ of two IATs to corresponding explicit measures confirming the construct validity of the IAT. That is, IAT scores were significantly related to the explicit endorsement of prejudiced beliefs (convergent validity), and IAT scores predicted explicit prejudice only when the out-group category in the IAT was identical to that in the explicit measure with respect to the same target category (discriminate validity) (Gawronski, 2002).

As argued by Brownstein et al. (2020), research into implicit biases should not be abandoned. Conducting research to better understand social cognitive behaviour through theoretically meaningful ways of interacting remains needed. Despite the ongoing debate regarding the construct validity of the IAT to predict behaviour, the IAT continues to deserve a role in the sciences of the mind showing that aggregated implicit measures remain reliable and stable over time (Brownstein et al., 2020; Jost, 2018).

5.6 Limitations of the Implicit Association Test – Indigenous identity

The Australian Aboriginal IAT's use of historical images of Australian Aboriginals and Caucasian Australians has received its share of criticism since its release in 2009. Organisers of the Australian IAT secured images used in the Australian IAT through the National Library of Australia (Shirodkar, 2019, p. 9). Today, Aboriginal identity is not a simple process of identifying someone through skin colour and physical attributes, as depicted in historic images used in the IAT. The use of these images as an instrument to reveal unconscious bias is limited in that it only captures a particular type of unconscious bias. In reality, unconscious bias is more complex than when triggered by someone looking Indigenous. Indeed, the expressions of Indigenous agency or the act of identifying as an Indigenous person could itself be a trigger for either unconscious or conscious bias experienced as discrimination (Hunter, Howlett, & Biddle, 2014, p. 6). As such, the associated preference measured and reported in this chapter is likely to be a conservative estimate.

²³ Convergent and discriminate validity are two forms of construct validity with both being considered necessary for establishing construct validity. Convergent tests that constructs that are expected to be related are in fact related, and discriminate validity (or divergent validity) tests that the constructs that should have no relationship (Shuttleworth, 2009).

In applying Australian Government policy, the APS uses a tripartite approach to confirm Indigeneity as confirmed by the High Court of Australia, none of which relies on physical appearance²⁴. However, in a test like the IAT, unambiguity provides the ease of identifying an individual with a distinct Anglo-Saxon or Aboriginal appearance. One instance in Australia known to the researcher resulted in replacing the historic images with alternative images. In their research, Skinner et al. (2013) replaced historic black and white images with hand-drawn sketches of Australian Aboriginals and Caucasian Australians. This was done to lessen any potential 'offence to any Aboriginal Australians' (Skinner et al., 2013, p. 3).

A disclaimer before completion of the APSUBS warned participants of the potential confronting nature of the historic images used in the APSUBS. It is reasonable to expect some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander APS employees – and non-Indigenous employees, for that matter – might find the use of the IAT's historical images confronting. For the APSUBS, no complaints were forthcoming regarding the images used. Project Implicit is aware of criticism in Australia regarding the use of historic black and white images in the Australian Aboriginal IAT, and consequently has suspended the Australian Aboriginal IAT pending the identification of a replacement set of stimuli. However, Project Implicit provided approval for using the Australian Aboriginal IAT for the APSUBS.

Nonetheless, while the IAT is an imperfect measure of unconscious bias or discrimination, it does provide systematic information about the prevalence of bias against Indigenous people in the APSUBS population and the broader Australian society. Policymakers and HR managers are encouraged to consider the insights provided in this chapter. Doing so will build a richer capability to understand unconscious bias in minimising the impact on the employment experiences of Indigenous employees in the APS.

²⁴ The tripartite test requires demonstration of biological descent from an Indigenous people together with mutual recognition of the person's membership of the Indigenous people by the person and by the elders or other persons enjoying traditional authority among those people (High Court of Australia, 2020, p. 1).

5.7 Methodology

5.7.1 Participants

Over three weeks in November and December 2020, 1,544 APS employees participated in a unique version of the IAT. Participants included employees from four APS agencies ranging from APS 3 classifications through to employees in the SES. Female employees made up a significant proportion of participants in the APSUBS at 67%. Table 5.1 lists manager/non-manager employee proportions, mean age, and standard deviation of respondents.

Table 5. 1 Summary description of respondents

Classification	Proportion	Mean age	Standard deviation
Managers (EL1 to SES)	29%	26.8	8.6
APS Staff (APS 3 to APS 6 classification)	71%	23.6	10.8

Note: *N* = 1,544

Source: APSUBS

5.7.2 Recruitment

Recruiting participants through a direct random selection from each of the four participating agencies (*N* = 35,792)²⁵ was not possible due to the privacy requirements of participating APS departments/agencies in protecting the identity of employees. Instead, participation was facilitated through a self-nominating process via an 'Invitation to Participate' in the APSUBS coordinated through all four participating APS departments/agencies. Participants were deemed to have accepted to participate in the APSUBS when they agreed to completed the IAT via an online link hosted by the Project Implicit IAT website. In all, 1,544 respondents successfully completed the APSUBS, representing 4.3% of the total participating agency employee population. For a gender comparison between the APSUBS and the APS refer to Table 4.1.

²⁵ See Table 4.1.

5.7.3 The Implicit Association Test

The APSUBS uses the internationally recognised IAT administered by Project Implicit of Harvard University – most notably, the Australian Aboriginal variant of the IAT²⁶. The IAT was developed by Greenwald et al. and was first released in 1998 (Shirodkar, 2019, p. 6). The IAT seeks to measure implicit attitudes between a ‘target concept discrimination and an attribute dimension’ (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995, pp. 6-8; Greenwald et al., 1998). The authors define an implicit attitude to ‘manifest as actions or judgments that are under the control of automatically activated evaluation, without the performer’s awareness of that causation’ (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995, pp. 6-8).

Pairs of target concepts in the APSUBS consisted of black and white images of Caucasian Australian faces and Aboriginal faces categorised into an in-group and out-group. Pairs of attributes dimensions associated with positive and negative terms used in the APSUBS consisted of:

- **Good** – Joy, Love, peace, Wonderful, Pleasure, Glorious, Laughter and Happy.
- **Bad** – Angry, Terrible, Horrible, Nasty, Evil, Awful, Failure and Hurt.

The APSUBS labelled the in-group or out-group with Indigenous Australian or Caucasian Australian ‘good’ or ‘bad’ terms. Stimuli was presented as facial images of the in-group or out-group with positive or negative terms. Participants were then required to group the images of faces or terms, depending on what was displayed by using their keyboard to input the result.

The test measures the strength of associations between the images of faces and the terms used for good and bad words. Determining the IAT score is based on the time it takes a respondent on average to sort the words in the third block of the IAT with the fifth block of the IAT. The IAT measurements are standardised for each individual into an IAT effect or D Score, measuring the participant’s implicit bias towards the in-group or the out-group, and

²⁶ For further information on project Implicit, refer to <https://www.projectimplicit.net/>

the extent of that bias (Shirodkar, 2019). Suppose a participant is quicker to group positive terms with Caucasian faces, and slower to group positive terms with Indigenous faces. In that case, an individual is seen as having a bias in favour of Caucasian faces. Shirodkar (2019) was the first researcher to utilise Australian data captured by the IAT, which he refers to in his research as the Australian IAT. Both Shirodkar's Australian IAT and the APSUBS applied the same IAT. Table 5.2 below lists numeric cut-offs and provides a description indicating the extent of implicit bias measured in both surveys.

Table 5.2 IAT Numeric D score cut-offs

Numeric cut-off	Preference for bias
≤ -0.65	Strong preference for Australian Aboriginal over Caucasian Australian
> -0.65 and ≤ -0.35	Moderate preference for Australian Aboriginal over Caucasian Australian
> -0.35 and ≤ -0.15	Slight preference for Australian Aboriginal over Caucasian Australian
> -0.15 and < 0.15	Little to no preference between Australian Aboriginal and Caucasian Australian
≥ 0.15 and < 0.35	Slight preference for Caucasian Australian over Australian Aboriginal
≥ 0.35 and < 0.65	Moderate preference for Caucasian Australian over Australian Aboriginal
≥ 0.65	Strong preference for Caucasian Australian over Australian Aboriginal

Note: The D Score is a standardised measurement of each individual respondent's unconscious bias towards one group compared to the other group and the extent of that bias. Hereafter, this is referred to as the IAT score in this paper.

Source: Project Implicit (2020)

5.8 Findings of the APS Unconscious Bias Survey

5.8.1 Benchmarking comparisons between the APSUBS and AustUBS

One sample t-tests of APSUBS, and AustUBS datasets allowed comparative analyses of mean IAT scores, hereafter referred to as the IAT score (dependent variable) by Indigenous status, and gender. A t-test analysis of APSUBS data was conducted allowing for the possibility of unequal variances across both Indigeneity and gender. IAT scores in the APSUBS were further benchmarked to the Community and Personal Service Sector (CPSS) from within the AustUBS, as the most similar in structure to the APS. Table 5.3 lists mean IAT scores for the APSUBS benchmarked to the AustUBS and CPSS subsection of the AustUBS.

Table 5.3 APSUBS & AustUBS IAT score

Variable	APSUBS	AustUBS* (whole)	CPSS** (within AustUBS)
Overall IAT score	0.15	0.27	0.22
Indigenous	-0.07	-0.00	-0.06
Non-Indigenous	0.19	0.29	0.25
Female	0.12	0.23	0.19
Male	0.21	0.32	0.28

Source: APSUBS *N* = 1544

*Source: AustUBS *N* = 11,099

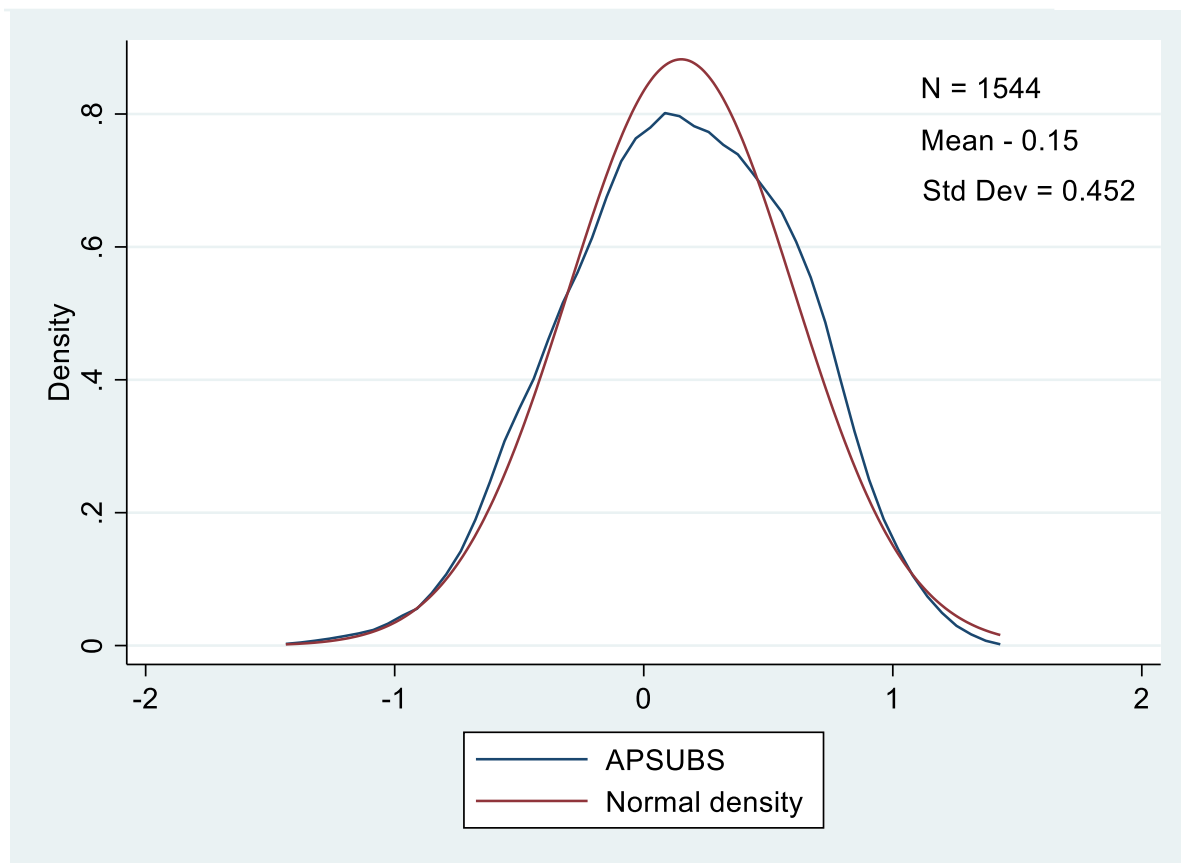
**Source: AustCPS *N* = 1,014

5.8.2 Distribution

Figure 5.1 shows distribution of standardised IAT scores in the APSUBS. The blue line represents all individual IAT scores in the APSUBS (*N*=1,544). The red line represents a normal distribution of scores distributed about the sample mean²⁷. The APSUBS distribution shows a slight positive skew. This is consistent with the average IAT score showing as +.15, and hence falling within the range of $\geq .15$ and $< .35$, indicating a slight preference for Caucasian Australian over Australian Aboriginal (see Table 5.2 above).

²⁷ Note that for a standard normal distribution will be centred on the mean of zero.

Figure 5. 1 IAT score in APSUBS vs Normal Distribution



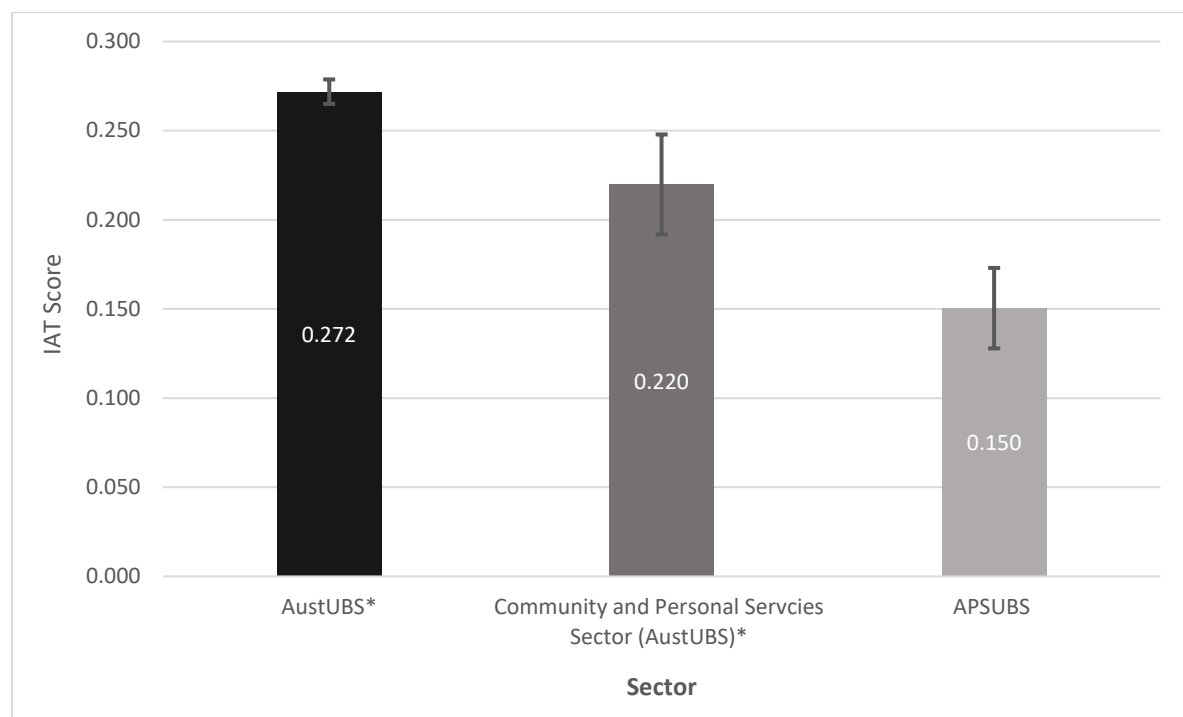
Note: The Shapiro Wilk test for normality confirmed we can reject the null hypothesis that the data are drawn from a normally distributed population at the 1% level. The non-normality in the APSUBS is driven by the non-Indigenous sample as we cannot reject the null hypothesis of normality in the Indigenous population at the conventional levels.

Source: APSUBS

5.8.3 Overall Mean IAT

Mean IAT scores for AustUBS & CPSS are shown to be within the range of values having a slight preference for Australian Aboriginal over Caucasian Australian with IAT Scores of 0.27 and 0.22 respectively. The APSUBS has a mean IAT score of 0.15, which is located on the boundary between having slight or little to no preference for Caucasian Australian over Aboriginal Australian (Table 5.2). Mean IAT scores for all three samples (APSUBS, CPSS and the AustUBS) were all shown to be significantly more than zero. The differences in means for three sample comparisons were all found to be statistically significant at the 1% level (APSUBS/AustUBS t-statistic = 10.10; APSUBS/CPSS t-statistic = 3.78; AustUBS/CPSS t-statistic = 3.54) (Figure 5.2).

Figure 5. 2 Overall mean IAT score



Note: The IAT score is significantly more than zero in all three samples.

Source: APSUBS

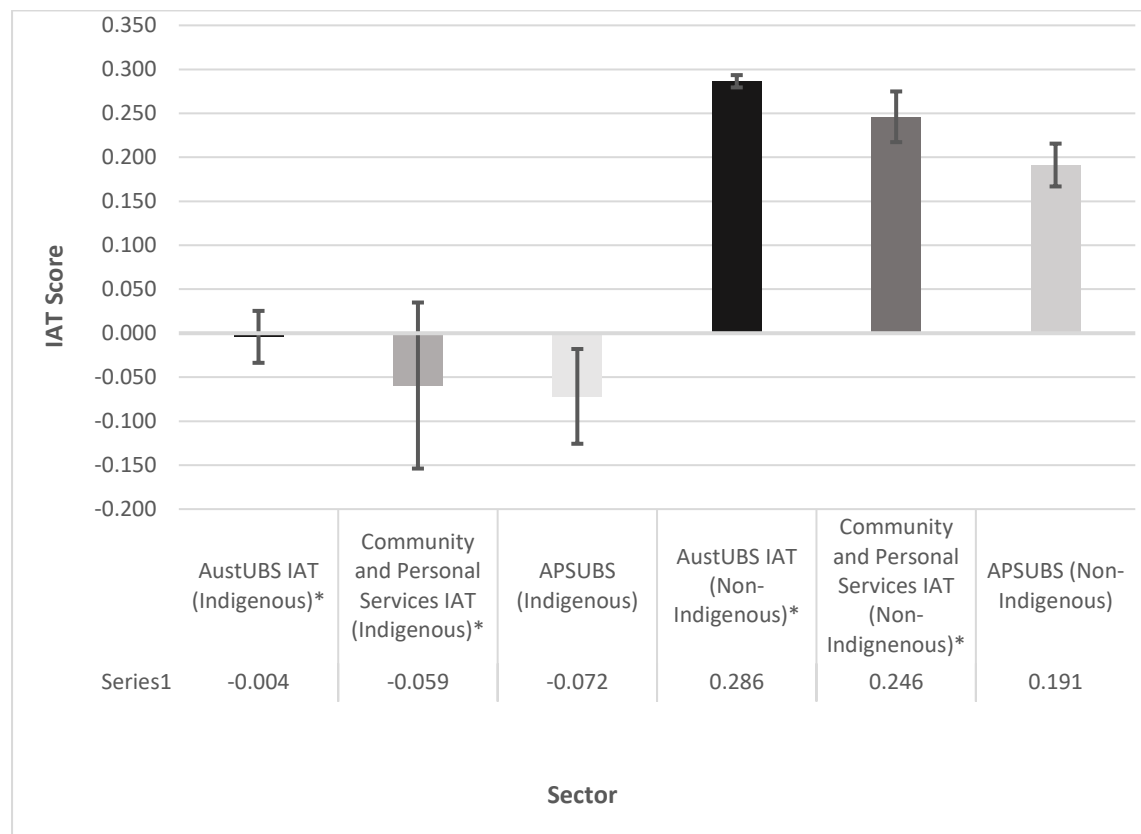
*Source: Shirodkar 2021

5.8.4 Indigeneity

IAT scores for Indigenous respondents in all three samples indicate little to no bias preference between Australian Aboriginal and Caucasian Australian. By comparison, non-Indigenous IAT scores indicated a slight bias preference for Caucasian Australian over Australian Aboriginal in all three samples (Figure 5.3).

The difference between mean IAT scores for Indigenous and non-Indigenous in all three samples were shown to be significantly different than zero. The difference in IAT means for non-Indigenous respondents in the APSUBS, and the AustUBS is statistically significant at the 1% level (i.e., t-statistic = 7.38 for the difference between 0.191 & 0.286). For the APSUBS and the CPSS, differences in non-Indigenous IAT scores were also found to be statistically significant at the 1% level (i.e., t-statistic = 2.85 for the difference between 0.191 & 0.246).

Figure 5.3 Mean IAT Score by Indigeneity



Notes: The IAT score is significantly more than zero in non-Indigenous populations, but is only significantly less than zero at the 5% level for Indigenous respondents in the APSUBS.

Source: APSUBS

*Source: Shirodkar 2021

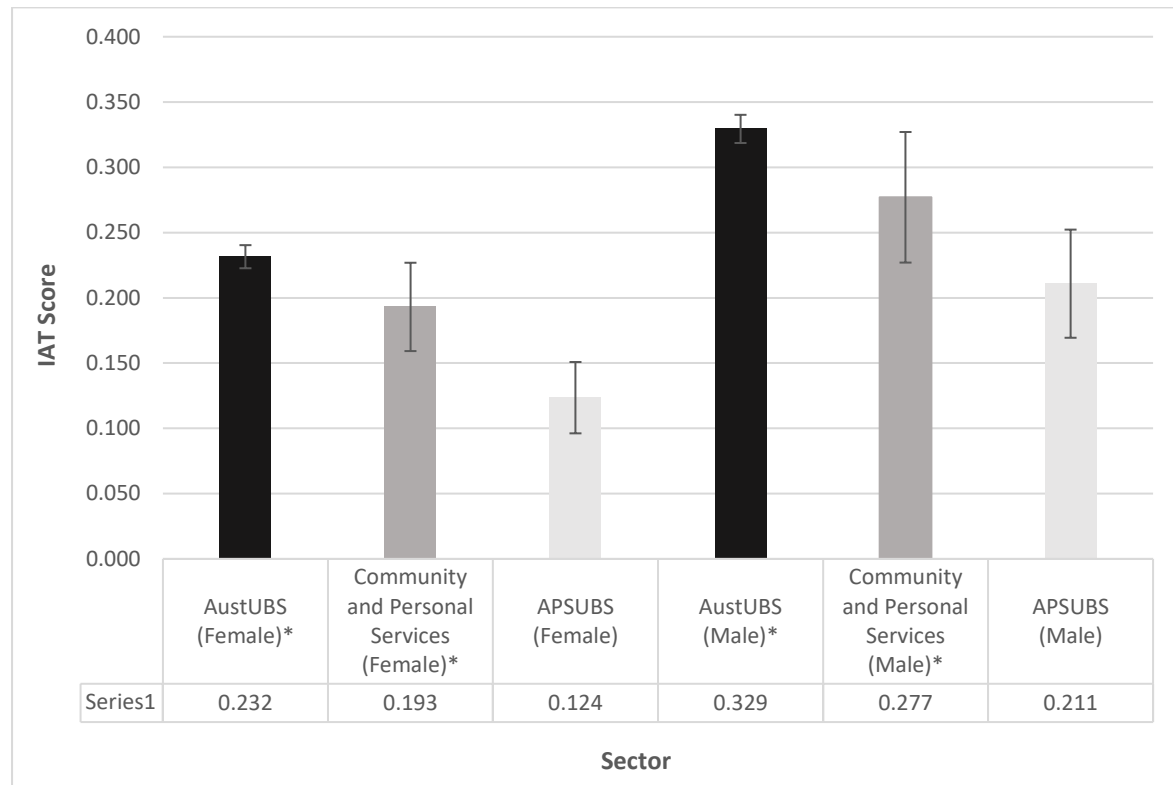
5.8.5 Gender

Respondents in the APSUBS, on average, have less bias preference for Caucasian Australian than respondents in the AustUBS or CPSS regardless of gender (Figure 5.4). Mean IAT score by gender in all three samples shows that females on average indicate a lower bias preference for Caucasian Australian than their male counterparts.

Mean IAT scores for both female and male in all three samples were shown to be significantly more than zero. The difference in means between the APSUBS and the AustUBS for females and males are both statistically different at the 1% levels (t-statistic = 7.38 and t-statistic = 5.44 respectively). The difference in means for female between the APSUBS and CPSS is statistically different at the 1% levels (t-statistic = 3.14). The difference in means for

male between the APSUBS and CPSS is statistically different at the 5% levels (t-statistic = 2.00).

Figure 5. 4 Mean IAT Score by gender



Source: APSUBS

*Source: Shirodkar 2021

5.8.6 Comparing proportionate levels of unconscious bias

Compared to data captured in the AustUBS sample, respondents in the APSUBS shows less proportionate preference for Caucasian Australians than in the AustUBS. For example,

Results show that around 75 percent of Australian participants hold an implicit bias against Indigenous Australians, with a third of Australians holding what might be considered a strong implicit bias (Shirodkar, 2019, p. 4).

Of all APSUBS respondents ($n=1,544$), 50% hold an unconscious bias against Indigenous Australians (i.e., IAT score >0.15) with 15% of APSUBS respondents ($n=225$) showing a strong preference in favour of Caucasian Australian (IAT score $>.65$).

Table 5.4 shows the proportion of APSUBS respondents with IAT scores exceeding both a slight or higher and a strong or higher preference for Caucasian Australians by APS classification category. The greatest proportion of all APSUBS respondents with a slight or higher preference for Caucasian Australians (IAT score $>.15$) were found in the APS 3 classification category (35% of survey respondents). Similarly, the greatest proportion of APSUBS respondents with an IAT score $>.65$ was also found in the APS 3 classification category (10.2% of survey respondents).

Table 5. 4 Classification and unconscious bias

Total APSUBS N = 1,544	Employees who hold a slight or higher preference for Caucasian Australian over Australian Aboriginal (>0.15)		Employees who hold a strong preference for Caucasian Australian over Australian Aboriginal (>0.65)	
APS Classification	Number	Proportion of N	Number	Proportion of N
APS 3-6	546	35.36	158	10.23
EL	198	12.82	63	4.08
SES	9	0.58	4	0.25
	753	48.76	225	14.57

Source: APSUBS

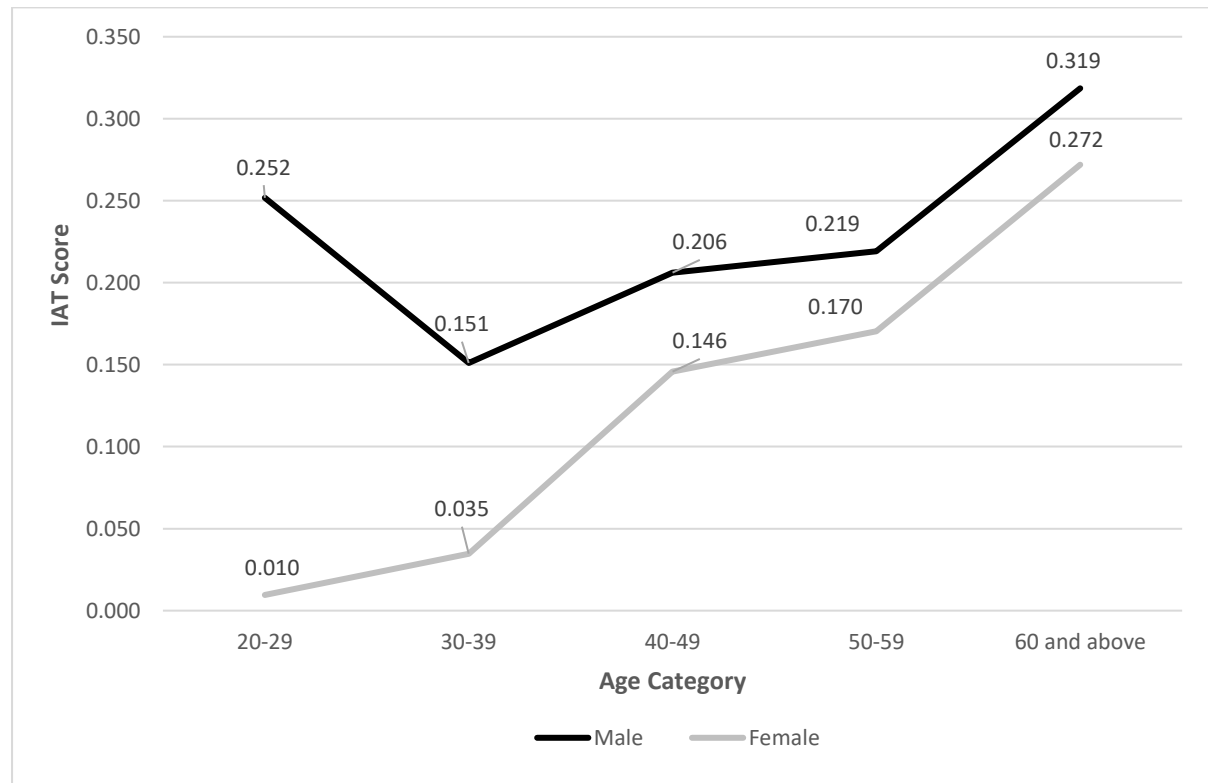
5.8.7 Age and gender APSUBS

Females, as previously stated, show lower levels of preference for Caucasian Australian than males. However, when considering the added effect of age with gender, one gains a clearer picture of differences in strength of preferences between female and male APSUBS respondents (Figure 5.5). For example, an IAT score of .01 for females is located in the first age category of 20–29 years (Figure 5.5), which indicates an IAT score statistically close to zero according to Project Implicit cut-offs (see Table 5.3).

By comparison, the lowest male IAT score of .15 is found in the second age category of 30–39 years (Figure 5.5). Female IAT scores preferring Caucasian Australian increase positively through each successive age category finishing with an IAT score of .27 at age 60 and above. Similarly, male IAT scores preferring Caucasian Australian also positively increase throughout each subsequent age category after 30–39 years, finishing with an IAT score of .32 for age 60 and above. At 60 years and above, both female and male IAT scores approach

the threshold boundary of .35, between slight and moderate preferences for Caucasian Australian.

Figure 5. 5 Mean IAT scores by age category and gender APSUBS

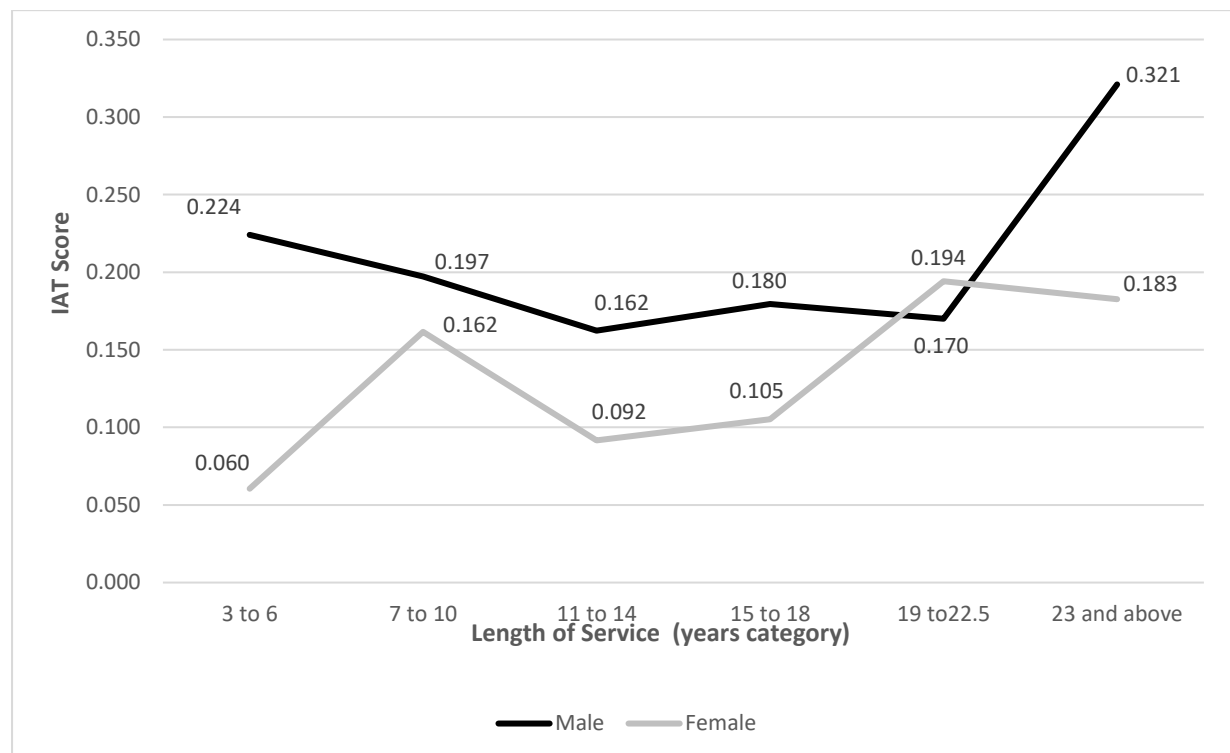


Source: APSUBS

5.8.8 Length of service APSUBS

Female APSUBS respondents with 3–6 years of service show the lowest IAT score (.06) of all length-of-service categories (Figure 5.6), indicating little to no preference for Caucasian Australian over Australian Aboriginal. Males for the same length of service period showed a higher average IAT score of .22 (Figure 5.6), indicating a slight preference for Caucasian Australian.

Figure 5. 6 Mean IAT scores by length-of-service category and gender APSUBS



Source: APSUBS

Female APSUBS respondents who have worked 7–10 years or 19 or more years show a markedly higher preference for Caucasian Australian when compared to other length-of-service categories. A markedly higher rate of preference for Caucasian Australian is associated with length of service categories above 23 years for both female and male respondents. However, male preference for Caucasian Australian almost doubles from 0.194 at 19–23 years to 0.321 for over 23 years length-of-service category (Figure 5.6).

5.9 Insights from previous research conducted into APS employment practice

5.9.1 Gender inequality in the APS

The APS espouses to be a workplace free of discrimination, where the diversity of all employees is equally valued, and where all employees feel supported and encouraged in the workplace. One key element of the APS diversity commitment, recruitment, and promotion is the principle of merit. The merit principle is meant to provide a level playing field where all eligible members are assessed fairly and equitably in arriving at an employment decision (APSC, 2021f). However, the APS workplace is not level for all.

Women and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees continue to experience inequitable employment opportunities as demonstrated in APS employment research (Evans et al., 2014; Faulkner & Lahn, 2019; M. Foley & Williamson, 2019; Williamson & Colley, 2018; Williamson & Foley, 2018). For example, in studying six Commonwealth agencies, Evans et al. (2014) identify several cultural and systemic barriers affecting equitable outcomes for women in the APS. They find that unconscious bias in the APS is widespread, resulting in subjective recruitment practices such as perceptions of cloning people, reinforcing the 'boys club', or stereotyping staff with children as less capable, dependable, or committed (Evans et al., 2014).

In reviewing APS employment practice, M. Foley and Williamson (2019) find managers in the APS are accepting of unconscious bias training and affirmative action programs as required initiatives to address gender inequity in the APS. The term affirmative action refers to a 'generic term for policies aimed at encouraging and supporting underrepresented groups within a workplace' and is applied as a positive action but is often misinterpreted as an instance of positive discrimination (Noon, 2011, p. 729). Many managers see these initiatives as an unacceptable violation of tenets of the merit principle – fairness, neutrality, and non-discrimination M. Foley and Williamson (2019). This dilemma is a perplexing issue for the APS.

Here M. Foley and Williamson (2019) identify a critical and conflicting threshold issue. While senior managers are key decision-makers responsible for upholding the principle of merit, growing discussion about and commitment to addressing unconscious bias in the APS requires senior managers to accept that merit-based decisions are affected by subjective biases (M. Foley & Williamson, 2019). Suppose managers are perceiving that affirmative action violates the tenets of merit whilst also accepting the need for unconscious bias training and affirmative action. In that case, the APS potentially faces a conflicting behavioural dilemma that will require reconciling.

5.9.2 Added difficulties for Indigenous employees who walk in two worlds

Research into APS Indigenous employment also shows that Indigenous employees experience institutional biases such as being stereotyped and pigeonholed in career choices (Bargallie, 2020; Faulkner & Lahn, 2019; Larkin, 2014). Failing to adequately comprehend

the added burden placed on Indigenous employees of having to walk in two worlds – the APS and culture – can result in further bias experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees (Faulkner & Lahn, 2019). When Indigenous employees perceive they have to justify their cultural identity in the workplace, it illustrates how negative attitudes and perceptions can prevent equitable capability assessment, such as development and promotional opportunities.

Indigenous employees are therefore compelled to explain or justify their cultural identity to non-Indigenous colleagues in these instances. Whether being compelled is due to views that are deliberate expressions of perceived Indigenous identity or are views based on ignorance, apathy, or unconscious bias, they present biased views on career progression for Indigenous employees. For example, consider the following response expressed by a participant in a report into the enablers and barriers to Indigenous employee career progression in the APS.

I have had to educate people when they say things like ‘oh, you’re one of the good ones’ or ‘you wouldn’t think you were Aboriginal, because you are so blah, blah, blah’. And that is where I feel that the walking in two worlds has made a huge impact to me, because personally it takes me back, but ... that’s where I try to use that as an opportunity to educate someone (Faulkner & Lahn, 2019, p. 25).

Unconscious biases in the workplace will adversely impact how Indigenous employees experience workplace inclusion in the APS. As briefly discussed above, stereotyping and pigeonholing show this possibility to be a real concern. The primary response in the APS to educate APS employees on the effects of unconscious bias has been offering unconscious bias training. However, as discussed next, all may not be well with this approach.

5.9.3 Unconscious bias training alone is not enough for tackling gender equality

Williamson and Foley (2018) argue unconscious bias training is not a silver bullet solution to gender equity in Western governments. Unless the APS can determine the effectiveness of current unconscious bias training first, the success of any training is likely to be limited (Williamson & Foley, 2018). Alarming, Williamson and Foley (2018, p. 357) also note that

several managers perceive unconscious bias training as lip service in addressing gender equality. International research indicates that unconscious bias training as a diversity initiative may not effectively reduce racism in the workplace, leading instead to unintended negative consequences, taking focus away from embedded structural bias in organisations (Noon, 2017, p. 203). Similar concerns regarding the effectiveness of diversity initiatives are expressed by Dobbin and Kalev (2016). They argue that diversity programs such as unconscious bias training often fail. Despite the outcome anticipated with providing diversity training, diversity programs are failing. 'The problem is that we cannot motivate people by forcing them to get with the program and punishing them if they don't' (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016, p. 1). Instead, supporting people to shift their beliefs to a particular view by discussing how bias is experienced is more likely to reduce bias (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016; Dubner, 2022, p. 1).

Williamson and Foley (2018) express the same concern as that of Noon (2017). They, too, are worried that the focus on individual behavioural change through unconscious bias training fails to address the deeper embedded systemic issues behind gender inequality in the APS. For example, in their research, Williamson and Colley (2018) argue the 'doing' of gender in the APS continues to place a masculine interpretation on the categories and roles of women in the APS. They argue gender needs to be 'undone' with an approach that includes dismantling occupational segregation by restructuring the bureaucracy through a broader application of gender necessary for an APS workplace. Perhaps this might be an approach that considers a broader intersection of gender with identity (Williamson & Colley, 2018).

Unconscious bias training that focuses on individual behavioural change alone is not enough. Focusing alone on the individual's learning and development needs while an outward visible commitment excludes the broader systemic organisational bias embedded into everyday practice and processes is inadequate. The goal should be an integrated organisational wide capability response that integrates change into the culture of the APS. Unfortunately, learning and development initiatives often don't consider this bridge between individual learning outcomes and organisational behavioural change outcomes.

5.10 Where to next? What are the implications for diversity and inclusion?

The scores in the APSUBS survey show that respondents have a slight preference for Caucasian Australian with an IAT score of 0.15, but noticeably this sits right on the boundary between little to no preference and a slight preference for Caucasian Australians. This indicates that respondents in the APSUBS show almost half the overall preference for Caucasian Australians compared to that indicated in the broader AustUBS survey.

This result reflects positively on the APSUBS population. However, it would be unwise to suggest that these case study findings reflect the APS more broadly without conducting further research. Nonetheless, when analysing APSUBS IAT scores further for age and length-of-service categories by gender, some interesting insights are revealed that could assist future APS diversity and inclusion practice. First, males in the age range 20–29 years (Figure 5.5) show considerably more preference for Caucasian Australians when compared to women in the same age category. Secondly, males over most length-of-service categories show a decreasing relationship in preference for Caucasian Australians compared to females, only reversing at the age category of 23 years and above (Figure 5.5).

Considering the outcomes of the APSUBS alongside research undertaken by other researchers into APS employment practice, gender equality appears as a real concern for female employees in moving forward in the APS. With the overrepresentation of Indigenous employees in trainee to APS 4 classifications, and underrepresentation of Indigenous employees in EL to SES positions, gender equity for career advancement for Indigenous female employees is a concern. This concern takes on greater significance considering that 68% of the APS Indigenous employee workforce is female (APSC, 2020a).

Traditional unconscious bias training where one attends a face-to-face development session or completes an online eLearning program, is not enough. Diversity training initiatives for unconscious bias training has failed to promote equity, according to Dobbin and Kalev (2016). They present evidence demonstrating that requiring people to undertake diversity training will make an organisation less diverse if people are forced to do training (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016). Alternatively, making training voluntary only attracts those interested and familiar with bias and consequently, the people who would potentially benefit the most or

should attend are missing (Gino & Coffman, 2021). Individual training outcomes gained by completing questionnaires are soon forgotten in as little as a couple of days, and in some instances, possibly result in activating bias (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016). Bridging the gap between individual learning outcomes and organisational capability to embed learning outcomes into institutional processes and practices has to underpin any diversity and inclusion response to unconscious bias training.

The *Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020–24* (the Strategy) has several actions specifically targeting Indigenous diversity and inclusion. Unconscious bias initiatives, though not specifically identified in the Strategy, would be easily incorporated within existing priority actions listed in the Strategy. For example, Priority Action 1.5 identified in the strategic focus area of Cultural Integrity seeks to implement practical strategies to develop the cultural capability for all employees (APSC, 2020c). Refocusing the structure and delivery of unconscious bias training offers the opportunity to support the development of cultural competence of non-Indigenous employees by developing a culturally inclusive deeper appreciation and understanding of how prejudice and discrimination impact Indigenous employees.

Gino and Coffman (2021) offer a framework to assist organisations in adopting a more effective response to unconscious bias training. Their framework provides practical advice and guidance on considering a range of strategies for a more inclusive and holistic unconscious bias training response. Importantly, as discussed above, the ability to bridge the gap between individual learning outcome and organisational behaviour underpins their framework. Gino and Coffman (2021, pp. 116-117), through their framework, focus unconscious bias training on the following elements:

- identify tools to change behaviour to assist in better understanding others
- teach what unconscious bias is, how it is measured, and how it harms others
- encourages employees to take the Implicit Association Test to determine personal preferences for reflection

- seek employees to identify individual practical examples to reduce bias in their own lives
- measure and track the effectiveness of unconscious bias training
- challenge employees to rethink policies, processes, and procedures to support systematic organisational change.

For a further discussion on the framework, refer to **Chapter 7**.

5.11 Concluding remarks

Unconscious bias is a complex social cognitive phenomenon. Despite its criticisms, the IAT has an ongoing role in understanding how implicit associations manifest as unconscious bias resulting in discrimination, prejudice or racism. The findings of the APSUBS case study show that employees in the APSUBS sample have almost half the level of preference for Caucasian Australian compared to that of the broader Australian population. Interestingly, non-Indigenous employees in either the APSUBS, AustUBS or CPSS samples show little to no preference (Figure 5.3).

Some notable insights with potential policy implications for workplace inclusion and diversity initiatives emerge when investigating the impact of age and length-of-service for respondents in the APSUBS. Male APSUBS respondents in the 20–29 age category show a statically significant increased preference for Caucasian Australian compared to female APSUBS respondents in the same age range. According to Project Implicit IAT cut-offs, female respondents in this age category statistically show close to zero preference (see Table 5.2). However, when considering all age and length-of-service categories, preferences for Caucasian Australians show an overall positive increase for both female and male APSUBS respondents.

Australian research into the employment experiences of APS employees indicates women and Indigenous employees are not afforded equal opportunities when it comes to career advancement and promotional opportunities. Gender inequality presents a priority obstacle for Indigenous female employees when two-thirds of the APS Indigenous workforce are

female. Further still, Indigenous employees remain overrepresented in lower APS classification levels and underrepresented at executive and senior management levels.

Research has shown that traditional forms of unconscious bias training have yet to create better diverse organisations successfully. A framework authored by Gino and Coffman (2021) provides guidance in repositioning unconscious bias training for the APS. Notably, the framework bridges the gap between individual learning outcomes and organisation outcomes by considering systemic changes to organisational behaviour through policies, processes, and procedures. Arguably most important for the APS will be the need to convince senior managers to accept and act on the discriminatory effects of unconscious bias in Indigenous employment. The key to committing to such a response will be authentic senior leadership in the APS. Without this, any attempt at repositioning unconscious bias training runs the risk of failing to make a difference – worse still, even strengthening unconscious bias in the APS.

The following chapter (**Chapter 6**) applies the mixed-methods research methodology discussed in Chapter 4 commencing at section 4.3.

Chapter 6 Modern QFD: Manager and Employee Perspectives

6.1. Introduction

This chapter presents findings of research analysis applied from a combination of NVivo thematic analysis and a pairwise analysis of workplace needs using Modern QFD methodology. Modern QFD is a streamlined design approach evolving from the traditional methodology of QFD (see Section 4.6 above for a previous discussion). Modern QFD responded to organisations needing a more agile approach to identify customer needs that avoided the time-consuming and resource-intensive process of developing the House of Quality (HoQ) matrices at the centre of the traditional model of QFD. Modern QFD replaces the QFD HoQ matrices concern for comparing engineering characteristics (the whats) with the voice of the customer (the hows) by providing a streamlined process to determine ‘which’ problems got solved first instead of the traditional QFD approach to defining ‘how’ to solve the problem (QFD Institute, 2022a). Building on the outcome of NVivo thematic analysis, Modern QFD incorporates the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) tool to determine a range of prioritised workplace needs.

Modern QFD defines a need as an action or process that would return a benefit if realised. For this research project, a workplace need was described as an action or initiative identified by either a manager or Indigenous employee that would result in a benefit leading to a more culturally inclusive APS workplace. Modern QFD applies the quantitative element of AHP to construct a hierarchy of prioritised workplace needs for each research theme of unconscious bias, cultural competence, and workplace congruence. In all, 162 needs were identified and ranked according to their overall level of global importance within their respective hierarchy, reflecting this thesis’s three research questions.

In arriving at the 162 priority needs, a three-tiered hierarchy of needs (Appendix I) was constructed collectively for managers and for Indigenous employees consisting of:

- primary need category
- secondary need category

- local priority need.

The outcome derived from the hierarchy of needs was the ability to map all 162 local priority needs through to one of five primary need categories for each research question's theme for both managers and Indigenous employees. This process ranked all 162 individual local needs by priority of importance for managers and Indigenous employees.

The 10 top local priority needs for managers and Indigenous employees are presented below in their respective need hierarchies. The following discussion focuses on each research theme's top three local priority needs.

It is prudent to explain the rationale for focusing on presenting the top three local priority needs for each research theme as the key findings. In reality, decision-makers will rely on several factors when determining which needs to pursue through to production or service environment. In essence, decision-makers will allocate resources where the greatest marginal return on investment is maximised for the given marginal cost of inputs into the process. For this purpose, discussing the top three local priority needs was identified as offering the highest likely potential in returning a benefit to the APS, if realised.

6.2. Results of the AHP Questionnaire

Managers and Indigenous employees completed the same AHP questionnaire. Table 6.1 summarises the number of matrices applied in the AHP questionnaire. A total of 53 pairwise matrices provided the basis for comparative analysis. Each pairwise matrix consisted of multiple pairwise comparisons ranging from a two-by-two pairwise matrix to a seven-by-seven pairwise matrix.

Table 6. 1 Number of matrices in the AHP questionnaire

	Research theme		
Hierarchy level	Unconscious Bias	Cultural Competence	Workplace Congruence
Primary need category matrices	1	1	1
Secondary need category matrices	5	4	5
Local priority need matrices	14	8	14
Total AHP matrices	20	13	20

Source: Indigenous employee and Manager AHP questionnaires

Table 6.2 shows the number of local priority needs for each research theme and the global proportional importance level of each research theme's 10 top ranked local priority needs.

Table 6. 2 Representation of the 10 top workplace needs by research theme for Managers and Indigenous employees

Research Theme	Number of workplace needs	Global Proportion of top 10 ranked needs
Unconscious Bias	52	19%
Cultural Competence	38	26%
Workplace Congruence	72	14%
Total	162	

Source: Appendix I

6.3. Structure of discussion

The chapter consists of two parts. Part one comprises three sub-sections that lead with a diagrammatic representation of manager, and Indigenous employee need hierarchies for each research theme of unconscious bias, cultural competence, and workplace congruence. Manager and Indigenous employee narratives captured through qualitative NVivo analysis provide discussion and context for each top three priority needs. Part two summarises the discussion presented in part one, providing the grounding focus for discussing the policy implications for Indigenous employment in Chapter 7. First, considering how to interpret each research theme's diagrammatic representation is required.

6.4. Interpreting the hierarchy of needs categories

The first three columns of Figures 6.1 to 6.6 refer to the hierarchy's primary, secondary, and local priority needs. The fourth column, labelled *Local Priority* refers to the priority vector or row average value determined for the local priority need from its respective comparison matrix.

The column labelled *Global Priority* refers to each ranked local priority need's proportional importance level of its secondary need category's global importance level within the hierarchy. The column labelled ranking shows the rank of the local priority need within all local priority needs for each research theme.

The percentage indicator listed in each primary need category provides the proportional level of importance that each primary need category represents of all primary need categories. The percentage indicator listed for each secondary need category represents the global proportion that each secondary need category represents of its higher primary need category.

Each research theme in Figures 6.1 to 6.6 reflects only relevant primary and secondary need categories. That is, where there is no relationship between the 10 top-ranked local priority needs and their secondary and primary need categories, these need categories are not reflected in the hierarchies presented in Figures 6.1 to 6.6.

6.5. Manager and Indigenous employee perceptions

6.5.1 Manager perspectives of unconscious bias needs

Figure 6.1 lists the 10 top local priority needs identified by managers for the research theme of unconscious bias. Five of the five primary need categories are represented in Figure 6.1.

The primary need category, *I feel my agency emphasises Indigenous employment* was identified as the top category out of all five available primary need categories with an

importance level²⁸ of 25%. This category captured four of the top 10 ranked needs (2,3,4, and 5), indicating that managers' perspectives in emphasizing Indigenous employment are weighted through Reconciliation Action Plans and Indigenous cultural capability for a combined global importance of 25% at the secondary level. However, the highest priority need to be identified by managers with a global importance level of 8% is *Indigenous inclusion, and diversity is understood to be mutually exclusive*.

The next most significant grouping within all ten needs is found in the second primary category, *I feel secure in whom I am in the APS* with priority needs 8, 9, and 10. Moving toward feeling secure in one's identity in the APS indicates all employees experience the same expectations regarding individual capability within the workplace.

6.5.2 'I enjoy a culturally inclusive workplace'

In the primary need category, *I enjoy a culturally inclusive workplace* captured the highest local priority need of *Indigenous inclusion and diversity is understood as being mutually exclusive*. With a local priority importance level of 77%, moving toward an inclusive workplace, managers identified understanding the diverse representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as important. This relationship between levels of needs suggests that enjoying a culturally inclusive workplace is underpinned by a shared appreciation of the diversity of Indigenous cultural identity. Revisiting how Indigenous inclusion is articulated, modelled, and applied in the APS would require a deeper appreciation of the diversity within Indigenous cultures. This is particularly the case in what is generally thought to constitute Indigenous inclusion and how we respond to Indigenous inclusion.

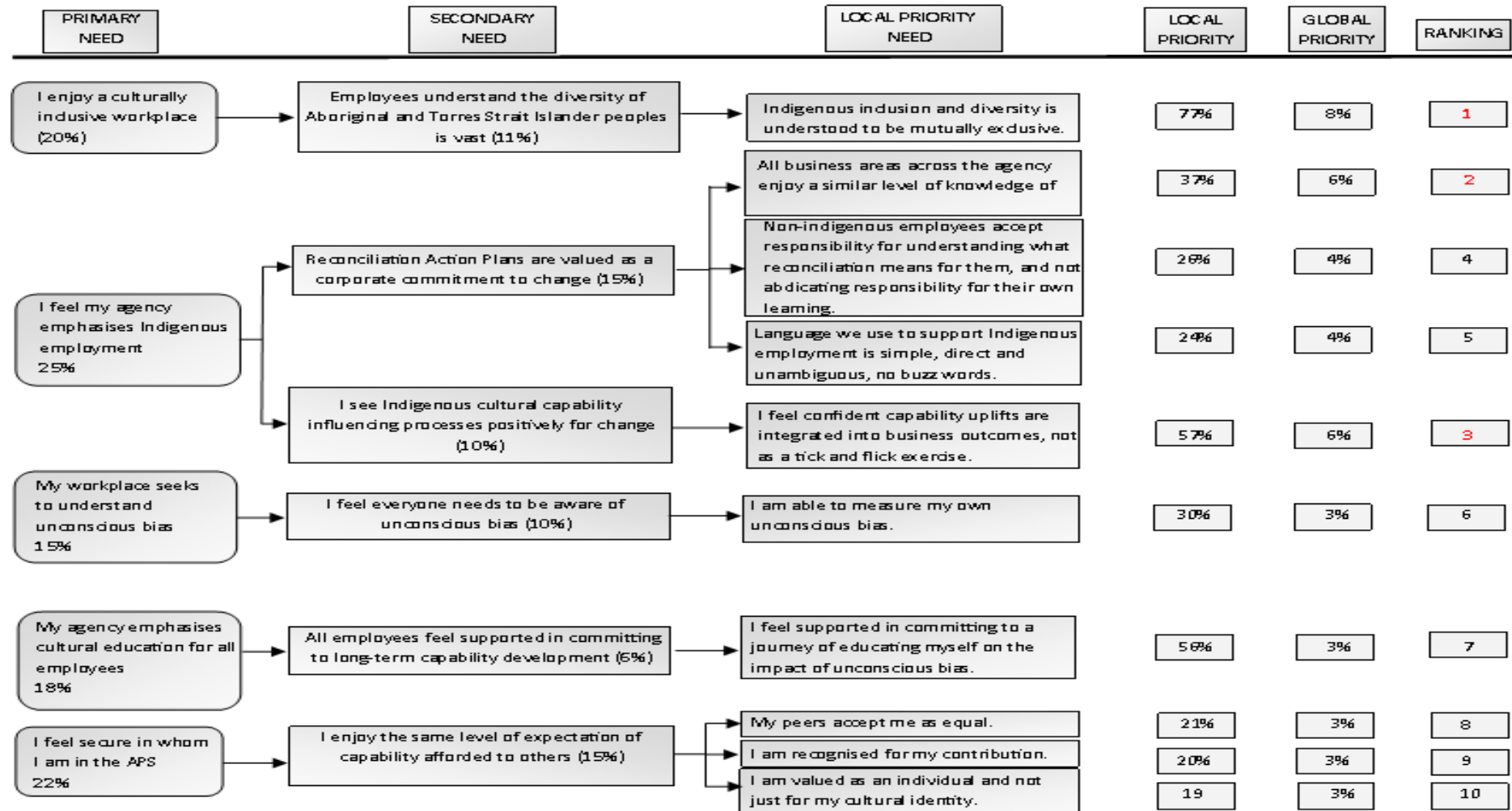
Addressing the Anglo/Celtic dominance of decision-making in the APS and the potential flow-on effects for Indigenous inclusion is perhaps one of the biggest challenges in refreshing Indigenous inclusion policy. The following manager's comment highlights the risk of not addressing this challenge.

²⁸ The importance level refers to the global proportion of all local priority needs aggregated across the entire hierarchy for each primary need category.

I think we risk being out of touch if we're not reflecting the community that we serve. To me that's a big risk, we need to be actively representing the breadth of diversity in the community. We need people in decision-making positions so that we attract non-Celtic Anglo-Saxon people. And we need to do it now, we can't afford to wait because we need to grow that as part of the way that we are and the way that we work (Participant 37).

The concern expressed above shows how a narrow appreciation of cultural inclusion can risk becoming 'out of touch' in the workplace when viewing diversity through a dominant cultural lens.

Figure 6.1 Manager 10 top unconscious bias workplace needs and priorities



Note: The global weight of all five primary need categories reflected in Figure 6.2 is 100%

Source: Appendix I

Even when the most capable people with the best of intentions are involved, unconscious biases can still adversely impact Indigenous inclusion. For example, power imbalances within decision-making structures and employees and managers can be challenging to address when Indigenous representation in middle and senior management positions remains low. As a result, Indigenous inclusion policies for coordinating HR areas are not maximised. The need to distinguish between inclusion and diversity practice becomes more poignant for Indigenous inclusion policy. This distinction is articulated well in the following manager's comment.

So, it's like that difference between diversity and inclusion, in my view, well, with diversity, you tick the box. It's like inviting someone to the party, but once they're there, are they actually invited to dance? Are they part of the group? Do they feel part of that group? (Participant 35).

In emphasising the need to move forward beyond current diversity and inclusion practice towards a more culturally inclusive adaption, a more informed understanding of cultural inclusion will require an organisational cultural change in how HR practitioners respond in the APS. For example, consider the following:

Generational and cultural change, if you ask me. I mean this is a cultural issue. And anything that's culture takes a really long time. There's no one quick fix for the culture of one organisation to change. But that being said, I think moving past just the rhetoric and really getting into how do you actually do that? (Participant 35).

Workplace cultural change in any organisation requires a consistent change in management process sustained over a long period. Steeped in processes and procedures in administering taxpayer-funded government expenditure, reviewing workplace inclusion for a more nuanced and profound culturally inclusive workplace will require a bold approach to challenge existing Indigenous inclusion practices. Bold, because critically, it will be essential to engage Indigenous employees in any reviewed workplace inclusion agenda in an APS environment that historically favours a western dominant mindset of workplace inclusion.

6.5.3 'I feel my agency emphasises Indigenous employment'

The primary need category, *I feel my agency emphasises Indigenous employment* captured the highest number of ranked local priority needs (i.e., 2,3,4 and 5), representing a combined 20% global importance level of all 52 local priority needs for the research theme unconscious bias. In moving toward a workplace that emphasises Indigenous employment, managers identified Reconciliation Action Plans as a purposeful vehicle to achieve this outcome. This result suggests that managers view Reconciliation Action Plans as a primary avenue through which commitment to Indigenous inclusion and employment in the APS is actioned. However, one manager identified a barrier resulting from the perception that Reconciliation Action Plans may not be thought of in the same capacity as other corporate policies. For example, consider the following comment.

So, for me, the Reconciliation Action Plan is a strategic commitment to address reconciliation and work with Indigenous people and to improve. However, it doesn't sit equally to things like the corporate plan or workforce strategies, which are all high-level strategic documents. Instead, as an internal member, I would go to my intranet and I would try to find a copy of the Reconciliation Action Plan. It was buried under networks. Not sitting equally with other corporate documents (Participant 35).

This perspective alone is worrying. However, when considering the specific local priority need to move an agency toward emphasising Indigenous employment, developing a shared commitment to reconciliation also requires a personal commitment. That is, as indicated by local priority needs, accepting responsibility for one's own cultural education, having confidence in developing individual cultural capability, and establishing a consistent understanding of Indigenous cultures across the APS. Consider the following comment where an Indigenous manager expresses frustration at being the default go-to person for all matters Indigenous.

I think that they just don't know. They don't know where to start to learn about it themselves or to understand it themselves. And so, as a default, it's just easier to come and ask me about it (Participant 24).

As mentioned above, managers who forgo individual commitment to reconciliation risk placing an unnecessary expectation on Indigenous employees, lowering the opportunity for developing individual capability.

A further potential barrier for the same primary need category regarding the effectiveness of Reconciliation Action Plans was identified in the local priority need *Language we use to support Indigenous employment is simple, direct and unambiguous, no buzz words*. For example, consider the following two comments provided by the same manager when referring to the language used in the APS to advocate Indigenous employment and the implication for HR areas in implementing policy.

If we keep just using the buzzwords, I don't know how much engagement we will get. We need to break away from the buzzwords and actually say what that means (Participant 35).

And at the moment, all of this is seen as fluffy HR-ish language. And we've got the strategy. HR will have to worry about implementing (Participant 35).

The reference to use of 'buzz words' indicates that perhaps it is time to review language applied to promoting and advocating Indigenous inclusion. The risk of any over-use of language is that it becomes jaded in practice and loses its ability to provide meaning.

Managers identified unconscious bias training as a core aid to help embrace cultural education to support Indigenous inclusion. The following comment provided by a manager aptly shows why unconscious training is favoured.

And so that really probably didn't really surprise me but just alerted me to I've got a lot of privilege so the gap between me and him is a yawning chasm, the gap between me and somebody else for a couple of other minority qualities is again a yawning chasm. So I guess it woke me up a bit in that sense, yes (Participant 19).

The above comment also goes to the fundamental challenge of any multicultural workforce. That is, employee representation is becoming increasingly diverse minority populations are growing in size, and this includes Indigenous representation in the APS.

Unconscious bias training was viewed positively as a critical educational and development aid to improve the level of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee cultural knowledge in the APS. However, managers also identified several concerns on what might constitute the right form or structure of unconscious bias training. Issues identified include: ensuring employees had the time and space to devote to unconscious bias training, applying a strength-based perspective in unconscious bias training, and convincing employees to own their participation in any training initiative. The views expressed by managers reflected a consistency in identifying the need for unconscious bias training, as reflected in the following two comments.

We need to probably branch out beyond cultural awareness training, and actually have some training targeted at some areas about things like this that need to be stripped and unconscious bias practice might be it (Participant 12).

So, to do that in a structured way, that wasn't finger-pointing or blaming, but just to bring it to people's visibility, and to use examples, data evidence. So, yes, I think there's an opportunity. Like there is training to build cultural competency, cultural understanding and awareness. I think I've seen in other organisations, training that can reveal unconscious bias (Participant 31).

These comments provided by managers consistently identify a role for unconscious bias training. This training should be innovative in providing an environment for reflection and genuine learning, where sensitivity encourages people to learn about unconscious bias openly and engagingly. As one manager describes, though, convincing others to attend unconscious bias training is not without its challenges. For example,

Everybody's short for time. Time poor. So, there's the mandatory training. Be it the cultural training, it's not mandatory and a lot of people aren't going to be coming because they're just over it. So, you have to be getting creative in how you're doing it (Participant 27).

Coming up with a creative and innovative approach to unconscious bias training, deciding whether unconscious bias training should be mandatory or not, and dealing with perceptions that training is seen as 'white noise' in an otherwise time-poor busy working environment –these are some of the challenges to address. This suggests unconscious bias

training must appeal to the individual and be supported by senior management to find the time and space in a non-threatening learning environment to encourage open and engaged learning.

6.6. Indigenous employee perspectives of unconscious bias

Figure 6.2 lists the 10 top local priority needs identified by Indigenous employees for the research theme of unconscious bias. Four of the five primary need categories are represented in Figure 6.2.

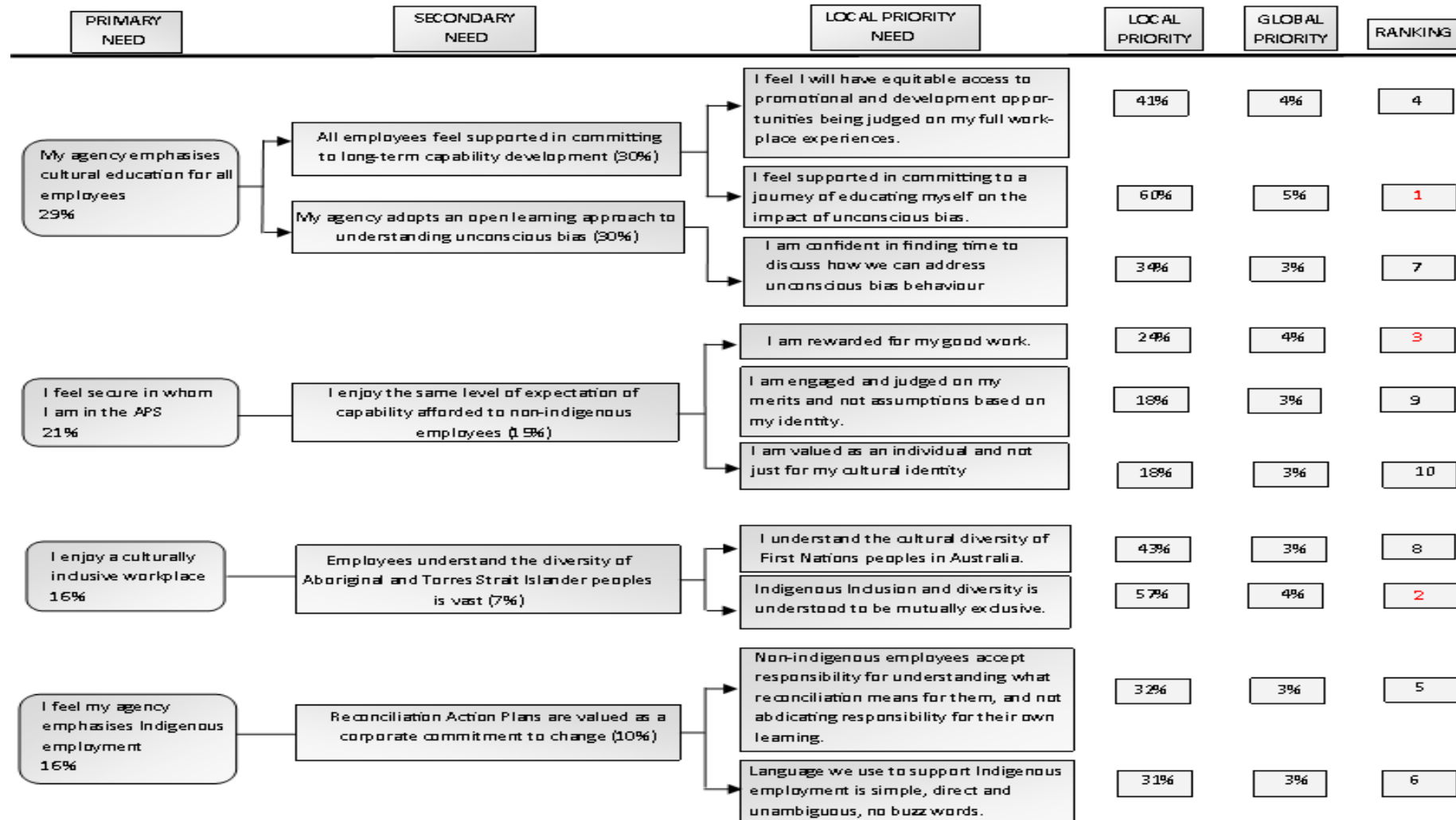
The primary need category, *My agency emphasises cultural education for all employees*, was identified as the leading category out of four reporting primary need categories with an importance level of 29%. The highest local priority need to be identified by Indigenous employees in this category with a local priority importance level of 5% was, *I feel supported to commit to a journey of educating myself on the impact of unconscious bias*. Indigenous employee perspectives indicate that moving toward a workplace that emphasises cultural education requires an open and supportive environment to understand and respond to unconscious bias.

The primary need category, *I enjoy a culturally inclusive workplace*, captures the second highest-ranked local priority and eighth-ranked needs. This category indicates moving toward a culturally inclusive APS workplace requires appreciating the diversity of Australian Indigenous peoples for Indigenous inclusion.

6.6.1 'My agency emphasises cultural education for all employees'

Indigenous employees identified *I feel supported to commit to a journey of educating myself on the impact of unconscious bias* as their top local priority need in responding to unconscious bias. This was a surprise finding in that Indigenous employees identified their own need above non-Indigenous employees to develop a deeper cultural understanding of unconscious bias. It is reasonable to presume Indigenous employees would generally be on the receiving end of unconscious bias, where those who are thought to be prejudiced are generally thought of to be those from a dominant cultural context other than a minority.

Figure 6.2 Indigenous Employees top 10 unconscious bias workplace needs and priorities



Note: The global weight of all four primary need categories reflected in Figure 6.2 is 82%.

Source: Appendix I

Though surprising, this perspective provided by Indigenous employees is perhaps indicative of the broader commitment to family and well-being commonly accepted as a cultural trait of Indigenous peoples (Satour & Goldingay, 2021). The importance of adopting a journey to educate oneself to unconscious bias is expressed in the following comment provided by an Indigenous employee.

Changing education is one of the key factors and by education our Indigenous cultural capability learning pathway is all about knowing, doing, and being for me, with Indigenous cultures. I would strongly encourage those people to become more familiar and the more they interact with them, the more that changes their perception on things and that we take those unconscious biases away. (Participant 30).

The learning pathway mentioned in the above comment refers to the *Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework* (the framework) (APSC, 2015) adopted by the APS in 2015. The Framework contains three key aspects of knowing, being, and doing to develop greater levels of Indigenous cultural capability. That is, knowledge and understanding of Indigenous cultures are considered requirements for APS employees to perform their duties in a culturally inclusive manner.

One has to ask how effective the Framework has been in raising the cultural capability of the APS? For example, the following comment suggests that cultural capability in the APS is still underdeveloped and that moving forward will require further education for employees to gain a deeper personal understanding of cultural capability. One Indigenous employee calls for cultural education to include a broader understanding of the ongoing impact of colonisation on the workplace experiences of Indigenous employees.

Part of my work is around educating more, so I get really questioning where people are at in their journey, understanding these systematic issues that we were impacted with. And understanding that, although times have changed, and really understanding that, although it has changed, we still are impacted on the face of these particular things (Participant 13).

Despite initial colonisation occurring over 200 years ago, this comment suggests colonisation still impacts the workplace experience of Indigenous employees in the APS. For Indigenous employees working in the APS, an accepted cultural clash known as having to

‘walk in two worlds’ illustrates this impact (Faulkner & Lahn, 2019; Halverson, 2017; Scott et al., 2020). That is, having to function as an Indigenous person governed by cultural belonging and identity and one controlled by the expectations of a professional Western principled public service. The clash fundamentally presents a tension between both cultural world-views. In sharing this message, the Indigenous employee indicates the APS may still be some way from appreciating this tension of having to ‘walk in two worlds’, bringing to bear a sufficient understanding of how unconscious bias through different cultural contexts can occur.

The practical implication of having an effective and appropriate form of cultural education provided in the following two comments provides a hopeful perspective on how cultural education can assist in responding to unconscious bias.

Yes, everyone has vices, you know, and how do you sort of, how do you manage those vices when you’re in a work environment? And how can you, I guess, have education points, potentially, or capability uplifts to be able to address some of those vices in an informative and supportive way, rather than just tick and flick? (Participant 8).

I think we can if we raise awareness about it and provide education and strategies to be able to manage the unconscious bias, I think we’re in a much better place. But I don’t see enough out there in terms of... Especially for leaders to be able to say this is a real thing. And let’s actually give you some training and some strategies to be able to manage decision and unconscious bias within yourself but then also within your staff (Participant 28).

Education to develop cultural capability is necessary to help mitigate unconscious bias in the APS workplace. As identified in the previous comment, leadership has a particular role in committing to cultural education. First, it has a role in acknowledging that unconscious bias exists and impacts Indigenous employees' employment experience. Secondly, it has a role in appropriate personal training and education. Cultural education can lead to practical responses to preventing unconscious bias from informing attitudes.

6.6.2 ‘I feel secure in whom I am in the APS’

The second most significant primary need category is *I feel secure in whom I am in the APS* with an importance level of 21% capturing local priority needs 3, 9, and 10. This grouping

indicates that Indigenous employees feel secure in who they are in the APS, including contributing effectively as an APS employee and being accepted by peers and colleagues.

Being recognised for work done is a common desire of most employees in any workplace. However, in capturing comments from Indigenous employees, a worrying experience was identified where Indigenous employees perceived themselves as being judged as lazy and incapable. Consider the following comments provided by two Indigenous employees.

Then there's also personal views about, what's the word? I can't think of the word, but the way people portray us as people, and then relaying that within a workplace, so being lazy or being uneducated because we don't have a degree, and that requires additional help because that's what is portrayed of us now. (Participant 13)

I think coming into it, Indigenous, coming through an Indigenous apprenticeship, I felt like they treated me as if I already didn't have work and life experience. Like I've worked all the time since leaving high school. And I felt like, yes, it was just wrong. Because for a long time I was given remedial work to do, and I, yes, I was just like, but I know things. And as much as I would speak about my experiences, yes, it still seemed the same (Participant 34).

Both comments portray negative experiences of being stereotyped in the workplace, with Indigenous employees perceived as less capable. It is worth noting both comments were from graduates of Indigenous entry-level employment programs. These programs target Indigenous candidates for employment in the APS as a direct measure to increase Indigenous representation in the APS. This finding appears to damage the objective of entry-level employment programs of attracting Indigenous Australians to secure a successful career in the APS. The experiences shared above suggest opportunities to develop a career pathway in the APS may not be equitable due to unconscious bias behaviour resulting in lowered expectations of Indigenous employees.

In another example, an Indigenous employee explains how he believes he has witnessed unconscious bias because his Indigeneity somehow seems to be perceived as him being less capable.

Yes. Oh absolutely, I hear that. And that goes into the understanding that, if you're different, or you think that something different or somehow you don't get it, well we do get it, we just

see things differently or communicate in a slightly different way, whether we're the first to put our hands up in a meeting or whether we'll provide an in-depth answer to a question two hours later via email. Yes. So, it's a huge thing in understanding the difference. And to go back to the unconscious bias thing, that is largely what drives some of that unconscious bias and limiting the ability of indigenous people to access those development opportunities. (Participant 33).

This comment demonstrates concern where Indigenous employee capability is adversely perceived and Indigenous employees do not feel valued for who they are and what they bring to their role. Another Indigenous employee shares a similar experience in the following comment.

But they don't realise there's actually a lot of work and a lot of stuff involved. And you worked really hard to get to this position. And it's not you're just having a cruisy little gig now. And it's also, I guess, that assumption that because you're in this position, you know everything. Everything Indigenous, every Aboriginal, Sandra (not real name) has got to know it all. And you're judged if you don't (Participant 15).

The unconscious bias being alluded to here is a form of expectation that when it comes to an Indigenous issue, the default position is to refer to an Indigenous person. On face value, this may not seem to be an instance of unconscious bias and may even be seen as a positive act in acknowledging Indigenous employees are best qualified to provide advice on Indigenous matters. However, with a little further consideration, this view can become problematic.

The employee shares that the hard work applied in getting to her current position appears to be inconsequential. Rather, the expectations of others narrowly perceive her to be only interested in, and of value in relation to Indigenous issues despite being capable of doing much more by default of her position. As a result, the Indigenous employee's capability is not judged on her own merits. Instead, the employee perceives a biased view of what others expect of her. Instead of accepting the employee's true range of skills and capabilities, the employee is pigeonholed and stereotyped through a biased view of capability because of her indigeneity.

6.6.3 'I enjoy a culturally inclusive workplace'

The primary need category, *I enjoy a culturally inclusive workplace* captured the second-ranked local priority need *Indigenous inclusion and diversity is understood as being mutually exclusive*. With local priority importance of 57%, moving toward an inclusive workplace indicates understanding the diverse representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures is required for effective Indigenous inclusion in the APS. This local priority suggests that a culturally inclusive workplace requires a shared knowledge of Indigenous cultural identity. Managers also identified *Indigenous inclusion and diversity is understood as being mutually exclusive*, which was highly ranked as their top local priority need. This finding suggests that, as identified by managers in the discussion above, a deeper appreciation of the diversity of Indigenous cultures in policy and practice would strengthen Indigenous inclusion in the APS. Why? Consider the following comment provided by an Indigenous employee who expresses concern in supporting diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

I feel that there's a genuine recognition that diversity and inclusion is something that is really important, but then I feel like it gets lost in the busy-ness of work (Participant 8).

The same concern for finding time in a busy APS workplace to advocate diversity and inclusion was expressed by managers as well. This finding suggests an amended approach is required; otherwise, getting business areas to commit to Indigenous inclusion will continue competing for space in a busy workplace – as previously mentioned, perceived as white noise. An Indigenous employee working in the Indigenous inclusion and diversity space offers the following advice to help Indigenous inclusion compete in a busy APS workplace.

It really looks at the value proposition and where I'm lobbying it is in job design and workforce planning. The only people who will have any buy-in are people who have that personal value themselves, and what I mean by that is they actually see that there's the opportunity to contribute back to society by taking a slightly amended approach to recruitment, a slightly amended approach to engagement (Participant 23).

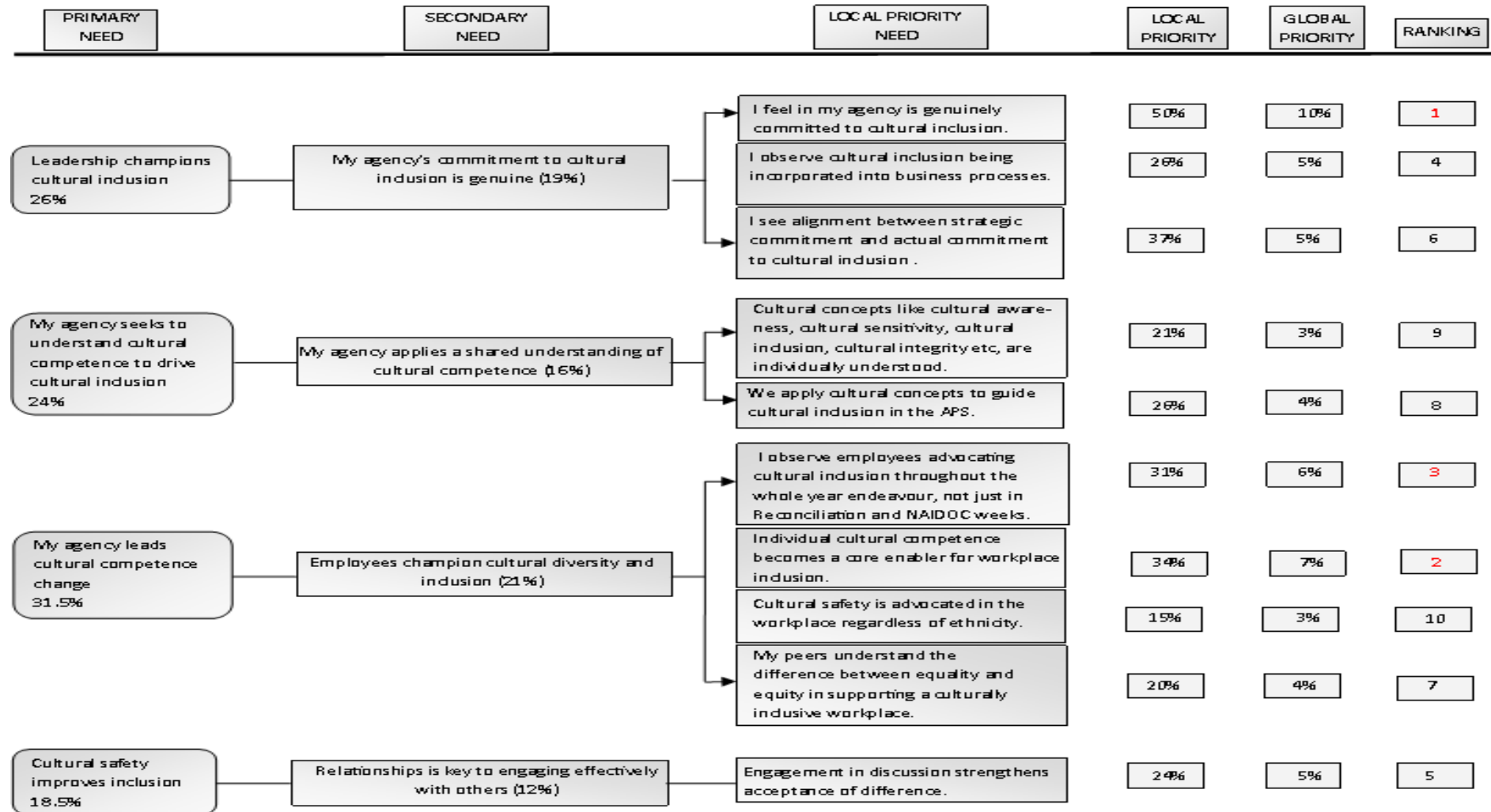
A value proposition linked with job design and workforce planning is suggested. Here the employee is identifying the importance of having personal buy-in for Indigenous inclusion to be successful, where the opportunity to contribute back to society provides a motivating

buy-in point for business areas. In reality, though, designing, developing, and implementing Indigenous inclusion is dominated by a non-Indigenous perspective in the APS. Convincing HR business areas in government agencies to be guided by a genuine understanding of cultural capability through an Indigenous lens will be the challenge.

6.7. Manager perspectives of cultural competence

Figure 6.3 lists the 10 top local priority needs identified by managers for the research theme of cultural competence. Four of four available primary need categories are represented in Figure 6.3.

Figure 6.3 Manager 10 top cultural competence workplace needs and priorities



Note: The global weight of all four primary need categories reflected in Figure 6.3 is 100%

Source: Appendix I

The primary need category, *My agency leads cultural competence change*, showed the highest importance across all four available reporting categories. With an importance level of 31%, four ranked local priority needs were captured (2, 3, 7, and 10). The next highest primary need category was *Leadership champions cultural inclusion*, with an importance level of 26% capturing local priority needs ranked 1, 4, and 6.

For an agency to move towards leading cultural competence change, managers identified employees championing cultural diversity and inclusion as a priority secondary-level need category. Managers also identified agencies having a genuine commitment to cultural inclusion to support leadership in championing cultural inclusion. Local priority needs captured in both primary need categories share the same global importance level of 20% each.

6.7.1 'My agency leads cultural competence change'

The primary need category, *My agency leads cultural competence change*, captured the second highest ranked local priority need, *Individual cultural competence becomes a core enabler for workplace inclusion* with an importance level of 34%. For an agency to move toward leading cultural competence change, an identified key driver for change was individual employees championing cultural competence. However, current perceptions regarding the effectiveness of current cultural competence practice in the APS are not seen positively by managers. For example, consider the following three comments provided by managers when asked to comment on what they thought of their agency's commitment to cultural competence.

It would be pretty low and I think there's a lot of individual interventions rather than looking at creating an environment that feels culturally safe for people. Just given the systematic nature of the interventions, either strategy or individual but there's not a lot of interventions that are working (Participant 37).

I think in a whole of organisation way probably not. Within the group of people who hold themselves to account then yes. And they're a subset and they're probably people who have experienced different forms of exclusion (Participant 19).

I don't think so. I think there's a long way to go. I think in most senses it's quite fragmented how we view and act as an APS, is quite separate to how we make investment decisions and fund service providers to deliver in communities. And I think there's still a dominance of primary programmatic view, not necessarily a more inclusive, broad view that would pick up not just broader concepts like wellbeing, but cultural competence, more broadly (Participant 31).

The responses provided above are generally consistent with comments provided by other managers. These comments highlight that culturally competent practice is, at best, perceived to be fragmented and poorly integrated into broader business processes. Participant 31 raises this dilemma by identifying how culturally competent practice is not embraced as a necessary support or enabler of inclusiveness in making better decisions.

The following comment identifies a recurring theme similar to that specified for unconscious bias. That is, the busy nature of work in the APS means finding the time and space to devote to workplace interventions and convincing others to buy into interventions is very difficult to achieve.

Partly, people are not interested. People are too busy. I just mind my own business. We can demonstrate that we're doing a whole heap of things. But practically, I just think people are too busy, especially at the moment, to even be able to do that. Or properly. It needs to go below... It needs to be, sorry, above the superficial engagement about your culture and who you are and whatnot (Participant 18).

Cultural competence practice in the APS appears to need a revised approach if agencies are to champion cultural competence change. One non-Indigenous manager articulates an openness to wanting to embrace an open and learning approach to cultural competence in partnership with Indigenous employees. This approach will require managers to find a way to disrupt the busyness of daily work practices to commit to doing cultural competence practices differently.

I think part of me is saying, being quite open with the fact that I don't know all the details and I'm really looking for you to educate me and share with me what things are important to you, what things drive you, what things are important to you and your family in your culture, so that I can better support you or educate the broader team as well (Participant 20).

6.7.2 'Leadership champions cultural inclusion'

The primary category, *Leadership champions cultural inclusion*, captured the highest weighted local priority need of *I feel my agency is generally committed to cultural inclusion*. The secondary need category of *My agency's commitment to cultural inclusion is genuine* is closely aligned with the local priority need. The only real difference is that one need targets individual responsibility, and the other targets an agency-level response. Both responses reflect managers' importance on perceiving their agency's genuine commitment to cultural competence. This has direct implications for who is responsible for cultural competence in agencies.

One manager provided an interesting response when asked to share her views on strengthening the APS's cultural competence policy. Her insight points to the broader implications of cultural competence policy being applicable beyond just Indigenous Australian cultures, to cultures more broadly in the APS.

In the APS I think we view any of those words that partner with cultural as being focused purely on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups. But I think that they could equally be applicable to other ethnic groups. And I think if we want to champion it, make it more visible, make people more aware that when we're attending this training or we're talking about the cultural in this specific context that it may be more about where we're going. We're doing Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander training today. The objective is to understand the culture. But be more specific, more targeted to the region that we're in (Participant 32).

The principles of cultural competence and its position within the theoretical framework of cultural proficiency²⁹ are essentially the same regardless of what culture is in focus. However, the APS has an opportunity to reposition its cultural competence policy within the broader cultural proficiency framework for the betterment of all minority cultures in the APS. By positioning cultural competence policy in the APS through a nuanced understanding of Australian Indigenous cultures, learning acquired can easily be transferred to strengthen

²⁹ Cultural proficiency is positioned as the last stage along a developmental continuum of cultural proficiency in achieving transformation for equity. Cultural proficiency is characterised as supporting ongoing learning in order to be increasingly effective in serving the educational needs of cultural groups. Holding the vision that you and the agency are instruments for creating a socially just democracy (Lindsey & Lindsey, 2016).

broader culturally competent practice within the APS.

For the APS to move toward leadership championing cultural inclusion, commitment has to be seen to be genuine. This will require leadership to be open and transparent in leading cultural competence change, but equally important, all employees will be responsible too. One Indigenous manager sums up this commitment in the following comment.

I think everyone is committed when you look at our APS code of conduct. You unpack that and you talk about integrity and trust and all of those sorts of things that we're all meant to bring to our workplace in our everyday working. To me, that means everyone is responsible. To reinforce it. Everyone is responsible to model it, to talk openly about times where they haven't, to be transparent about it. To really go, you know what? This isn't good enough anymore. Be brave (Participant 24).

6.8. Indigenous employee perspectives of cultural competence

Figure 6.4 lists the 10 top local priority needs identified by Indigenous employees for the research theme of cultural competence. Two of four available primary need categories are represented in Figure 6.4.

The primary need category, *My agency leads cultural competence change* showed the highest level of importance across two available primary need categories with an importance level of 45%, capturing local priority needs ranked 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 9. The primary need category, *Leadership champions cultural inclusion*, reported the remaining local priority ranked needs of 4, 8, and 10 with an importance level of 23%.

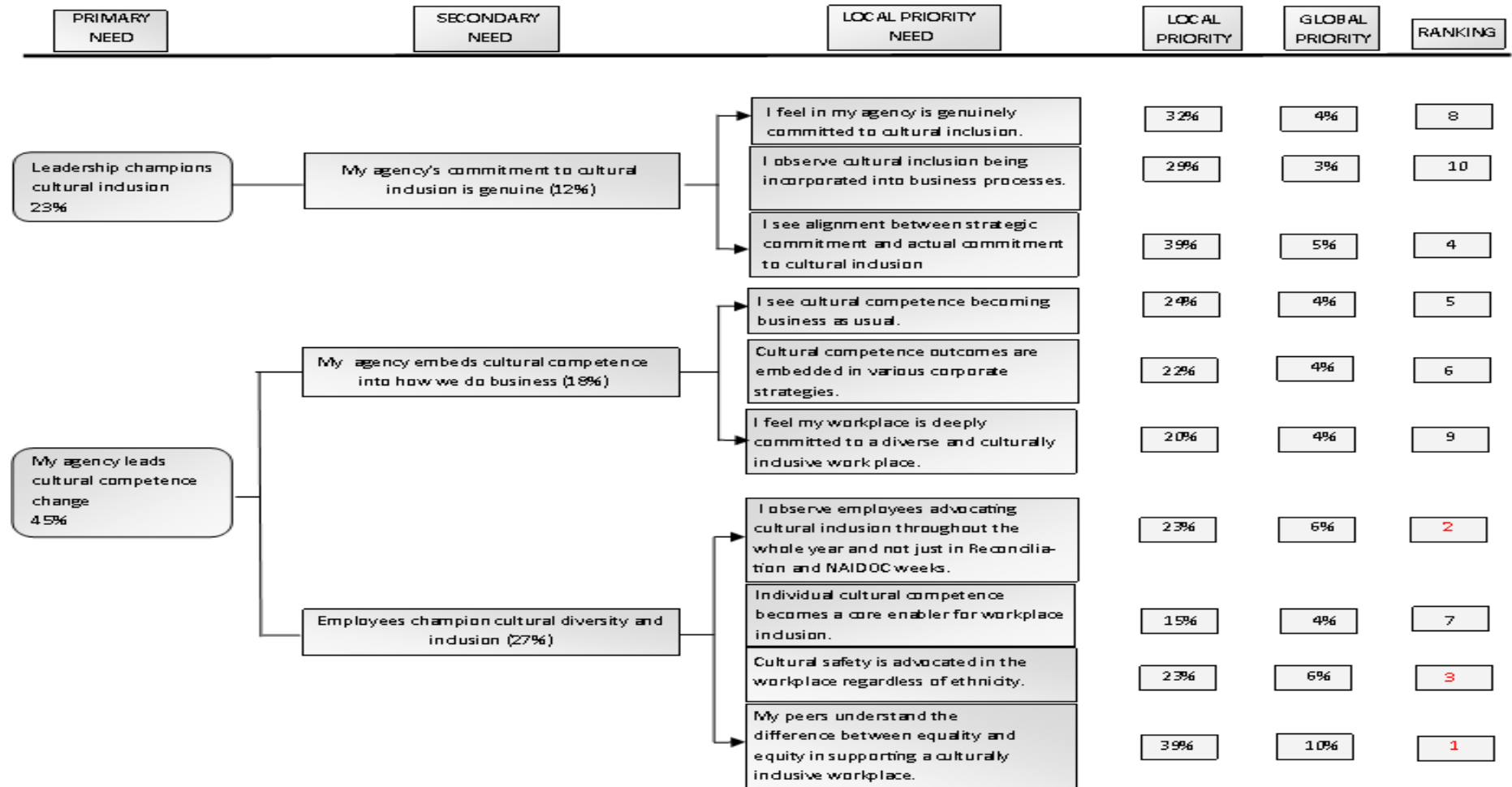
For an agency to move towards leading cultural competence change, Indigenous employees identified the secondary need category, *Employees champion cultural diversity and inclusion* as their highest priority secondary level need. The four local priority needs captured under *Employees champion cultural diversity and inclusion* represented a combined global importance level of 26%. The only other secondary need category identified in Indigenous employee 10 top-ranked local priority needs was *My agency embeds cultural competence into how we do business*, with a lower combined local priority global importance level of 12%.

6.8.1 'My agency leads cultural competence change'

The primary need category, *My agency leads cultural competence change*, captured all three top-ranked local priority needs. The top local priority need to be identified by Indigenous employees was *My peers understand the difference between equality and equity in supporting a culturally competent workplace* for a local priority importance level of 39%. This result indicates Indigenous employees place importance on all employees understanding the difference between being treated equally and equitably for their agency to lead cultural competence change. Where equity means everyone is treated fairly, equality means treating everyone the same. It is the former concept of equity expressed through processes, structures, and the environment of the APS where Indigenous employees identified greater equality. For example, consider the following two comments.

Well, it comes back to more flipping it as well in regards to how our mob, well, that organisation), all the people understanding how our mob culture can assist build their capabilities. So, although we have all these programmes, how the individual or a person of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background can assist with building or developing through that cultural lens, particularly because we look at things a lot more broader through dreaming or through that storytelling or aspects (Participant 13).

Figure 6. 4 Indigenous employee 10 top cultural competence workplace needs and priorities



Note: The global weight of the two primary need categories reflected in Figure 6.4 is 68%

Source: Appendix I

A lot of that is, as I said before, if they don't have to have acquired the information that they won't. And there's a lack of consideration of Indigenous issues and how it actually plays out in the greater Australian economy, and the relationship between some of these issues and the work that we do. They might have a body of work but if they were a little more considerate or understanding of Indigenous issues, then they might incorporate that into their existing body of work. The last thing is that it's not actually thought about much in the day-to-day work that they do (Participant 33).

The first comment identified the opportunity to collectively integrate the broader input of Indigenous employees to boost capability. Specifically mentioned in a program context, the Indigenous employee commenting argues for a more inclusive and purposeful integration of knowledge held by Indigenous employees collectively. Valuing cultural inclusiveness in this example is asking for more significant consideration of what government programs can bring to support Indigenous employees/people. That is a different way of viewing the world through a cultural lens, such as storytelling.

The second comment follows a similar concern in expressing a gap in seeking Indigenous knowledge to improve government outcomes. Here the Indigenous employee perceives managers as not being aware or possibly not wanting to acquire more culturally informed information. This perception suggests environmental aspects of APS culture might inhibit cultural inclusion resulting in inequitable input of Indigenous employees from contributing to problem-solving, particularly in Indigenous programs or service delivery. The result a potentially weakening of responses to programs and service delivery for Indigenous citizens.

In both comments, input into business operations that value Indigenous cultural knowledge will lead to more equitable inclusion for Indigenous employees, particularly for Indigenous-related issues. This might not appear contrary to what is currently advocated in the APS through existing workplace and inclusion practices. However, a collective application of knowing when and how to seek Indigenous input into business processes in the APS more broadly across the APS does not exist.

6.8.2 'I observe employees advocating cultural inclusion throughout the whole year and not just in Reconciliation and NAIDOC weeks'

The second-ranked local priority need with a local priority importance level of 23% is that *I observe employees advocating cultural inclusion throughout the year, not just in Reconciliation and NAIDOC weeks*. This priority indicates that Indigenous employees place importance on all employees committing to cultural inclusion throughout the year, and not predominantly during specific weeks alone such as Reconciliation and NAIDOC weeks for an agency to lead cultural competence change. The following comment specifically addresses this concern.

I genuinely just think it is management. It's just so accepted over lots of different sites that no one bothers to do anything about it, other than during NAIDOC Week. I think, for our department, it's very much, I don't think anyone is culturally confident in anything. I think, like I said, we do it one week out of the year where we try, and then it's forgotten until next year (Participant 16).

Several Indigenous employees consistently expressed this view. While focusing on celebrating and advocating Indigenous cultures through Reconciliation and/or NAIDOC weeks are valued and welcomed by Indigenous employees, the belief amongst Indigenous employees is that the focus enjoyed in these specific weeks is somewhat missing for the remainder of the year. Not advocating and valuing Indigenous participation and inclusion more broadly throughout the year leads to perceptions that Indigenous inclusion is only perceived to be of value in one or two weeks of the year. As a result, agency commitment in leading culturally competent inclusion is at risk of becoming a tokenistic exercise or lip service. Even with a Reconciliation Action Plan where the focus is on supporting Indigenous inclusion throughout the year, an agency's response is not guaranteed. Consider the following comment that highlights this failing.

Yes. Definitely. And to be honest, I guess in the role that I'm doing, I'm sort of a business analyst, looking at process simplification. If I asked someone in my team, have you read the reconciliation action plan? I don't think they even would now. They would know what it is but, yes, I have never read it. I just think there's that much of a disconnection between it (Participant 17).

By its very nature, reconciliation requires engagement from everyone in the APS. As expressed above, awareness of an agency's Reconciliation Action Plan and knowing what is contained in the Reconciliation Action Plan highlights a fundamental issue that underlies implementation. That is, integration into agency business processes appears limited. Indigenous employees will, on average, be far more likely to be aware of what is contained in the Reconciliation Action Plan than their non-Indigenous peers. The Indigenous employee is alluding to this in his comment above when mentioning that they might know what it is but not have read the Reconciliation Action Plan. As expressed by Indigenous employees above, shared knowledge of advocating Indigenous inclusion through reconciliation action plans is not adequately understood across the APS.

6.8.3 'Cultural safety is advocated in the workplace regardless of ethnicity'

Maori nurses originally coined 'cultural safety' as a term that essentially means no assault on a person's identity (Williams, 1999). The third-ranked local priority is to lead an agency to cultural competence change through employees championing cultural inclusion and diversity is, Cultural safety is advocated in the workplace regardless of ethnicity with an importance level of 39%. The following comment from an Indigenous employee indicates why having a culturally safe environment is important regardless of cultural background.

I think it's important because it will pull out that safety regardless of what race you come from. If you feel like your opinion counts, regardless of what perspective you're coming from, whether that's a cultural or community. Yes, I think that's really important (Participant 13).

Another employee strengthens the above message for respecting all cultures in the workplace while being purposeful in providing a culturally safe workplace.

We would generally say that a workplace should be free from harassment or bullying. One of the factors is being aware of everyone's cultural background. And this is broader to their diversity. And once we are aware of them as individuals, making sure that we can provide them with a workplace that is free from anything that might be seen as causing them offence or anything like that. Yes, trying to balance that across the whole department or agency (Participant 30).

However, when asking Indigenous employees to respond to what a culturally safe

environment meant, comments provided also raised the difficulties of having to walk in two worlds. For example, the following statement provided by an Indigenous employee articulates the difficulty that Indigenous employees can face.

You came from the community, you have been a recipient (government support) at that end of the community, and now you're in government and you're making policy and programmes. You try to interject in that environment. A lot of experiences. It's hard. It's hard to sort of think. Especially when there's a certain way that your boss is trying to direct it. For myself, I'm feeling very emotional about it because this is something that affects me. They're very... How can you say? They've got no emotion when it comes to what they're doing because it does not affect them. But when I see that they're doing something that's going to affect not only me, but my children and family and community in an adverse way, I find that difficult sometimes (Participant 29).

Walking in two worlds for Indigenous employees is a real phenomenon that directly impacts an Indigenous employee's workplace experience. In the above comment, the participant provides a clear example demonstrating a missing shared understanding and appreciation of cultural inclusion between him and his manager. Consequently, walking in two worlds resulted in the participant's identity as an Indigenous employee in the APS being devalued. For an Indigenous employee working in Indigenous affairs on Indigenous-related policy or program matters, this tension between what is expected of an employee and what an employee has to do can place unique and conflicting expectations on Indigenous employees as First Nations People of Australia.

Cultural competence underpins being culturally safe and should not be positioned the other way around. That is, one cannot provide a culturally safe workplace without having appropriate cultural competence. Of course, varying levels of cultural competence will lead to varying levels of cultural safety that directly influence how Indigenous employees experience agency in their role in the APS. Consider the following comment from an Indigenous employee when specifically asked to identify how to embed a greater level of cultural competence into the DNA of their agency for a safer, culturally inclusive workplace.

It's going to be a really hard one to try and change only because of the history. You still have this white ideology. You still have people who think that colonisation and massacres did not

occur. You still chip away at trying to educate and we've been trying to educate for many, many years and people aren't going to change their views or their minds. They're not and it goes back to their own personal beliefs and values and yes, we have our APS values (Participant 11).

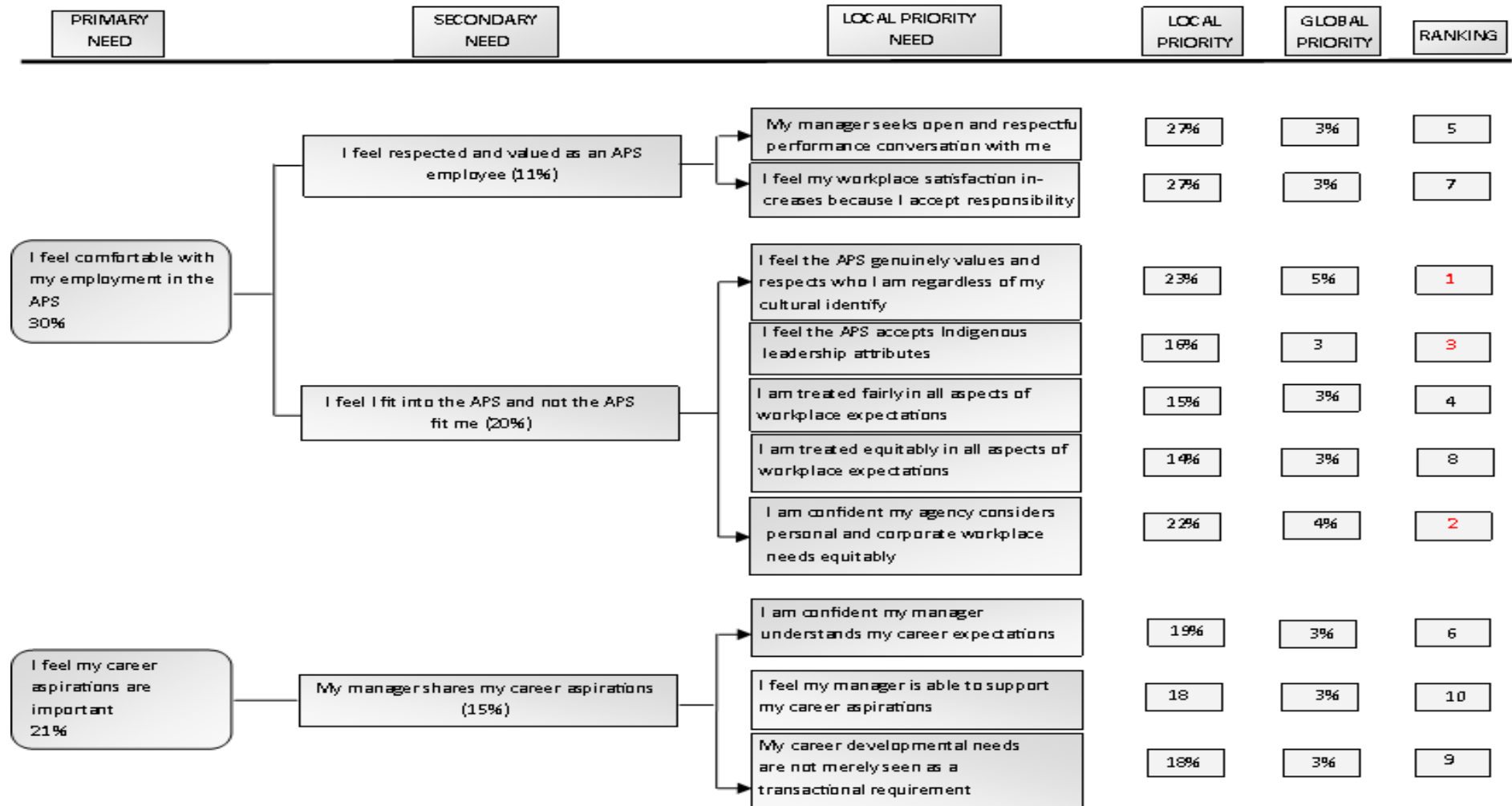
The above comment suggests areas where cultural safety will continue to be undermined for some in the APS because historical realities for Indigenous employees are not accepted. For agencies to lead cultural competence in the APS, understanding the realities of 'walking in two worlds' as experienced by Indigenous employees is essential for employees to grasp when championing cultural diversity and inclusion.

6.9. Manager perspectives of workplace congruence

Figure 6.5 lists the 10 top-ranked local priority needs identified by managers for the research theme of workplace congruence. Two of the five available primary need categories are represented in Figure 6.5.

The primary need category, *I feel comfortable with my employment in the APS*, shows the highest level of importance across the two reported primary need categories. This category reports an importance level of 30% out of all five primary need categories for workplace congruence. The secondary need category, *I feel I fit the APS and not the APS fit me*, captures ranked local priority needs 1, 2, 3, 4, and 8 for a combined global importance level of 18%. The remaining secondary need category, *I feel respected and valued as an APS employee*, ranks local priority needs 5 and 7 for a combined global importance level of 6%.

Figure 6.5 Manager 10 top workplace congruence needs and priorities



Note: The global weight of the two primary need categories reflected in Figure 6.5 is 51%

Source: Appendix I

6.9.1 'I feel the agency genuinely values and respects who I am regardless of cultural identity'

The local priority need, *I feel the APS genuinely values and respects who I am regardless of my cultural identity*, with a global importance level of 5%, is identified as the top-ranked local priority need by managers. This priority need shows that managers value being genuinely accepted as an individual, which is an important factor in being comfortable with employment in the APS. When asked to respond to what he thought of employment expectations between managers and Indigenous employees in order for Indigenous employees to thrive in the APS, an Indigenous manager offered the following comment.

I think flexibility. And I don't just mean in terms of hours worked or those sorts of things, but a flexibility to be able to express yourself in a way that you're comfortable with. Express yourself in a way that others will listen. So what I mean is, to bring everything back down to a narrow, unless you look and sound like this, you're going to struggle. That sort of definition of, that idea of success and a person's capability and their ability is not limited to a certain look. And I don't just mean a physical look, there's a set of, okay, well this person can write like this or they're an eloquent speaker (Participant 5).

In the above comment, the manager identifies a need to address how a narrowed view of capability can impact one's self-concept of worth, lowering expectations between a manager and an Indigenous employee. A biased perception of capability leads to a potential devaluing of worth for both employees and managers. Defaulting to an individual for a particular perceived strength, such as writing or speaking eloquently, can also narrow workplace expectations. If a manager limits the opportunity to write or to speak in certain instances to certain individuals, by default, this limits the opportunity and potential to develop others.

A non-Indigenous manager, when asked whether Indigenous employees and managers shared the same workplace expectations, provided the following response expressing a similar concern as Participant 5, but identifying a dichotomy of opposing expectations.

No. They're the same people at different points in their career in a way. I really don't think people differ much between generations. I think that generational distinction we keep

making is almost a horoscope. People are people and they just operate in the environment they're in. But I think as you progress you either get more and more conscious of how you don't fit the mould or you get less and less conscious of the people around you being an awful lot like you and that skews your experience (Participant 19).

On the one hand, the manager identifies how one can become more and more conscious of not fitting the APS mould as one progresses through the APS, and on the other hand, becoming less aware of the similarity of others around you as you progress in the APS. Both views will directly impact how one perceives their position to be in the APS. Unconscious bias theory, in this instance, shows how easily one's attitudes can align to either an in-group or out-group, resulting in others experiencing potential stereotyping, prejudice, or inequitable employment expectations. This results from becoming less conscious of the diversity of people around oneself.

6.9.2 'I am confident my agency considers personal and corporate workplace needs equitably'

The second highest ranked local priority need with a global importance level of 4% is, *I am confident my agency considers personal and corporate workplace needs equitably*. This need suggests that being treated equitably is important to be comfortable with one's employment in the APS. Managers clearly understand the distinction between being treated fairly and equitably in the workplace. However, when asked to share what they think of the distinction between both concepts of fairness and equity, concerns expressed identify a reality of bias resulting in negative perceptions of inclusion. For example, consider the following comment from a non-Indigenous manager.

I mean look at decisions made at this place. And I do not think that they're fair, because they don't take into account an individual. What they're trying to do is they're trying to take the individual and the situation and fit the mould, and it just doesn't fit. And I think if we tried it the other way around, to make the decision to fit X, Y and Z (Participant 18).

The above comment demonstrates how, structurally, decision-making can prevent equitable outcomes in a diverse, engaged workplace in favour of following entrenched practices. The

following comment provided by an Indigenous manager picks up on the need to elevate equity in decision-making to combat the effects of unconscious bias in decision-making.

I think they are different. Equity to me is putting in place processes to ensure for us, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, that we are given the same opportunities as anyone else. And it links to that unconscious bias, because we say the public service is fair and it's all based on merit etc., but obviously unconscious bias must be feeding into that, because we're not feeling represented (Participant 6).

In providing the above comment, the Indigenous manager highlights a shared concern held by Indigenous employees. That is, when opportunities come along, Indigenous employees do not feel that they are being considered equitably, and as expressed by Participant 6, unconscious bias prevents equal access to opportunities. The result is that merit application reflects the inequitable representation of Indigenous employees in the APS. This perception in beliefs remains tension between Indigenous employees and workplace inclusion practices more broadly across the APS.

6.9.3 'I feel the APS accepts Indigenous leadership attributes'

The third highest ranked local priority need, *I feel the APS accepts Indigenous leadership attributes*, is shown by managers as being a priority need to support cultural inclusion in the APS. However, managers identify that recognising and accepting Indigenous leadership attributes is perhaps not adequately understood or appreciated across the APS. Consider the following two comments.

Look, I think, more generally, we probably underestimate the value that they can bring to the APS. If you think about connections in communities, some of these staff have got amazing connections culturally through their patches. And I think we underestimate that (Participant 32).

A lot of indigenous people will learn their leadership style from their elders, from their community, from people they know, respect and value. And that kind of leadership style, again, doesn't fit the APS mould. So, I think in order to thrive, in order to be who you are, you need to be ...we talk about bring your whole self to work. Really? (Participant 18).

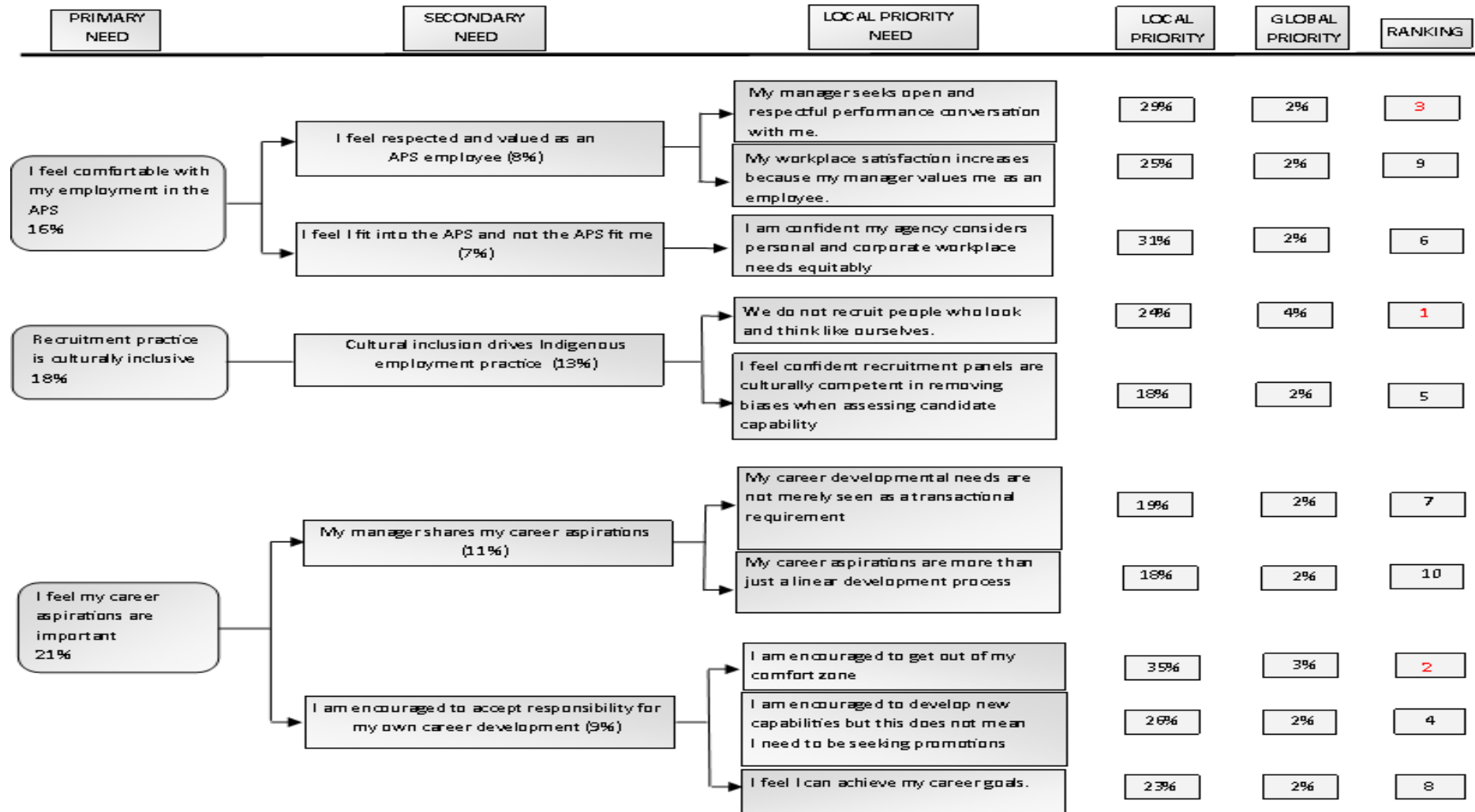
Both comments present implications for embracing Indigenous leadership attributes for an inclusive workplace. While it is positive to have managers identify the need to embrace Indigenous leadership attributes for Indigenous inclusion, manager comments suggest that further work on sharing the value of Indigenous leadership attributes is required to realise this priority need. Specifically, as identified by Participant 18 above, is his concern that Indigenous leadership may not fit the APS mould for leadership. The manager suggests that despite the APS encouraging one to bring their full self to their role in the APS, he questions the reality of the APS accepting such. He suggests that expressing one's Indigenous leadership style in a multicultural workplace may need not be encouraged, instead being seen to be politically correct in fitting a perceived leadership mould, as supported in the following comment.

But we, a lot of Indigenous people will learn their leadership to be careful, because we might be going down the road to hell of political correctness and everything. And I think that's the biggest danger to our multicultural, as a general concept I think (Participant 18).

6.10. Indigenous employee perspectives of workplace congruence

Figure 6.6 lists the 10 top local priority needs identified by managers for the research theme of workplace congruence. Three of the five available primary need categories are represented in Figure 6.6.

Figure 6. 6 Indigenous employee 10 top workplace congruence needs and priorities



Note: The global weight of the three primary need categories reflected in Figure 6.5 is 55%

Source: Appendix I

The primary need category, *I feel my career aspirations are important*, showed the highest level of importance across three reporting primary need categories. This category reported an importance level of 21% out of all five primary need categories for workplace congruence, reporting five of the 10 top-ranked local priority needs (2, 4, 7, 8, and 10). The highest ranked local priority need, *We do not recruit people who look and think like ourselves* with a global importance level of 4% is captured in the primary need category, *Recruitment practice is culturally inclusive*. The third-ranked local priority need, *My manager seeks open and respectful performance engagement with me*, with a global importance level of 2% was captured in the primary category of *I feel comfortable with my employment in the APS*.

6.10.1 'We do not recruit people who look and think like ourselves'

Indigenous employees rank *We do not recruit people who look and think like ourselves* as their third highest ranked local priority need in moving forward to achieve culturally inclusive recruitment practices. Indigenous employee narratives expressed a range of considerations regarding unmet expectations of cultural inclusion.

When asked to share their views on recruitment and development opportunities, Indigenous employees express a number of different views and expectations on what they think is limiting the effectiveness of cultural inclusion in supporting recruitment and development opportunities. An Indigenous employee working in the diversity and inclusion space highlights his concern.

I think because, in all honesty, the role that I've got is essential to the organisation but it doesn't fit the make-up of the organisation. What I mean by that is if I was to give a shape to this role it would be a circle, but more often than not the equivalent APS6 roles are squares or triangles. This is quite a unique space, the diversity space, inclusion space, but in saying that the links go right across, up and down in the organisation. Does that make me able to get a job done if I was to go into the budget policy division? I don't know but I'm pretty sure no-one's tapped me on the shoulder to have a conversation about that (Participant 23).

Here the Indigenous employee expresses concern at what he perceives to be a structural limitation in supporting culturally inclusive recruitment practices for Indigenous

employment. Working directly in diversity and inclusion in his agency, although he sees how diversity and inclusion are 'linked' throughout his agency, he feels the structure of his agency is preventing the adoption of culturally inclusive recruitment practices. Recruiting to fill a role that structurally limits attracting potential candidates makes applying culturally inclusive recruitment to increase Indigenous representation in his agency even harder.

In another example concerning the effectiveness of cultural inclusion in guiding recruitment, an Indigenous employee expresses concern about how unconscious bias in the recruitment process prevents existing employees from being considered for development opportunities. For example, consider the following comment.

Yes, they are, but because there's a gap somewhere when you take this issue when we talk about recruitment, not just as people in the Public Service, but when it comes to that unconscious bias through in recruitment, we always try and take somebody who is fully capable instead of looking at somebody that we can build on over time (Participant 13).

In this instance, the Indigenous employee further comments on how the principle of merit in identifying the most suitable person for the advertised role is failing. The result is a situation where merit does not ensure fairness in determining capability because of unconscious bias.

I think it's because we know there's also that personal aspect. So, if you have that relationship with a particular somebody, we know sometimes that we're chucked out because of that. Again, merit is not always applied fairly when you're looking for somebody that meets the whole criteria, therefore you may be overlook. (Participant 13).

Moving toward culturally inclusive recruitment, in this instance, appears to be weakened through unconscious bias. Indigenous employees seeking promotion through recruitment actions are potentially screened out of promotional opportunities.

In pursuing the recruitment theme, another Indigenous employee expresses the need to respond even further to Indigenous recruitment. He suggests Indigenous employment should be conducted externally to the APS.

I'm fair. I'm one for best practice. I'm one for research stuff and like a lot, the UN approach to best practice in diversity management. And I think the employment should be done externally. By an external organisation, if someone wants to, for your organisation to build that capacity (Participant 25).

However, the same Indigenous employee suggests a compromise. He offers the model of a specific Indigenous body within the agency to act as an Indigenous inclusion advocate for Indigenous employment and workforce-related matters.

Yes. I think we would then need to have a body within the organisation to deal with indigenous issues, workplace issues. If there is conflict with a manager or whatever, then that's turned over to the Aboriginal body to have a say. And not just a lip-service say, but to have power behind it (Participant 25).

Comments presented above concerning moving an agency to inclusive recruitment practices is linked directly to the local priority need *We do not recruit people who look and think like ourselves*. The aim of diversity and inclusion practice generally is to increase engagement within organisations where employees perceive high levels of trust because of inclusion. However, in sharing their concerns, Indigenous employees indicate the need to strengthen trust in their agency's commitment to demonstrate culturally inclusive recruitment practices.

6.11. Summarising the three top ranked local priority needs

Table 6.3 lists the top three ranked local priority needs identified by both Indigenous employees and managers. A noticeable observation is that Indigenous employees and managers identify the same local priority level need *Indigenous inclusion and diversity is understood to be mutually exclusive* for the research theme of unconscious bias as indicated in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3 The three top ranked local priority needs identified by Indigenous employees and managers

	Indigenous Employees	Managers
Unconscious Bias		
I feel empowered to commit to a journey of educating myself on impact of unconscious bias.	✓	
I am rewarded for my good work.	✓	
Indigenous inclusion and diversity is understood to be mutually exclusive	✓	✓
All business areas across the agency enjoy a similar level of knowledge of Indigenous matters		✓
I feel confident capability uplifts are integrated into business outcomes, not as a tick and flick exercise.		✓
Cultural competence		
My peers understand the difference between equality and equity in supporting a culturally inclusive workplace.	✓	
I observe employees advocating cultural inclusion throughout the whole year and not just in Reconciliation and NAIDOC weeks.	✓	✓
Cultural safety is advocated in the workplace regardless of ethnicity.	✓	
I feel in my agency is genuinely committed to cultural inclusion.		✓
Individual cultural competence becomes a core enabler for workplace inclusion.		✓
Workplace congruence		
We do not recruit people who look and think like ourselves.	✓	
I am encouraged to get out of my comfort zone.	✓	
My manager seeks open and respectful performance conversation with me.	✓	
I feel the APS genuinely values and respects who I am regardless of my cultural identify		✓
I am confident my agency considers personal and corporate workplace needs equitably		✓
I feel the APS accepts Indigenous leadership attributes		✓

Source: Chapter 4

The following discussion summarises all ranked local priority needs and their hierarchy pathway through to each need's respective primary level category.

6.11.1 Unconscious bias

When identifying priority needs in response to the research theme of unconscious bias, both Indigenous employees and managers identify enjoying a culturally inclusive workplace as an important primary need. Employees and managers share a similar perspective; it is important to consider how Indigenous inclusion and diversity are interpreted as individual concepts to achieve a culturally inclusive workplace. However, Indigenous employees identify the need to feel empowered to commit to self-education on the impact of unconscious bias as their top-ranked local priority need, tracing through to the primary need category of emphasising the importance of cultural education for all employees. The remaining top-ranked local priority need that Indigenous employees identify is *I am rewarded for my good work*, which traces through to the primary need category of feeling secure in one's identity in the APS.

The two remaining local priority needs that managers identify reflect a different perspective to that identified by Indigenous employees. That is, managers place greater importance on corporate capability in moving towards the primary need category of their agency emphasising Indigenous employment. This is not surprising, given their management and leadership functions. To move towards this primary need category, managers identify corporate strategies – like Reconciliation Actions Plans – as key in leading their agency's response, where all business areas enjoy a similar level of knowledge of Indigenous matters fundamental to achieving this primary need.

6.11.2 Cultural competence

When identifying priority needs in response to the research theme of cultural competence, Indigenous employees and managers identify the primary need category of *My agency leads cultural competence change* as their greatest primary need. This primary need category captures all three top-ranked local priority needs for Indigenous employees and two of the three top-ranked local priority needs for managers. Indigenous employees identified all three top-ranked local priority ranked needs as being dependent on the secondary-need category of employees championing cultural diversity and inclusion. Likewise, managers identified the same secondary-need category with similar global weight for two of their top-

ranked local priority needs (34% and 31%, respectively). The remaining top-ranked local priority need (local priority need 1) identified by managers sees cultural competence as a key enabler for their agency's genuine commitment to cultural inclusion.

6.11.3 Workplace congruence

For workplace congruence, Indigenous employees and managers have the most variance of all three research themes in reflecting their local priority needs. Indigenous employees identify three primary need categories with three secondary need categories for each of the three top-ranked local priority needs. Managers identify just one primary and secondary needs category for their top three ranked local priority needs.

Indigenous employees identify *Recruitment practice is culturally inclusive* as their top primary need category, where cultural inclusion results in increased career opportunities for Indigenous employees. The practical implication is removing barriers preventing Indigenous employees from being perceived as less interested in or capable of seeking career advancement and development opportunities.

The second primary-need category that Indigenous employees identify is feeling that their career aspirations are important. To move toward this primary need, the local priority need of being encouraged to get out of their comfort zone was dependent on being encouraged to accept responsibility for their own career development for Indigenous employees. This combination of all three needs suggests Indigenous employees want a stronger open relationship with managers.

The third primary need category that Indigenous employees identify is *I feel my career aspirations are important* for their employment role in the APS. To move toward achieving this primary need was determined to be dependent on employees feeling respected and valued, and where their manager focuses on building a relationship of open and respectful performance expectations.

Managers identify the primary-need category *I feel comfortable with my employment in the APS* as their sole primary need category for all three top-ranked local priority needs. This outcome also results in one secondary need category linking both the primary need

category with the top three local priority needs – *I feel I fit the APS and not the APS fit me*. However, important to managers in this regard is their agency being seen to genuinely value and respect all cultures, ensuring a balance between personal and corporate needs equitably and accepting that Indigenous leadership attributes matter.

6.12. Concluding remarks

The top three ranked local priority needs for each research theme offer the APS with valuable insight into where focus and effort can strengthen Indigenous employment outcomes in the APS. For example, Indigenous employees and managers emphasize the need to understand that workplace inclusion and diversity are mutually exclusive. A better appreciation of this distinction is important when responding to how unconscious bias expressed through attitudes can potentially lead to stereotypes, prejudices, and potential racism experienced by Indigenous employees.

Likewise, for the research theme of cultural competence, priority needs suggest positive and active responses are required to advocate cultural competence across the APS. In terms of achieving equitable employment outcomes for Indigenous employees, reconciliation advocated throughout the whole year is important, and where cultural inclusion can drive greater levels of workplace inclusion.

Indigenous employees and managers signal the importance of clarifying key areas to build workplace congruence. For example, Indigenous employees identify the need to be supported and encouraged by their supervisor to step out of their comfort zones as a priority area to address when pursuing promotional and development opportunities. Managers, for example, placed importance on an APS workplace that values everyone respectfully regardless of one's cultural identity, where personal and corporate needs are balanced, but also where Indigenous leadership attributes have a greater appreciation in the APS.

The following chapter (**Chapter 7**) discusses implications for future APS Indigenous employment policy. In doing so, framing perspectives of organisational behaviour and the effectiveness of diversity initiatives.

Chapter 7 Implications for Indigenous employment

7.1. Recapping the objective and purpose of the research project

The primary objective of this thesis has been to investigate how unconscious bias impacts the workplace experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and how cultural competence can support employment outcomes for APS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. Therefore, this investigation aims to identify policy implications for improving Indigenous employment in the APS.

Chapters 2, 5, and 6 form the basis of the implications presented in this chapter. Five sections follow. First, I review the prominent literature on why diversity programs fail to acclimate the reader to the broader challenges in addressing unconscious bias training as an inclusion and diversity program for the APS. The second section discusses priority workplace needs/themes, as summarised in Table 7.1. The third section discusses an integrated approach to unconscious bias training to help address the structural impediments of supporting a culturally inclusive APS workplace. The fourth section brings the first three sections together summarising a way forward for the APS to adopt. In the fifth and final section, I discuss some limitations of the research applied to this thesis identifying considerations for future research.

7.2. Why diversity training programs fail

Diversity training programs facilitate ‘positive intergroup interactions, reducing prejudice and discrimination, and enhancing participants’ skills, knowledge, and motivation to interact with diverse others’ (Bezrukova, Spell, Perry, & Jehn, 2016, p. 1228). There is a body of evidence in the literature arguing that diversity training programs are failing. That is, diversity initiatives (including those to address bias in the workplace), are not achieving equity in the workplace (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016; Fryer, 2022; Gino & Coffman, 2021; Madera, 2017). For example, Dobbin and Kalev (2016) contend that since the 1960s, diversity programs aimed at controlling bias have failed and that despite various new adaptations of existing diversity programs, results have worsened diversity outcomes (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016, p. 1).

Dobbin and Kalev (2016) argue diversity programs have failed because motivating people to compulsorily attend training events does not work; voluntary participation works better. Gino and Coffman (2021) discuss the flaws of conventional approaches to diversity training programs, arguing that training outcomes are better when training is voluntary. They reason that by making activity voluntary, only those who are aware and interested in reducing bias will commit to training (Gino & Coffman, 2021, p. 117). A similar concern is shared by Dobbin and Kalev (2016, p. 1). That is, by mandating managers to do diversity training risks the organisation becoming less diverse.

In an online article for Fortune Global Media, Roland Fryer, an American economist and professor at Harvard University, expressed his concern about the effectiveness of diversity training. Fryer states, 'The average impact of corporate diversity, equity, and inclusion training is zero, and some evidence suggests that the impact can become negative if the training is mandated' (Fryer, 2022). Fryer calls for corporate leaders first to solve diversity problems with a data-first approach that 'rigorously evaluates what works and what doesn't'. He argues that over the previous 25 years, solutions for diversity, equity, and inclusion have been missing robust data that can provide a rigorous assessment and understanding of the 'root causes' to drive diversity solutions (Fryer, 2022). Fryer's concern for robust data is also shared by Gino and Coffman (2021). Many organisations do not collect metrics on diversity elements, such as hiring new employees, race and gender, and aiding decision-making when deciding promotion and recognition awards (Gino & Coffman, 2021, p. 117).

Other concerns expressed in the literature on why diversity programs fail is the fear of 'backlash' or 'backfire' (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016; Dobbin, Kalev, & Kelly, 2007; Rawski & Conroy, 2020) – the idea that negative responses to diversity training make the training ineffective (Dobbin et al., 2007, p. 24). For example, Dobbin and Kalev (2016) express concerns that organisations that have long relied on diversity training programs to reduce bias have provided employees a way to challenge managers. 'Those tools are designed to pre-empt lawsuits by policing managers' thoughts and actions' (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016, p. 2). However, drawing on laboratory evidence, Dobbin and Kalev (2016) note that this kind of 'force feeding' paradoxically activates bias instead of ridding it. They suggest that trying to coerce people can cause people to rebel against the 'rules' in asserting their autonomy. That

is, ‘try to coerce me to do X, Y, or Z, and I’ll do the opposite’ (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016, p. 2). Gino and Coffman (2021) also claim research shows diversity training can backfire. They claim people fear bias training as it sends the message that ‘biases are involuntary and widespread—beyond our control, in other words—can make people feel they’re unavoidable and lead to more discrimination, not less’ (p. 116).

The gender equality literature in the context of APS practice suggests males still dominate decision-making when it comes to diversity outcomes for women, such as hiring, promotions, and developmental opportunities (Evans et al., 2014; M. Foley & Williamson, 2019; Williamson & Colley, 2018; Williamson & Foley, 2018). Dobbin et al. (2007) and others question whether diversity programs are counterproductive – that is, ‘raising the hackles of white men who, after all, still do most of the hiring and firing’ (Dobbin et al., 2007, p. 21).

For Leslie (2019, p. 538), ‘the science and the practice of diversity management are at a critical juncture’. Diversity training programs often result in unintended outcomes such as ‘negative non-target attitudes’ or ‘decreased target representation,’ though research on this has developed in a piecemeal way (Leslie, 2019, p. 539). Leslie (2019) concludes that for organisations and researchers to understand the effectiveness of diversity programs better, improved metrics are essential to identify the full impact of the effectiveness of diversity initiatives. He notes:

... a full understanding of diversity initiative effectiveness requires measuring not only diversity goal progress but also other mechanisms and outcomes (e.g., ethical climate perceptions, engagement, ethical behaviour, extrinsic diversity motivation, etc.) and also assessing diversity goal progress in ways that are immune to false progress effects (p. 558).

Lastly, the APS has also demonstrated how unconscious bias training to address gender equality has not resulted in mitigating unconscious bias in the APS (Williamson & Foley, 2018, p. 355). Williamson and Foley (2018, p. 357) note that agencies will continue to invest in ineffective unconscious bias training until the APS evaluates the effectiveness of unconscious bias training. They claim that unconscious bias training is not the ‘silver bullet’ for expediting the reduction of unconscious bias. The collection of reliable data appears to

be the most important factor to guide diversity, equity and inclusion solutions in reducing bias.

7.3. Overview of identified priority needs

Table 7.1 summarises priority workplace needs for all three research themes as set out in Chapters 2, 5 and 6. A discussion follows focusing on key themes emerging from needs identified for each of this study's research themes.

Table 7. 1 Priority workplace needs for key research themes

Unconscious Bias	Cultural Competence	Workplace Congruence
• Microaggressions as unconscious bias forms of stereotypes, prejudice, and racism • Gender inequality • Stereotypes • Prejudices • Discrimination • Racism • Unconscious bias education • Gender differences in the level of unconscious bias in the APS. • Effect of age and classification on levels of unconscious bias in the APS • Self-reflecting on one's own unconscious bias behaviour • Diversity and inclusion are mutually exclusive • Indigenous business capability uplifts match corporate rhetoric	• Repositioning cultural competence policy and practice in the APS • Cultural competence education for all employees • Partnering ethics with cultural competence for inclusion and accountability • HR policies reflecting genuine cultural inclusion • Cultural inclusion is advocated equally throughout the whole year • Relationships with peers are key to mitigating unconscious bias • Positioning recruitment practices to minimise unconscious bias in assessing capability. • Skilling HR practitioners to think differently for Indigenous inclusion • The importance of distinguishing equity from equality for a culturally inclusive workplace	• Positioning Indigenous workplace inclusion strategies equally with other corporate strategies • Transparent and accountable commitment for Indigenous inclusion • Indigenous voice is reflected in HR and employment policies • Recruitment practices reflect genuine cultural inclusion for better ways of attracting and assessing talent • Supervisors are aware of their own biases and know where to seek support when required • Communicating why culturally competent change is needed to support a culturally inclusive workplace • Senior leadership advocacy for cultural inclusion • Providing opportunities to build stronger relationships of trust between employees and supervisors

Source: This thesis, Chapters 2, 5, & 6.

7.3.1. Unconscious bias

The present study identified unconscious bias as a genuine workplace concern by Indigenous employees and managers. However, the perception of what can constitute

unconscious bias can differ between Indigenous employees and managers, though both share similar perceptions. Different perceptual sets are not surprising given the nature of the effects of unconscious bias between Indigenous employees and managers. Indigenous employees and managers share different worldviews because of the intersectionality of cultural identity and the nature of work roles between managers and employees.

Indigenous employees in the APS workplace are more likely to identify perceptions of unconscious bias when interacting with others that result in personal experiences of stereotypes, prejudices, or discrimination. Not blatant discrimination, but acts of unconscious bias discrimination that make Indigenous employees feel uneasy and uncomfortable in the workplace. They report being uneasy because they feel unable to articulate or isolated in articulating or expressing their concerns in a workplace dominated by a non-Indigenous understanding of race. Larkin (2014) suggests institutional racism is one reason senior Indigenous managers find it challenging to convince their peers when voicing their concerns, as evidenced in the following statement.

...because institutional racism often occurs in unconscious bias and indirect forms, it is likely to be performed by well-meaning and well-intentioned non-Indigenous colleagues, Indigenous executives are likely to experience difficulty in confronting or challenging these forms of racist behaviour. As such acts are embedded in the everyday routines of the institution, they present in ways that are not obvious but as ambiguous and largely indiscernible. Many Indigenous people have experienced various forms of racism as a feature of their daily lives so they are likely to possess a heightened and sophisticated awareness of the various guises of racism that can occur (p. 245).

In the above statement, Larkin (2014) highlights the difference in 'worldviews' of understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees. Perceiving racism is a personal experience, and where power imbalance in decision-making resides in processes governed by a dominant non-Indigenous majority (including those who may think they are doing the right thing), convincing others of experiences of racism becomes difficult. From an Indigenous perspective, Larkin (2014) argues that institutional practices of racism have

become embedded as bias in the APS. These practices favour the status quo when senior decision-makers are predominantly non-Indigenous Australians.

Managers interviewed for this study also expressed a similar concern shared by Larkin (2014): decision-makers in the APS are predominately managers of an Anglo/Celtic background. Because of the power imbalance between Indigenous employees and managers, managers may not see how their own dominant cultural traits can limit their ability to communicate effectively when engaging with other minority groups, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. If diversity programs do not reflect the target audience's perspective, and, in this case, Indigenous perspectives of institutional processes, the likelihood of unconscious behaviour reinforcing stereotypes, pigeonholing, or discrimination of Indigenous employees will potentially become embedded as institutional bias.

'Microaggressions' can help to explain how instances of bias can lead to unintentional acts of discrimination becoming entrenched as institutional bias. Bargallie (2020, p. 103), states that Indigenous employees experience racial microaggressions in 'the form of hostile derogatory and insulting behaviours, processes and practices that are often invisible to non-Indigenous people because racism seems normal in a racist environment'. In this context, microaggressions of unconscious bias that result in prejudice, discrimination, and racism will largely go unnoticed, making it difficult for managers to become aware of the impact of microaggressions on the workplace experience of Indigenous employees.

7.3.2. Cultural competence

Cultural education to raise awareness and understanding of cultural differences was identified as an essential and critical response to help reduce the damaging effects of unconscious bias. The APS has and continues to invest heavily in cultural education and awareness-building programs and initiatives. The latest commitment is 'Cultural Integrity' in the *Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020-24* (APSC, 2020c) (hereafter the Strategy). Two Priority Actions (1.5 and 1.7) found in the key focus area of Cultural Integrity speak specifically of managers and colleagues receiving cultural competency training and embedding cultural capability into all business areas (APSC, 2020c,

p. 21). What I have addressed above in this thesis at **Chapter 2** directly impacts the likely success of these two Priority Actions and the Strategy more broadly – developing and applying a consistent and shared understanding of cultural competence across the entire APS is critical for the future of Indigenous employment.

The APSC is charged with ensuring the APS workforce meets the Australian Government's and its citizens' expectations (APSC, 2020d). Unfortunately, the literature shows cultural competence remains a much-misunderstood philosophy in practice, including unconscious bias in public administration (Balcazar et al., 2009; Carrizales, 2019; Gallegos et al., 2008). In Chapter 2, I argued that the APS needs to return to understanding the Cross et al. (1989) original positioning of cultural competence in a holistic system approach for change. Lindsey and Lindsey (2016) build on Cross et al. (1989) five essential elements by integrating these essential elements along a continuum of cultural proficiency. Given the significance of these five elements to my argument, I list them once more. They are:

- assessing cultural knowledge
- valuing diversity
- managing the dynamics of difference
- adapting to diversity
- institutionalising cultural knowledge (Lindsey & Lindsey, 2016, p. 54).

Returning to the Strategy's key deliverables (priority actions 1.5 and 1.7), a consistent and shared application of cultural competence across the APS will enhance the likely success of each deliverable. Equally important, though, is knowing what to measure and how progress and success are to be measured. The Strategy identifies data as an essential collection and reporting mechanism for showing portfolio outcomes (APSC, 2020c, p. 24). The question I pose to the reader is, How can cultural integrity be measured effectively when the APS does not share a consistent understanding and application of cultural competence? Though identified in the Strategy, details on how data will inform progress are missing. The APS is at a significant juncture in its journey of Indigenous employment to get cultural competence

right across all of the APS. This is the critical challenge facing Indigenous employment policy in the APS. The APSC has to lead the APS's response, providing the long overdue clarity required to apply cultural competence consistently across the APS. Only then will performance measures be able to be developed to measure the effectiveness of cultural competence change such as that identified in the Strategy.

7.3.3. Workplace congruence

Three broad themes emerge from the summary of needs listed in Table 7.1. One, valuing Indigenous employee voice. Two, distinguishing inclusion from diversity. Three, matching corporate commitment with actions on the ground for cultural inclusion.

7.3.3.1 *Valuing Indigenous employee voice*

The concept of employee voice can be simply considered in terms of how employees express their workplace concerns when advancing their interests to improve participation in the workplace (Pyman, Cooper, Teicher, & Holland, 2006, p. 543). Benefits anticipated from providing the opportunity and means for employees to express their voice include eliminating employee dissatisfaction and improving organisational performance (Dundon, Wilkinson, Marchington, & Ackers, 2004, p. 1163). Employee voice is divided into formal and informal means of participation. Marchington and Suter (2013) explain the difference between formal and informal employee voice participation.

A distinction needs to be made between formal and informal employee involvement and participation; the former relates to codified, pre-arranged, and regular practices/concrete structures, whereas the latter refers to ad hoc or non-programmed interactions between managers and their staff which provide opportunities for information passing, consultation, and the seeking of ideas (p. 286).

Formal employee voice participation exists through various workplace channels such as: self-managed teams, staff meetings, employee representative bodies, attitude surveys, and grievance processes (APSC, 2020c; Dundon et al., 2004; Marchington & Suter, 2013; Wilkinson, Gollan, Kalfa, & Xu, 2018). On the other hand, informal employee voice

participation can be considered as an avenue where employees express their ideas or concerns outside a formal structured process (Klaas, Olson-Buchanan, & Ward, 2012).

APS departments and agencies utilise several formal and informal employee voice mechanisms to strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee participation. However, I will focus on formal voice mechanisms here in discussing implications for APS Indigenous employment policy.

Priority Action 1.1 under the Core Focus Area 1: Cultural Integrity in the Strategy states:

- ‘Explicitly recognise the value, and embed the voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees into agencies’ work’ (APSC, 2020c, p. 21)

Cultural integrity is one of three strategic focus outcomes sought in the Strategy. As I argued in **Chapter 2**, the various adaptations of cultural concepts supporting the implementation of cultural competence across the APS have created confusion in workplace practices. The message behind my argument is for the APS to revisit its understanding of cultural competence as initially designed by Cross et al. (1989). That is, cultural competence is a holistic systems-based ongoing development approach to change into which all other cultural concepts fit, not as has been applied in practice across the APS by substituting cultural competence for cultural integrity.

Faulkner and Lahn (2019) identify the importance of managers possessing a greater knowledge and appreciation of cultural stewardship, including understanding what many Indigenous employees in the APS mean when they refer to working for the greater good. Faulkner and Lahn (2019) refer to this stewardship as a ‘passion to serve the mob’, a key motivating factor for Indigenous employees choosing employment in the APS (Faulkner & Lahn, 2019, p. 37). This commitment shared by Indigenous employees is an important consideration for managers to value in supporting Indigenous voices. The following participant comments provided by Faulkner and Lahn (2019) articulate this position.

When you think about the concept of stewardship and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, it’s an innate skill that we have about custodianship and that’s why I think the public sector is such a great job for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

people because they get custodianship. It's that ability to be able to learn from the past to steward the present to set up for the future, that is one of the most incredible intuitive things that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have.

Having an Indigenous voice and somebody that has the understanding of those issues is better placed to create opportunities for Indigenous people to grow, just because they'll have a bit more of a historical knowledge of what's happened. They'll draw on their family experiences, and information that they've gathered from listening to their elders, aunties and uncles.

We don't go home at 5:00 pm and stop working in Indigenous Affairs, we are motivated to get the best because we can relate policy outcomes to our families, communities, to broader people, networks, whereas non-Indigenous people think about the government of the day. If we bring the best out of our Indigenous staff, there's actually value in their lived experiences. (p. 37).

The above participant comments support how a shared appreciation of Indigenous voice through manager/employee relationships can increase motivation, participation, and satisfaction for Indigenous employees and managers. However, transforming workplaces to be more inclusive of Indigenous voices can be somewhat ineffective where dominant voice capture mechanisms remain prominent (M. P. Bell, Özbilgin, Beauregard, & Sürgevil, 2011, p. 139). Responding to this challenge will require open dialogue between Indigenous employees and managers to identify enablers and blockers to a shared understanding of the Indigenous voice. The following section, in part, provides a way forward in supporting this approach, which argues for differentiating inclusion from within diversity practice.

In short, for the APS to maximise its desire to demonstrate cultural integrity in embedding the voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in Priority Action 1.1, I reiterate the APS should consider applying the following steps:

- Identify which cultural concepts are necessary to support Indigenous employment in the APS, and define each cultural concept alongside each other within the broader framework of cultural competence, not in substitute of. This clarity will avoid

contributing to the practice of confusing the purpose and understanding of cultural competence.

- Partner cultural concepts with an Indigenous perspective of engaging with ethics and identify where change is to be measured on the cultural competence continuum to bridge the ethical tension gap identified by Lindsey and Lindsey (2016) (see **Chapter 2**).

7.3.3.2 Transforming diversity and inclusion practice to value Indigenous voice

The terms ‘diversity’ and ‘inclusion’ are commonly grouped in HR practice. However, both concepts have different meanings. For example, diversity encompasses how people differ, including but not limited to gender, race, education, culture, values, beliefs, and sexual orientation (Roberson, 2016, p. 220). Inclusion is defined as the ability of individuals to feel included in an organisation’s commitment, such as accessing information, resources and inclusion in groups where individuals influence decision-making processes (Mor-Barak & Cherin, 2008, p. 48). The benefits of diversity achieved through organisational strategies, practices, and procedures allow employees to make meaningful contributions in the workplace. The benefits of an inclusive workplace facilitated through organisational culture of leadership commitment enable individuals from diverse backgrounds to bring forward different perspectives, ideas, and life experiences to influence business approaches differently (Lundy et al., 2021, p. 1033).

The three top needs identified by Indigenous employees and managers (see **Chapter 6**) are all relevant as either diversity or inclusion initiatives. Where the top three needs for managers are more specific to an inclusion focus, the top three for Indigenous employees indicate a broader commitment to workplace diversity. This difference is perhaps not surprising when you consider that the role of managers in supervising employees provides a different focus than that of an employee seeking to perform their work role satisfactorily. However, I argue that both managers and Indigenous employees needs have a common transformational requirement in meeting the expectation of both managers and Indigenous employees. That element has been called ‘cultural satisfaction’.

Cultural satisfaction at work concerns how satisfied employees are with how their culture is portrayed and respected in their workplace (Haar & Brougham, 2011, p. 464). Managers' top three needs reflect inclusion regardless of cultural identity but also acknowledge inclusion practice in the APS requires a sound appreciation of an Indigenous cultural perspective to support Indigenous employment in the APS. A capability maturity model developed by Lundy et al. (2021) applies a transformational approach that offers a framework to review how valuing Indigenous voices can support a renewed approach to diversity and inclusion. Their model guides public sector organisations through a review and audit process to transform diversity and inclusion practices by considering four different diversity and inclusion maturity levels to benchmark diversity and inclusion practice. These four levels are (1) Compliance, (2) Managerial, (3) Integrative, and (4) Transformative.

The first level of Lundy et al.'s (2021) model, *Compliance*, refers to abiding by legislation governing workplace participation, e.g., anti-discrimination and equal opportunity laws. The second level in the model, *Managerial*, refers to demands for more efficient and effective government services to maintain value in the use of public funds. The third level of *Integrative* refers to how diversity and inclusion initiatives integrate to achieve strategic goals and employee commitment enhancing performance and productivity. The fourth and final level, *Transformative*, builds on the preceding three by connecting diversity and inclusion initiatives with a younger, more digitally connected, cognitively diverse, and socially minded employee cohort to create a workplace of genuine participation (Lundy et al., 2021, pp. 1035-1038).

The model guides public sector organisations to undertake an,

‘assessment of organisational capabilities against ‘best’ and ‘next’ diversity and inclusion practice requirements, leading to a more targeted set of goals and actions with a greater chance of achieving the desired results’ (Lundy et al., 2021, p. 1041).

The final maturity phase of the model represents a structured approach for evolving public sector diversity and inclusion practices to meet changing workforce and societal expectations (Lundy et al., 2021). Refer to Appendix J for a more detailed overview of the diversity and inclusion maturity model proposed by Lundy et al. (2021).

Indigenous employees and managers call for a more sophisticated way of distinguishing inclusion within broader diversity practices regarding Indigenous employment. For the APS, this will require evolving diversity and inclusion practices to reflect the cultural perspectives of Indigenous employees fully in a changing APS landscape. That is an inclusion practice that integrates cultural satisfaction with a model to transform capability like that proposed by Lundy et al. (2021).

7.4. An improved integrated approach to unconscious bias training

7.4.1. Revisiting the business approach to unconscious bias training

Leadership has invested significantly in diversity and inclusion programs in Australia and worldwide. Unconscious bias training is an inclusion initiative adopted widely to raise understanding of how mental shortcuts often based on race and gender, can lead to poor and/or flawed decisions about someone's ability or character (Gino & Coffman, 2021, p. 116).

The following section presents a model for more effective unconscious bias training. The proposed model primarily adopts a framework developed by Gino and Coffman (2021) and a behavioural framework of workplace diversity opportunities and challenges presented by Canas and Sondak (2011). Combined, both form an integrated change management process to assist the APS in designing and implementing a more effective unconscious bias training program.

7.4.2. An integrated model for more effective unconscious bias training

Table 7.2 provides a proposed integrated behavioural model for delivering more effective unconscious bias training adapted from Canas and Sondak (2011), Dobbin and Kalev (2016), and Gino and Coffman (2021).

Table 7. 2 A proposed integrated model for more effective Unconscious bias training

Domains	Strategies	Measures
Behavioural	Create empathy with others.	Challenge personal perspectives. Encourage small group discussions.
	Stress that employees hold the power.	Overcome denial, we all have unconscious bias. Focus on the potential for growth. Provides examples of how to change behaviour. Break stereotypes.
	Encourage (contact) interactions among people of different groups.	Expand inner circles, work with people that you normally would not work with. Nurture curiosity in an environment where you can ask questions without fear of reprisal. Track interactions over time, do not adopt a set and forget target.
Cultural	Authentic leadership commitment.	Clear organisational communication starts the Secretary and is reinforced through all management levels.
	Promote engagement to correct cognitive dissonance.	Create opportunities to correct cognitive dissonance to change attitudes. Increase line manager on-the-job involvement with Indigenous employees.
Structural	Set a broader strategy for a broader impact.	Build the foundations for change on a solid understanding of why change is required. Measure the effectiveness of Unconscious Bias training. Nudge people, help them to consider different perspectives to make better decisions. Review and rethink how unconscious bias can seep into policies.
	Encourage good practice and continued learning.	Commit to improvement. Find an Indigenous mentor and solicit feedback. Track improvement.

Source: Adapted from combining research suggestions and models presented in Canas and Sondak 2011, Dobbin and Kalev 2016, and Gino and Coffman 2011.

Central to the above model are three ‘organisational change’³⁰ domains of behavioural, cultural and structural. When applied together, all three domains provide a mutually reinforcing and integrated organisational change approach to designing an effective

³⁰ Organisational change refers broadly to the change process adopted by organisations in moving from one business state to another. Typically this process involves structural, cultural and change process elements (Hay, Parker, & Luksyte, 2020, p. 181).

unconscious bias training program (Canas & Sondak, 2011, p. 46). Holvino, Ferdman, and Merrill-Sands (2004) define each of the three organisational change domains as follows:

- *Behavioural* – ‘seek changes in behaviour, attitudes, and perceptions within and between individuals, and within and between workgroups that support or hinder the goals of diversity’.
- *Cultural* – ‘concerns the basic assumptions, values, beliefs, and ideologies that define an organisation’s view of itself, its effectiveness, and its environment’.
- *Structural* – ‘focus on the formal systems that guide and control work of the organisation. These interventions target policies, practices, and structures that support or hinder the goals of the organisation’ (pp. 251-253).

‘Strategies’ are value-based outcome statements consisting of several various individual measures. Measures represent priority focus areas to achieve each of the strategy’s goals. At this level, in the proposed framework, individual actions specific to each measure provide a practical, tangible response in the organisation. For example, for the measure of *Small group discussions*, a possible action might be holding a series of small group discussions to learn about others’ views and experiences of Indigenous employees (Gino & Coffman, 2021, p. 120). In another example of the measure of *Clear organisational communication* for the strategy of ‘Authentic leadership commitment’, an action may be the Chief Executive Officer committing to communicating why the organisation values unconscious bias training in creating an inclusive workplace for Indigenous employees (Canas & Sondak, 2011, p. 49). Combining strategies with elements supported by individual actions offers a more practical approach to unconscious bias training.

As noted, research indicates conventional unconscious bias approaches may not be effective (Gino & Coffman, 2021, p. 117). In researching unconscious bias training practice in the APS Williamson and Foley (2018, pp. 356-357) argue that not enough is known on the effectiveness of unconscious bias training. They suggest conventional unconscious bias training in public administration, including in Australia, is at risk of being relied on as a quick fix ‘silver bullet’ solution for eliminating inequality and discrimination. The proposed model

in Table 7.1 shows unconscious bias training programs can be more sophisticated over conventional training options such as off-the-shelf products or consultant-dependent training delivery.

All three domains in the proposed model provide organisations with an inclusive and comprehensive integrated approach to designing, developing, and implementing an unconscious bias training program. Whether the unconscious bias training program addresses processes, procedures, policies, behaviours, or individual education and learning objectives, an integrated, holistic organisational-wide approach offers a framework for embedding change into the DNA of the APS. In this format, unconscious bias training is not just seen as an organisational value to commit to; it is understood and positioned as an overall business strategy within diversity practice for change (Canas & Sondak, 2011, p. 45).

7.4.3. Elements for a successful unconscious bias training program

The effectiveness of conventional diversity programs appears questionable, with, on average, zero results and even harmful in some circumstances (Fryer, 2022). As noted above, part of the debate argues that mandating diversity training only motivates those interested in the training, and coercing attendance can potentially result in unwanted negative consequences (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016; Gino & Coffman, 2021).

In Section 7.2 above, I identified literature that explains why diversity programs fail. That same literature also points to elements that can support a more successful development and implementation of an unconscious bias training program as summarised below:

- adopt a data-first philosophy to unconscious bias training where intelligent data is captured that can test hypotheses giving an honest and rigorous assessment (Fryer, 2022)
- measuring unconscious bias training, i.e., understanding what will constitute practical unconscious bias training and having measures to demonstrate effectiveness (Williamson & Foley, 2018)

- making unconscious bias training voluntary and not compulsory (Gino & Coffman, 2021)
- committing to unconscious bias training positively and in a non-confrontational approach (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016)
- structuring unconscious bias training programs to avoid unintentional outcomes such as backfire or backlash of managers (Leslie, 2019).

If the APS is to maximise the effectiveness of any unconscious bias training program, I would argue that the first two elements are the most important for the APS to consider. When developing any integrated unconscious bias training program, the crucial aspect is deciding up front the requirement to know what is to be measured, why it is essential to measure, and how you will know when unconscious bias training has been effective.

7.4.4. Adopting data analytics to measure unconscious bias

7.4.4.1 Using the Australian Aboriginal Implicit Association Test as part of a broader integrated approach to unconscious bias training

The Australian Aboriginal IAT remains a worthwhile measure of unconscious bias. That is, despite the known criticisms of the IAT as a test of individual implicit measures of unconscious bias. As part of a larger integrated response to unconscious bias training, the IAT offers the APS a practical means to potentially assist in tracking changes in overall levels of unconscious bias between non-Indigenous and Indigenous employees. Evidence in the literature suggests that aggregated measures of implicit bias remain relatively stable over time (Brownstein et al., 2020; Jost, 2018). Both Jost (2018) and Brownstein et al. (2020) acknowledge that implicit measures are important to help understand socially sensitive behaviours such as intergroup behaviour and racial attitudes. Chapter 5 provides a fuller discussion of the reliability and validity of the IAT as a measure of implicit bias.

7.4.4.2 Rigorous data approach to identify and understand root causes of bias

As identified through diversity research, measuring the effectiveness of an integrated unconscious bias training program would require a range of suitable data measures that can

rigorously test for change in bias levels (Fryer, 2022; Gino & Coffman, 2021; Williamson & Foley, 2018). Fryer's suggested approach aligns with an integrated organisational unconscious bias training program. Fryer (2022) identifies root causes of bias that social scientists typically place in three categories: structural bias, information bias, and preference bias. *Structural bias* refers to when institutional practices directly or indirectly adversely impact particular groups, even when these same practices go unnoticed. *Informational bias* refers to when organisations have flawed information regarding an employee's productivity ability and instead use an observable proxy, such as gender or race to infer capability. Lastly, *preference bias* is a preference for one option over another, even when both options are similarly qualified (Fryer, 2022).

7.4.5. Mandating unconscious bias training cautiously in the APS

Research suggests voluntary training will result in more likelihood of success (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016, p. 2) in avoiding the pitfalls and unintended consequences of diversity practice (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016; Dobbin et al., 2007; Leslie, 2019; Rawski & Conroy, 2020). This dilemma poses a threshold question for the APS. Should unconscious bias training be mandatory or voluntary? This should not mean dismissing mandating diversity training in all circumstances. Arguments for mandating training for diversity programs exist within the Australian Indigenous diversity and inclusion space. For example, consider the following exert taken from *Woort Koorliny Australian Indigenous Employment Index 2022 National Report*.

Where cultural learning is comprehensive, bespoke, and offered to all employees, it is highly regarded by Indigenous employees. Many participants called out a need for bespoke training particularly for senior leaders and line managers, while also expressing that such training for all Australian employees should be mandatory (Minderoo Foundation, Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre (BCEC) at Curtin University, & Murawin, 2022, p. 33).

The critical perspective in the above exert is the high regard placed on cultural learning by Indigenous employees for senior leaders and managers. A similar view, albeit from a

corporate perspective, is also found in the strategy's strategic focus area of cultural integrity (APSC, 2020c). Priority Action 1.5 of the Strategy states,

Implement practical strategies to help develop cultural capability for all employees so that by 2024 all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees can expect that their manager and their colleagues have received cultural competency training. (p. 21).

It would appear reasonable to think that achieving this priority action requires mandating cultural competency training for employees, particularly managers. However, a closer inspection of all individual actions listed under the core focus area of Cultural Integrity reveals an ongoing continuation of mixed messages that would potentially threaten the effectiveness of mandating cultural competency training. That is, the concepts of cultural competence, cultural awareness, and cultural capability placed under the core focus area of cultural integrity are undefined in the workforce strategy. This omission allows the reader (or APS HR practitioner) to form their interpretation of what either concept means. As I argued above, this practice risks ongoing confusion and substituting the proper meaning and purpose of cultural competence. As argued previously in this thesis, this dilemma has hindered Indigenous employment in the APS. Refer to **Chapter 2** to explain the impact of a weakened and inconsistent understanding of cultural competence for Indigenous employment in the APS.

I argue that the benefits of mandating training for cultural diversity and inclusion initiatives (e.g., unconscious bias training) outweigh the consequences under the right circumstances. Getting the circumstances right for when and why to mandate unconscious bias training sends a vital message signalling confidence to Indigenous employees that their agency takes discrimination, prejudice, and racism seriously. Consequently, Indigenous employees can feel confident in calling out such behaviour.

The need to eliminate discrimination, prejudice, and racism in the APS workplace is clear. That is, almost one in four (23%) Indigenous employees reported discrimination based on Indigeneity or a personal characteristic in their employment in 2021, a result which starkly

differs from that reported by non-Indigenous employees of 11%. (APSC, 2021b). I argue, therefore, that mandating Indigenous-led training as such has a role in the APS.

However, commitment to cultural education and training will translate to less sustainable positive outcomes if corporate responsibility does not align with practice in the APS workplace. Unfortunately, the best corporate intentions can be perceived as ‘lip service’ when this occurs. Indigenous employees and managers expressed evidence of this experience during this study. That is, actual support for cultural education was seen as lip service in matching corporate rhetoric. Building and maintaining trust for cultural education that genuinely partners with Indigenous employees will go a long way in avoiding perceived lip service.

Cultural education and training initiatives are fundamental to sustaining a positive and inclusive workplace. Mandating cultural education and training has a place in the APS under specific circumstances, but this requires addressing the concerns found in the literature on why diversity programs fail. Both the manager and employee express concerns of ‘trust’ in their agency’s ability to achieve genuine support on the ground to support cultural inclusion. This concern is why I have argued for an integrated organisational wide approach to unconscious bias training under the right circumstances. The sought result ultimately aims for a workplace culture of accepting the need for unconscious bias training, which ultimately improves the employment experience of all employees and the capability of the APS generally.

7.5. Implications for future APS Indigenous employment policy

Unconscious bias in the APS exists and impacts the lived experience of Indigenous employees. However, unconscious bias training is not the panacea to mitigating the adverse impact of unconscious bias. Instead, what is required is a broader suite of educational and organisational change strategies to help reposition Indigenous employment policy and practice in the APS. From the results of this study, three priority responses emerge to reposition APS Indigenous employment. The three responses are:

1. Adopt a range of formal and informal educative processes to create a consistent understanding of cultural competence across the APS Indigenous employment policy and practice.
2. Establish mechanisms to enhance workplace inclusion outcomes for Indigenous employees by empowering Indigenous voices.
3. Adopt an integrated organisational behavioural approach to establishing an unconscious bias training program.

Each proposed priority response will provide the APS with clarity at a strategic policy level in standardising potential approaches. Designing, developing, and implementing individual responses should remain flexible for local agency adoption.

7.5.1. Priority response 1 – Restructure cultural competence in the APS is fundamental for future Indigenous employment

Education is essential to building a consistent and shared understanding of cultural competence. Research shows that inconsistent use of cultural competence in understanding Indigenous culture in APS employment has resulted in ongoing experiences of stereotyping, bias, prejudice, discrimination, and racism (Bargallie, 2020; Faulkner & Lahn, 2019; Ganter, 2016; Larkin, 2014; Lea, 2008; Leitch, 2017). The current cultural competence policy in the APS is restrained, operating within a partial and mixed version of what cultural competence is and does. I have argued that Cross et al.'s (1989) cultural competence framework still applies today as it did in the 1980s. Significantly, their framework for cultural competence operates as an organisational-wide systems approach to change where developing cultural competence towards achieving cultural proficiency is an ongoing development approach (Cross et al., 1989, pp. v-viii).

Lindsey and Lindsey (2016) build on Cross et al.'s (1989) framework by providing further clarity to show how varying levels of cultural competence exist along a continuum of capability ranging from destructive to healthy behaviours. In their research, Lindsey and Lindsey (2016) identify an ethical gap between barriers to cultural proficiency and guiding principles to cultural proficiency. This gap exists as an 'ethical tension' because of differing

worldviews between minority groups and those of a dominant organisational setting. To help bridge this ethical gap in developing capability towards cultural proficiency, I add to Lindsey & Lindsey's (2016) framework ethics, but with an Indigenous cultural perspective of ethics. Moving forward in enhancing Indigenous employment in the APS, the APS will need to standardise knowledge and understanding of cultural competence. Three elements will assist in facilitating this approach:

1. Educate employees on Lindsey & Lindsey's (2016) conceptual framework for culturally proficient practices.
2. Determine which cultural concepts work best for the APS and define each cultural concept with each other to avoid ongoing confusion and interchangeability between concepts.
3. When viewed through an Indigenous lens, identify which principles of ethics can assist. For example, the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (Universities Australia, 2018) and/or *AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research* (AIATSIS, 2020) can be used in conjunction with identified cultural concepts to establish a culturally informed and inclusive approach to Indigenous employment initiatives.

Addressing all three elements will assist the APS in standardising its approach to cultural competence knowledge. Partnering with an ethical cultural lens will lead to a culturally informed and inclusive Indigenous employment philosophy. Notably, this will be the opportunity to determine a baseline of cultural competence from which to holistically measure progress in the future across the whole of the APS.

7.5.2. Priority response 2 – Empowering Indigenous employee voice for greater workplace participation and inclusion

As argued above (sections 7.3.3.1-2), Indigenous employees and managers desire a relationship that fosters a culturally inclusive workplace for both employees and managers: a relationship where cultural inclusion values the cultural perspectives of Indigenous employees in the manager/employee relationship. The concept of cultural satisfaction, (i.e.,

a reflection of how well an employee's culture is portrayed and respected in the workplace) was a key finding expressed by Indigenous employees and managers during the research for this thesis. Employee performance and satisfaction can suffer if a manager does not have a satisfactory relationship with their subordinate. Improved manager awareness of their relationship with subordinates can directly influence employee behaviour and performance (Hassan & Hatmaker, 2015, p. 1146).

Priority Action, 1.1 of the Strategy, emphasises empowering the Indigenous voice under the Core Focus Area 1: Cultural Integrity. However, the issue of confusing cultural competence continues in the Strategy. Combining cultural satisfaction with Lundy et al.'s (2021) maturity model allows the APS to review its existing objectives for Indigenous diversity and inclusion practice. Among these will be the ability to determine how well cultural competence improves cultural integrity in the APS through embracing Indigenous employee voice in diversity and inclusion practice.

7.5.3. Priority response 3 – Adopt an integrated organisational behavioural approach to establishing an unconscious bias training program

Research shows conventional unconscious bias training approaches in the APS have proven largely ineffective (Evans et al., 2014; M. Foley & Williamson, 2019; Williamson & Colley, 2018; Williamson & Foley, 2018). An integrated approach to unconscious bias training offers the APS an opportunity to adopt a sophisticated behavioural approach to unconscious bias training (see Table 7.2). Underpinning the success of an integrated unconscious bias training program will be adopting a data-first philosophy to provide an honest organisational account of unconscious bias in the APS.

7.6. Limitations of research findings

7.6.1. The Australian Public Service Unconscious Bias Survey

While the APSUBS collected and analysed during the present study has provided robust findings about the broad set of issues in the APS, there are a number of caveats in the analysis, mainly arising from the data limitation inherent in the IAT instrument used. The IAT sample size (N=1544) reported in **Chapter 5** was captured through self-nomination when

respondents agreed to complete the APSUBS. A random selection to identify respondents consequently was not possible. Participants responded to an *Invitation to Participate* distributed by each participating agency's corporate area on behalf of me, the principal researcher. Completing the APSUBS required employees to access the APSUBS via an online portal administered by Project Implicit. While it must be acknowledged that the results of the APSUBS are not representative of the APS, results nonetheless offer an insight into the perceptions of APS employees as a case study of unconscious bias. Given the nature of the APSUBS in providing an individual measure of implicit bias, respondents who completed the APSUBS were possibly more interested in knowing their unconscious bias and, therefore, more personally motivated to participate in the APSUBS. Women participated in the APSUBS disproportionately (at 67%) compared to men. The results provided in **Chapter 5** show the population share for each reported variable in transforming raw data.

The controversy surrounding Aboriginality in a test like the IAT is well known. The use of black and white images is a limitation of the IAT, most notably in a test based on identifying someone who looks Aboriginal. Unconscious bias is a far more complex concept to identify than that triggered by someone presented within a stereotyped image of an Aboriginal Australian. Consequently, the associated preference measured and reported in this study is likely to be a conservative estimate.

This study argues cultural competence as the guiding philosophy to reposition and strengthen APS Indigenous employment policy and practice. In doing so, various other cultural concepts become critical building blocks within the broader organisation systems-wide change framework of cultural competence, not replacement for or substitution of cultural competence. Further research would be required to test this study's assertion to confirm or deny cultural competence as the superior change process over other cultural concepts like cultural capability, integrity, or safety for Indigenous employment in the APS.

7.6.2. Modern QFD

Studies that compare the voice of both employees and managers in public sector organisations is extremely limited. Only one other example of research of this nature is known to the author. This example reports a qualitative study capturing the perspectives of

Indigenous employees and managers in the Vietnamese civil service to investigate government policy impact on the workplace experiences of Indigenous employees in the Vietnamese public sector (Alang et al., 2020, p. 555).

As discussed in Chapter 4, evolving from Blitz QFD, Modern QFD – the third generation of QFD – replaces the traditional complex tools of the HoQ matrices found in QFD with smaller agile tools to deliver the benefits of QFD faster and better focused on customer/client needs (QFD Institute, 2022b). Central to distinguishing priority weighting from among multiple needs, Modern QFD applies the comparative analytic tool of AHP to derive a series of ratio scales or weights from among pairwise comparisons (R. W. Saaty, 1987, p. 161). The methodology of AHP itself is widely known and accepted in literature and practice (Sivasamy, Arumugam, Devadasan, Muruges, & Thilak, 2015; Vaidya & Kumar, 2006; Yadav & Jayswal, 2013).

At the time of writing this thesis, no other application of Modern QFD identifying a series of prioritised weighted needs to compare the voice of employees with the voice of managers in any organisational setting was known to the author. A key contribution of this thesis is the first-of-its-kind application of Modern QFD in an applied research context.

The many pairwise comparisons developed for this thesis resulted in a final list of 162 tertiary-level needs allocated across all three research themes. With this number of tertiary needs, each tertiary level need's global proportion reported is small, ranging from a minimum of 1% to a maximum of 10%. As such, focusing on individual tertiary need priority weighting alone provides a minimum importance interpretation when trying to discern implications for Indigenous employment in the APS. Instead, a combined hierarchical reporting approach was applied. This approach reported the top 10 weighted tertiary level needs in their corresponding hierarchies showing the dependency relationship between tertiary, secondary, and primary needs. Mapping the relationship of needs in this manner provided a fuller interpretation of likely implications for Indigenous employment in the APS. A similar approach to that described here was adopted by Aktas and Demirel (2019) when applying the methodology of Modern QFD in analysing preferences of conference attendees with conference venue and conference resources.

As a first-of-a kind use of Modern QFD, findings presented in this thesis may not be used to generalise the result of the APS as a whole. This is because we have no reason to believe the data and analysis in this thesis are Indigenous-specific. Nonetheless, there may be an analogous set of issues for other minority groups within the APS. Further research is required to build upon the findings presented in this thesis to either refute or confirm findings. However, as a case study of Indigenous employment in the APS, the insight provided through this research compares similarly to findings identified in previous research investigating Indigenous employment in the APS.

7.6. Concluding comments

As discussed in this chapter, the literature suggests diversity programs have not delivered the expected outcomes. Knowing how to measure the effectiveness of diversity programs is critical for success. Australian research into the APS's use of unconscious bias training, for example, to reduce gender inequality, shows that we cannot determine how effective this unconscious bias training has been. The three priority responses identified from this research study offer the APS key organisational change strategies to help reposition Indigenous employment in the APS. The need to ensure robust data application and testing underpin all three priority responses will be fundamental and crucial to the success of each priority response.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1. Why research APS Indigenous employment?

The present study sought to understand how Indigenous employees experience unconscious bias in the APS. My goal was to allow Indigenous employees and managers to share their understanding of unconscious bias. Two fundamental concerns were at the core of this research. The first concern was to investigate whether unconscious bias existed in the APS and, if so, how unconscious bias was perceived and experienced in the workplace. The second concern was identifying how cultural competence could mitigate unconscious bias to strengthen Indigenous employment inclusion in the APS. As an Indigenous researcher researching Indigenous employment in the APS, I wanted to ensure the present study contributed to the broader scholarship of Indigenous-led self-determination. This thesis focuses on three research questions:

1. Does unconscious bias exist in the APS, and if so, how is it experienced in the Australian Public Service?
2. To what extent is cultural competence supporting an inclusive Australian Public Service workplace?
3. To what extent is the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees congruent with the expectations required of APS employment?

Employment equity still eludes Indigenous employees in the APS. For example, Indigenous employees remain over-represented at the APS 3-4 classifications (43%) in comparison to non-Indigenous employees (25%). Moreover, comparing the proportional representation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees at the EL and SES classifications, a similar but reversed reality exists, i.e., 14% and 35%, respectively (APSC, 2021a). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees also exit the APS at a higher rate of 8.2% compared to 6.0% for non-Indigenous employees (APSC, 2021d).

Low recruitment rates, high attrition rates, under-representation in senior positions, and limited development opportunities for Indigenous employees suggest that something in the structure of the APS is contributing to these outcomes. One crucial explanation for

inequitable employment outcomes and working conditions is the unconscious bias identified in Chapter 5.

A mixed methods research model that used both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies provided insight into how indigenous employees and managers perceived and experienced unconscious bias in the APS. The quantitative research element of individual unconscious bias levels captured through the Australian Aboriginal IAT provided insight into where unconscious bias impacts interpersonal relationships between employees and managers. An in-depth analysis of semi-structured interview transcripts resulted in a comprehensive hierarchy of prioritised workplace needs. These workplace needs represent the voice of Indigenous employees and managers.

8.2. Core concepts: Race and cultural competence

In the present study, Indigenous employees were more likely to identify and experience unconscious bias. My concern is that unconscious bias has become institutionalised in the APS through subtle acts of stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination. Managers interviewed for this thesis also expressed a similar concern to that described by Indigenous employees. Indigenous employees and managers believe a power imbalance exists between Indigenous employees and managers. This imbalance may prevent managers from seeing how their dominant cultural position can restrict their ability to communicate effectively with Indigenous employees.

Race matters not as a negative or deficit discourse but one where our unique cultural perspectives can strengthen the APS in serving the needs of all Australian citizens. The central issue expressed here is a difference in 'worldviews' between Indigenous employees and managers. Though we are one human race, our differences are cultural, making understanding race from cultural perspectives pertinent in a multicultural society like the APS. Moreton-Robinson (2015, p. xi) argues Indigenous race-based research needs to consider a lived interpretation of race that goes beyond a simple understanding of race, such as 'measuring Aboriginality by the shade of skin colour'. Critical to building the capability to narrow this gap of differing worldviews will be rethinking and repositioning cultural competence within the APS. Unfortunately, cultural competence remains primarily

misunderstood and poorly applied in the APS. The result is a failure to realise the full transformational potential of a culturally inclusive APS workplace.

Cross et al.'s (1989) definition of cultural competence remains as relevant today as it was when introduced over three decades ago. For Cross et al., any response to applying cultural competence considers organisational elements together holistically as a system and not through individual adaptation of various cultural concepts in isolation. The literature illustrates how cultural competence is an often confused concept with overlapping meanings with interchangeable purposes (Danso, 2018; Getha-Taylor, Holmes, & Moen, 2018; Greene-Moton & Minkler, 2019; Whaley, 2008). Cultural concepts or alternatives to cultural competence (such as cultural sensitivity, cultural integrity, cultural capability, or cultural safety), are just some of many applied in conjunction with or in place of cultural competence.

The APS has also contributed to this confusion in its practice. I argue the APS should go back to Cross et al.'s definition of cultural competence. By acknowledging cultural competence is an ongoing whole of the organisation development approach, cultural competence becomes accurately positioned as the guiding philosophy for building cross-cultural capability. Then identified cultural concepts can be individually located within the broader philosophy of cultural competence (see Chapter 2). That is, as building blocks of cultural competence, each cultural concept can support each other within the whole of organisational framework of cultural competence. Avoiding the overlapping use of cultural concepts and the previously confused cultural competence practice in the APS ceases. Furthermore, an APS with shared knowledge and understanding of cultural competence will be able to determine an appropriate range of performance measures to measure success. Applying this approach will establish a shared cultural competence practice across the APS.

8.3. Quantitative research outcomes

The quantitative research reported in this thesis was sourced through the APSUBS. The APSUBS applied the Australian Aboriginal variant of the internationally recognised Implicit IAT administered by Project Implicit of Harvard University. The APSUBS showed that unconscious bias levels in APS respondents were similar to the findings of a broader

AustUBS study undertaken by Shirodkar (2021). That is, Indigenous respondents in both the APSUBS and the AustUBS, on average, showed little to no bias preference for either Caucasian Australian or Aboriginal Australians. In contrast, non-Indigenous respondents in both the APSUBS and AustUBS showed a slight bias preference for Caucasian Australians over Aboriginal Australians.

The APSUBS suggested Indigenous female employees appear most at risk of experiencing unconscious bias. Such consequences could potentially restrict Indigenous women from enjoying equitable careers and developmental opportunities. International research demonstrates that conventional unconscious bias training programs have not mitigated unconscious bias substantially. This concern is also found in gender inequality research into APS organisations. Research shows that despite many APS organisations committing to addressing unconscious bias, achieving gender equality appears to be some way from being realised (Evans et al., 2014; Williamson & Colley, 2018; Williamson & Foley, 2018). For example, structural limitations in policy articulation and decision-making capability were identified as critical concerns. Both concerns seem to be preventing the cultural change required to achieve gender equality reform in the APS.

The average implicit bias level for non-Indigenous employees of 0.19 is categorised as a slight bias preference for Caucasian Australians over Aboriginal Australians (see Chapter 5). This result suggests Indigenous employees may experience adverse effects of unconscious bias in their employment. Although the damaging effects of unconscious bias are unknown, they materialise through acts of stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, and racism (Bargallie, 2020; Biddle & Lahn, 2016; Faulkner & Lahn, 2019; Larkin, 2014; Leitch, 2017).

One model that can provide insight into racial discrimination and segregation of social outcomes is identified in *Dynamic Models of Segregation* (Schelling, 1971). As argued above, discrimination may be: (a) intentional, the result of consciously articulated prejudice or dislike; (b) unintentional, the result of unconscious bias; or (c) due to a network of institutional arrangements and cultural practices, which result in systemic discrimination. Schelling argued that people may give preferential treatment to people like themselves (endophilic), or we may treat people unfairly if they differ from themselves (exophilic). His dynamic model of segregation demonstrated that even small endophilic levels, can lead to

highly unequal or highly segregated outcomes (Schelling, 1971), such as that observed in Indigenous and non-Indigenous employment and working conditions in the APS.

Schelling's models of segregation have several important implications for the present investigation. First, highly segregated outcomes can occur with relatively minor levels of unconscious bias. So even though the measured level of unconscious bias among public servants is relatively small relative to much of the Australian population, it could be a significant explanation of the observed segregation in employment and working conditions of Indigenous and other Australians. Second, unless one can eliminate unconscious bias entirely, policy intervention may be necessary to maintain diversity. Schelling provides a dynamic model whereby outcomes will move towards highly segregated outcomes unless positive interventions, such as those articulated in this present study, can encourage diversity in the APS.

To achieve true integration in the workplace, there is a need for all employees to embrace the need for diversity. If left unchecked, the impact of unconscious bias will likely become harder to mitigate when the majority population is potentially and unknowingly contributing to the segregation of Indigenous employees. However, Indigenous employees can also contribute to segregation of outcomes in Schelling's model by having preferences for seeking out fellow Indigenous employees.

8.4. Qualitative research outcomes

The qualitative research element of this thesis adopted a unique research model combining two methodologies. The first methodological element was a thematic analysis of interview transcripts by applying the qualitative research tool of NVivo. This thematic analysis constructed a three-tiered hierarchy of themes (parent, child, and grandchild nodes) in cascading order. Combined with a series of cluster analysis queries, a matrix coding query matched a series of references from within interview transcripts aligned to the grandchild nodes. This result provided the ability to identify a series of workplace themes for the research project's three key themes: unconscious bias, cultural competence, and workplace congruence. The quantitative element of the AHP within the second qualitative

methodology of Modern QFD provided the ability to derive and weight a series of prioritised pair-wise variables for each research theme.

Modern QFD's methodology offers an agile and structured adaptation of the traditional QFD, providing a sequential documented process to capture known and implied client needs. In this instance, Indigenous employees and managers become the clients in Modern QFD. Progressing through the methodology of Modern QFD resulted in constructing a hierarchy of workplace needs for Indigenous employees and managers for each research theme.

The final result of combining both NVivo and Modern QFD methodologies resulted in identifying the three top prioritised workplace needs for each research theme for Indigenous employees and managers. That is, the individual workplace needs that, if actioned, would likely provide the most significant marginal return on investment for the APS.

8.5. Implications for APS Indigenous employment

The overall outcomes determined through both quantitative and qualitative data elements resulted in identifying three priority responses:

- **Priority Response 1:** Restructure cultural competence in the APS is fundamental for future Indigenous employment.
- **Priority response 2:** Empower Indigenous employee voice for greater workplace participation and inclusion.
- **Priority Response 3:** Develop an integrated unconscious bias training program to address unconscious bias.

The APS should consider institutionalising an Indigenous-led knowledge and understanding of cultural competence to improve Indigenous employment. For Priority Response 1, as discussed in this thesis, cultural competence policy and practice in the APS requires repositioning to cease the ongoing confusion about the meaning and purpose of cultural

competence. As defined by Cross et al. (1989), educating APS employees on cultural competence will significantly assist in achieving this outcome.

Another aspect critical to repositioning cultural competence will be determining which cultural concepts are required to support strategic Indigenous employment outcomes. Identifying which cultural concepts best support APS Indigenous employment will require defining alongside each other as they apply to the APS. This clarity will ensure that (1) the right cultural concepts are applied and (2) eliminate the interchangeability of cultural concepts. The result would be removing the potential for ongoing confusion while retaining the ability to add, remove or replace cultural concepts as required. Lastly, as discussed above, partnering the agreed cultural concepts with various principles of ethics will significantly assist in applying cultural competence through an Indigenous-informed cultural lens. This combination will form a culturally competent approach to Indigenous employment.

Empowering Indigenous employee voices for greater workplace participation and inclusion is the crux of Priority Response 2. Empowering Indigenous voice is identified as a priority action in the current *Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020-24*. Priority Action, 1.1 of the Strategy, emphasises the strategic priority of empowering Indigenous voices to support the core focus area of cultural integrity. The concept of cultural satisfaction, i.e., a reflection of how well an employee's culture is portrayed and respected in the workplace, was a key finding expressed by Indigenous employees and managers alike during the research for this thesis. Combining cultural satisfaction with a diversity and inclusion maturity model like that presented by Lundy et al.'s (2021) can provide the APS with the guidance to review its current Indigenous diversity and inclusion practice. Among these will be assistance in embracing Indigenous employee voice in diversity and inclusion practices to demonstrate cultural integrity.

Priority Response 3 calls for developing an integrated unconscious bias training program. Conventional unconscious bias training programs alone have not delivered the anticipated outcomes (M. Foley & Williamson, 2019; Williamson & Colley, 2018; Williamson & Foley, 2018). However, the literature warns of rushing in developing diversity responses (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016; Fryer, 2022; Gino & Coffman, 2021). For example, Fryer (2022) argues that the

effectiveness of conventional diversity programs appears questionable, producing, on average, a zero result and, in some circumstances, negative results. One possible explanation discussed in the literature is mandating diversity training. Requiring participants to attend diversity training only motivates those interested in the training, and coercing others to attend results in unwanted negative consequences (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016; Gino & Coffman, 2021). This presents a threshold question for the APS.

As discussed, estimating levels of unconscious bias through the IAT should not be discarded altogether in an integrated unconscious bias training program. Instead, measures like the IAT should form part of a broader integrated behavioural training program across behavioural, cultural, and structural change domains that utilise a combination of strategies and measures (Canas & Sondak, 2011, p. 47). An integrated unconscious bias training program offers the APS a whole-of-organisation focus change to the management approach to unconscious bias training (Canas & Sondak, 2011; Dobbin & Kalev, 2016; Gino & Coffman, 2021).

The literature also suggests elements to support the successful development and implementation of an integrated unconscious bias training program. These elements include: adopting a data-first philosophy for unconscious bias training (Fryer, 2022), ensuring measures are available to measure the effectiveness of unconscious bias training (Williamson & Foley, 2018), considering when to make unconscious bias training voluntary and not compulsory (Gino & Coffman, 2021), approaching unconscious bias training positively and non-confrontational (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016), and structuring training programs to include a broader conceptualisation of diversity initiatives will help to avoid unintended negative outcomes like a backlash from managers when implementing policies' (Leslie, 2019).

8.6. Final thoughts

Unconscious bias is a natural phenomenon to which all of us are subject. Our attitudes can and do influence how we think and engage with others. The evidence is clear; unconscious bias prevents Indigenous employees from enjoying equitable employment outcomes in the

APS. Indigenous employees regularly experience the adverse effects of unconscious bias in their APS employment.

For the APS to determine how to respond to unconscious bias, it is fundamental that cultural competence is understood and applied as an ongoing and systems-wide developmental approach for the APS. Unfortunately, as argued in the literature and in this thesis, cultural competence in practice has often been poorly understood and applied. This result has led to confusion with various cultural concepts blurring the original description of cultural competence, as Cross et al. (1989) provided. Cultural concepts like 'cultural integrity', 'cultural capability', 'cultural responsiveness', or 'cultural safety' are essential components of a broader cultural competence framework, not a substitute or replacement for cultural competence.

Ethics offers a culturally inclusive lens to strengthen cultural competence in the APS. The *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (Universities Australia, 2018) and/or the *AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research* (AIATSIS, 2020) provide several best practice research principles easily transferable to the APS. Incorporating these principles will help to ensure the voice of Indigenous employees' are captured and reflected in the design and development of cultural competence policy and practice in the APS.

Adopting a rigorous data-first approach is necessary to demonstrate the effectiveness of Indigenous employment diversity initiatives. This data approach includes cultural competence and unconscious bias initiatives. Applying all three elements (cultural competence, ethics, and rigorous data use) together will provide the APS with a consistent whole of APS approach to supporting Indigenous employment.

Lastly, a growing body of research investigating the experiences of APS Indigenous employees shows consistent concerns for achieving employment equity. For example, stereotyping, prejudices, discrimination, and racism are impacting Indigenous employees. These concerns affect building and maintaining effective working relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees. I ask the leadership in the APS to consider this thesis carefully in determining how to position Indigenous employment informed through a genuine Indigenous inclusive cultural lens.

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Appendix A: The Cultural Proficiency Continuum: Depicting Unhealthy and Healthy Practices

The Cultural Proficiency Continuum portrays people and organizations who possess the knowledge, skills, and moral bearing to distinguish among healthy and unhealthy practices as represented by different worldviews

Cultural DESTRUCTIVENESS	Cultural INCAPACITY	Cultural BLINDNESS	Cultural PRE-COMPETENCE	Cultural COMPETENCE	Cultural PROFICIENCY
Compliance Based Tolerance for Diversity (Unhealthy Practices)			Transformation for Equity (Healthy Practices)		
Cultural destructiveness: Seeking to eliminate references to the cultures of 'others' in all aspects of the relationships.	Cultural incapacity: Trivialising other communities and seeking to make them appear wrong.	Cultural blindness: Pretending not to see or acknowledge the status and culture of marginalised communities and choosing to ignore the experiences of such groups within the community.	Cultural pre-competence: Increasing awareness of what you and the organisation's do not know about working with marginalised communities. It is at this level of development that you and the organisation can either move in a positive constructive direction, or you can vacillate, stop, and possibly regress.	Cultural competence: Manifesting your personal behaviours and the organisation's policies and practices in a manner that is inclusive with marginalised cultures and communities that are new or different from you or the organisation.	Cultural proficiency: Advocating for lifelong learning in order to be increasingly effective in serving the educational needs of cultural groups served by the organisation. Holding the vision that you and the organisation are instruments for creating a socially just democracy.
<i>Adapted from Lindsey and Lindsey (2016, p. 52) in referring to Nuri Robins. K, Lindsey. R, Lindsey. D, and Terrell. R (2006)</i>					
Characterised by Intentional attitudes and practices that are destructive to cultures and consequently to individuals within the Culture.	Characterised by lack of capacity to help minority clients or Communities due to extremely biased beliefs and a paternal attitude towards those not of a mainstream culture.	Characterised by the belief that service or helping approaches traditionally used by the dominant culture are universally applicable regardless of race or culture. These services ignore cultural strengths and encourage assimilation.	Characterised by the desire to deliver quality services and a commitment to diversity indicated by hiring minority staff, initiating training and recruitment to attract minority members for agency leadership, but lacking information on how to maximise these capacities. This level of competence can lead to tokenism.	Characterised by acceptance and respect for difference continuing self-assessment, careful attention to the dynamics of difference, continuous expansion of knowledge and resources, and adaption of services to better meet the needs of diverse populations.	Characterised by Holding culture in high esteem. Seeking to add to the knowledge base of culturally competent practice by conducting research, influencing approaches to care and improving relations between cultures, promoting self-determination.
<i>Adapted from Victorian Public Sector Commission (2019)</i>					

Appendix B: Definitions of cultural concepts

Cultural Concept	Definition
Cultural Awareness	Cultural awareness means being aware of, and developing sensitivity to, cultural difference and cultural diversity. It involves knowledge, attitudes and values that demonstrate an openness and respect for other people and other cultures, languages, religions, dress, communication styles and so on (Victorian Public Sector Commission, 2019).
Cultural Safety	Cultural safety is an environment which is safe for people, where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, or who they are and what they need (Williams, 1999, p. 213).
Cultural Competence	Cultural competence is a set of congruent behaviours, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enable that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations (Cross et al., 1989, p. iv).
Cultural inclusion	Promotes laws and policies that ensure cultural participation, access, and the right to express and interpret culture. From an urban policy perspective, cultural inclusion calls to mixing the best problem-solving, creative, innovative and entrepreneurial practices (United Nations Education Science and Cultural Organisation, 2020).

Appendix C: Interview Guide

Introduction

1. Thanked each participant for volunteering to partner with me in my research
2. Introduced myself stating my role as a PhD student providing a broad overview of my research and its objectives

Opening question

3. Please tell me a little about yourself, who you are, your experience and current role in the Australian Public Service?

Transitions questions

4. What do understand to be unconscious bias (probe for participant understanding of what they think is unconscious bias in order to provide a clear description of what unconscious bias actually is).
5. What do understand about the concept of cultural competence (probe for participant understanding of what they think is unconscious bias in order to provide a clear description of what cultural competence actually is).

Key questions and prompts

Research theme – Unconscious Bias

6. Does unconscious bias exist in the APS and how is unconscious bias experienced in the Australian Public Service
 - What do you think unconscious bias is, what does this mean to you?
 - Do you think unconscious bias exists in the APS, why or why not?
 - Have you experienced or witnessed unconscious bias in the workplace, what was this?
 - What behaviours allows unconscious bias to influence practice in the workplace?

Research theme – Cultural Competence

7. To what extent does cultural competence support an inclusive Australian Public Service workplace
 - What does cultural competence mean to you?
 - Who is responsible for cultural competence in the APS and why?
 - Where do think cultural competence can improve workplace inclusion in the APS?
 - How culturally competent do you think your workplace is, and why?
 - Can cultural competence improve capability in the APS workplace, e.g. what practices, processes, systems or individual capabilities would benefit from cultural competence?

Research theme – Workplace Congruence

8. To what extent is Indigenous Employee experience in the APS congruent with expectations of APS employment practice?
 - What do you believe is required for Indigenous employees to thrive in the APS?
 - Do you think managers and employees share the same expectations of what constitutes a successful career in the APS for Indigenous employees, why?
 - How might unconscious bias inhibit a shared understanding between employees and management?
 - What does fairness and equity mean to you, particularly in recruiting and retaining Indigenous employees?
 - Is cultural uniqueness of Indigenous employees resulting in positive workplace experiences for employees, what do you believe?
 - When communicating corporate commitment of Indigenous employment outcomes, is this messaging resulting in positive workplace experiences for Indigenous employees, why or why not?

Closing question

9. Is there anything else you would to discuss or clarify in your responses?

Appendix D: Nvivo Thematic Cluster analysis

PARENT NODE – Unconscious Bias

CHILD NODE – Addressing unconscious bias

GRANDCHILD NODES		Jaccard's Coefficient
Increasing awareness	Checking Personal behaviour	0.166
Having the time to reflect and respond (growth environment)	Checking Personal behaviour	0.163
Westminster influence of senior management on inclusion	Lip service, tokenism, assumptions	0.119

CHILD NODE – Challenges and Needs

GRANDCHILD NODES		Jaccard's Coefficient
Environment	Behavioural	0.20
Structure and processes	Environment	0.162
Structure and processes	Behavioural	0.142
Social systems (work environment in which things get done)	Environment	0.137
Technical (essential resources and equipment...)	Environment	0.132
Social systems (work environment in which things get done)	Behavioural	0.127
Technical (essential resources and equipment...)	Behavioural	0.125
Structure and processes	Social systems (work environment in which things get done)	0.123
Technical (essential resources and equipment...)	Structure and processes	0.11

CHILD NODE – How has unconscious bias been experienced?

GRANDCHILD NODES		Jaccard's Coefficient
Witnessing behaviour	Institutional behaviour	0.284
Witnessing behaviour	Indigenous employees seen as less capable	0.248
Institutional UB behaviour	Indigenous employees seen as less capable	0.232
Racial discrimination	Making assumptions on appearance or identity	0.225
Making assumptions on appearance or identity	Indigenous employees seen as less capable	0.224

Stereotyped behaviour	Indigenous people only good for Indigenous jobs	0.218

CHILD NODE – Diversity

GRANDCHILD NODES		Jaccard's Coefficient
Modelling inclusive behaviour	Ethno centric nature of opportunities and practice	0.125

CHILD NODE – What do employees think is unconscious bias

GRANDCHILD NODES		Jaccard's Coefficient
Perceptions, prejudices and stereotypes	Being aware of how our personal experience leads to perceiving others	0.126
Unintentional discrimination	Judging others on appearances	0.125
We don't understand UB enough	Perception, prejudices, stereotypes	0.125

CHILD NODE – What do managers think is unconscious bias

GRANDCHILD NODES		Jaccard's Coefficient
Environmental or cultural influence on decision-making	Being aware of how our personal experience leads to perceiving others	0.146
Incomplete judgement of others	Being aware of how our personal experience leads to perceiving others	0.142

PARENT NODE – Cultural Competence

CHILD NODE – Barriers

GRANDCHILD NODES		Jaccard's Coefficient
Supporting cultural inclusion	Gaps between rhetoric and reality in practice	0.23

Child Node - Benefits of cultural competence

GRANDCHILD NODES		Jaccard's Coefficient
Skipped – too low a coefficient		0.076

Child Node - Cultural competence training

GRANDCHILD NODES		Jaccard's Coefficient
Fit for purpose training delivery	Culture for valuing CAT not held in high regard	0.128

Child Node - Challenges and needs

GRANDCHILD NODES		Jaccard's Coefficient
Structures and processes	Environmental	0.219
Technical	Environmental	0.211

Child Node – Diversity and inclusion

GRANDCHILD NODES		Jaccard's Coefficient
Limitations of dominant cultural experience	Appreciating diversity means people need to feel they are genuinely included	0.219
Policy in practice needs strengthening	Appreciating diversity means people need to feel they are genuinely included	0.16

Child node - Entry Level Program Support

GRANDCHILD NODES		Jaccard's Coefficient
Skipped – too low a coefficient		0.02

Child node - Expectations

GRANDCHILD NODES		Jaccard's Coefficient
Skipped – too low a coefficient		0.01

Child node - Integrating cultural competence experience into business practices

GRANDCHILD NODES		Jaccard's Coefficient
Responsibility for cultural competence	Demonstrating genuine commitment through processes and iteration	0.143
Responsibility for cultural competence	Culturally safe environments	0.131

Child node - Racism

GRANDCHILD NODES		Jaccard's Coefficient
Skipped		0.125

What do employees think is cultural competence

GRANDCHILD NODES		Jaccard's Coefficient
Spectrum of capability and learning	Respecting diversity of cultural difference	0.163

Child node - What do managers think is cultural competence

GRANDCHILD NODES		Jaccard's Coefficient
Level of cultural competence in the APS	Combining knowledge and skills to bridge the capability gap	0.215
Cultural competence is not evenly understood or applied in the APS	Ability to relate to interact with diverse cultural groups	0.211
Level of cultural competence in the APS	Appreciating that cultural competence adds to capability	0.157

Child node - What is impacting cultural competence experience

GRANDCHILD NODES		Jaccard's Coefficient
Skipped – too low a coefficient		0.059

Child node - What is required to build cultural competence

GRANDCHILD NODES		Jaccard's Coefficient
Skipped – too low a coefficient		0.076

Child node - What do managers think of the effectiveness of cultural competence practice

GRANDCHILD NODES		Jaccard's Coefficient
Poor	Average	0.128

Child node - What do employees think of the effectiveness of cultural competence practice

GRANDCHILD NODES		Jaccard's Coefficient
Poor	Good	0.127
Average	Good	0.12

PARENT NODE – Workplace Congruence

Child Node - Challenges and needs

GRANDCHILD NODES		Jaccard's Coefficient
Structures and processes (formal relationship of the employee in the organisation)	Environment (internal and external)	0.195
Environment (internal and external)	Behavioural (employees)	0.163
Structures and processes (formal relationship of the employee in the organisation)	Behavioural (employees)	0.144

Technical (essential resources and equipment to perform your role)	Environment (internal and external)	0.135
Technical (essential resources and equipment to perform your role)	Social Systems (work environment in which things get done)	0.135

Child Node - Expectations

GRANDCHILD NODES		Jaccard's Coefficient
Congruence of expectations	Career Development	0.188
Leadership	Career Development	0.167
Leadership	Congruence of expectations	0.161
Leadership	Context of communication	0.157

Child Node - Fairness and Equity

GRANDCHILD NODES		Jaccard's Coefficient
Employee perspective	Manager perspective	0.36

Child Node - Limitations in workplace practice

GRANDCHILD NODES		Jaccard's Coefficient
Cultural inclusion - valued or not	Career aspirations	0.122

Child Node - Perceptions of harassment

GRANDCHILD NODES		Jaccard's Coefficient
Skipped – too low a coefficient		0.058

Child Node - Supporting individuals and careers

GRANDCHILD NODES		Jaccard's Coefficient
Support and confidence to do your job	Managers	0.125

Child Node - Trust

GRANDCHILD NODES		Jaccard's Coefficient
Potential for lip service	Lowered expectations	0.151
Leadership	Conversation with managers	0.145
Conversation with managers	Leadership	0.145

Child Node - What is required to thrive in the APS

GRANDCHILD NODES		Jaccard's Coefficient
Take responsibility for own learning	Employment expectations	0.155
Walking in two worlds	Take responsibility for own learning	0.155
Strengthening relationships through conversation	Employment Expectations	0.15

Child Node - Wish list for change

GRANDCHILD NODES		Jaccard's Coefficient
Managing change	Education - Growing cultural competence	0.165
Managing change	Institutional change	0.137
Institutional change	Education - Growing cultural competence	0.131

Child Node - Workplace inclusion

GRANDCHILD NODES		Jaccard's Coefficient
Entry level recruitment	Disheartened from lack of opportunity	0.132

Appendix E: NVivo Code Book

All coding references are assigned at the grandchild node level. Grandchild nodes and their explanations based on interview text responses are listed in the following tables.

Cultural Competence

Child Node: Barriers	
Grandchild Node	Explanation
Accountability measures	What might support accountability for cultural competence?
Behaviour that encourages bias	Comments that either directly state or imply behaviour as encouraging bias.
Gaps between rhetoric and reality	Comments that either directly state or imply gaps between rhetoric and reality.
Increasing representation – what is policy	Comments that specifically mentioned a particular elements of Indigenous employment policy.
Supporting cultural inclusion	Comments that either directly state or imply cultural inclusion.

Child Node: Benefits of cultural competence	
Grandchild Node	Explanation
Greater workplace capability	Comments that either directly state or imply ways to improve cultural competence capability.
Personal value and positiveness	Comments that highlight personal or organisational values to support cultural competence.
Professional growth	Comments that support personal growth of cultural competence.

Child Node: Challenges and needs	
Grandchild Node	Explanation
Behavioural (employees)	Behavioural implications for addressing challenges and needs of employees.
Environment (internal and external)	Environmental implications for addressing challenges and needs for the APS as an institution.
Social Systems (work environment in which things get done)	Social system implications for addressing challenges and needs of an APS workplace.
Structure and processes (formal relationship of the employee in the organisation)	Structural implication on how employees relate to others in performing their role in the APS.
Technical (essential resources and equipment to perform your role)	Technology that provides the resources which employees perform their work tasks.

Child Node: Cultural competence training

Grandchild Node	Explanation
Changing demographic of Indigenous employees	Comments that either directly state or imply demographic changes of Indigenous employees in the APS.
Considerations for facilitators	Comments that raise issues of concern for facilitators of cultural awareness/competence initiatives.
Culture for valuing CAT is not held in high regard	Comments that either directly state or imply Cultural Awareness Training (CAT) is not seen as positively contributing to the workplace.
Fit for purpose training delivery	Comments that speak of the purpose of cultural competence training.
Integrating learning back in the work place	Comments that speak of how to integrate cultural competence learning back into the workplace.
Multi-cultural ability to combine training delivery	Comments that signal or identify cultural competence beyond just an Indigenous focus.

Child Node: Diversity & inclusion

Grandchild Node	Explanation
Appreciating diversity means people need to feel they are genuinely included	Comments that discuss diversity and inclusion.
Leadership needs to reflect diversity	Comments that link leadership to diversity.
Limitations of dominant culture experience	Comments that discuss limitations to cultural competence in the APS workplace.
Policy in practice needs strengthening	Comments that offer insight into how or where cultural competence practice can be improved.
The role of supervisors and managers	Comments that highlight specific role managers and supervisors have in cultural competence.

Child Node: Entry level programme support

Grandchild Node	Explanation
Choosing the right mentor for staff	Comments that suggest what is required in identifying the right mentor for Indigenous employees.
Expansion impact on operational needs	Comments that highlight how change impacts operational needs.
Peer support	Comments that specifically identify the importance of peer support.

Child Node: Expectations	
Grandchild Node	Explanation
Default belief Indigenous employees are experts on everything cultural	Comments that mention or imply Indigenous employees have all the answers.
Lip service	Comments that specifically mention lip service being applied to commitment to cultural competence.
Openness to wanting to learn more to become culturally competent	Comments that encourage embracing cultural competence.
Pressure to achieve business outcomes can impact expectations	Comments that might identify unreal expectations of cultural competence.
Responsibility for cultural competence	Comments that suggest where responsibility lies for cultural competence.
Trainees being perceived to be incapable or unable of performing core work duties	Comments that devalue Indigenous trainee capability to contribute in the workplace.

Child Node: Integrating cultural competence experience into business practices	
Grandchild Node	Explanation
Acknowledging dominant culture creates limitations to cultural competence	Comments that suggest how the APS workplace might actually limit the effectiveness of cultural competence.
Applying consistent knowledge of what is cultural competence	Comments that indicate what is required to support cultural competence or confuse cultural competence.
Becoming open minded to change	Comments that suggest being open to learning about cultural competence.
Culturally safe environments	Comments that suggest what is required for a culturally safe environment.
Demonstrating genuine commitment through processes and interactions	How cultural competence is demonstrated.
Diversifying responsibility to local responses	Comments that support diversifying responsibility for cultural competence.
Responsibility for cultural competence	Who is responsible for cultural competence, what capacity does responsibility take.

Child Node: Racism	
Grandchild Node	Explanation
Lived experience vs what is expected	Comments that suggest someone capability is negatively based on assumptions on how someone looks.

Child Node: Role of cultural competence	
Grandchild Node	Explanation
Cultural safety	How cultural competence support cultural safety.
Situational requirement for cultural competence	Comments that indicate cultural competence is situational.
Standardising commitment	Comments that indicate practice and rhetoric may be two different things when it comes to the APS demonstrating cultural competence.

Child Node: What do employees think cultural competence is?	
Grandchild Node	Explanation
Cultural understanding before cultural competence	Comments that support understanding of culture is required in order to become culturally competent.
Difference means being vulnerable to learning	Comments that indicate learning to be culturally competent is dependent on accepting difference.
Impact of colonisation and changing nature of culture	Comments that identify tensions in developing an understanding of cultural competence and applying cultural competence.
Individual vs organisational capability	Is cultural competence individual or organisational or both.
Ongoing commitment to educating oneself	Comments that indicate cultural competence in an ongoing journey.
Respecting diversity of cultural difference	Comments that indicate cultural competence means different things to different people.
Spectrum of capability and learning	Comments that discuss education of cultural competence as being multi-faceted.

Child Node: What do managers think cultural competence is	
Grandchild Node	Explanation
Ability to relate to and interact with diverse cultural groups	How cultural competence supports interactions with others.
Appreciating that cultural competence adds to capability	How cultural competence adds to one's capability.
Combining knowledge and skills to bridge the capability gap	Comments that indicate how cultural competence can build capability.

Cultural competence is more than just awareness	Comments that suggest cultural competence is more than just being aware of cultural difference.
Demonstrating cultural competence is an interactive experience	Comments that support demonstrating and understanding of cultural competence requires one to communicate and interact with others.
Level of cultural competence in the APS	Comments that suggest how culturally competent the APS is on a scale of capability.
Provides a cultural safe environment	Specific requirements to support a culturally safe environment.
Rhetoric has to match commitment through shared understanding	Comments that indicate cultural competence is just rhetoric in practice.

Child Node: What employees think of the effectiveness of cultural competence practice

Grandchild Node	Explanation
1. Good	Comments that suggest cultural competence in practice is good.
2. Average	Comments that suggest cultural competence in practice is average.
3. Poor	Comments that suggest cultural competence in practice is poor.

Child Node: What is impacting cultural competence experience

Grandchild Node	Explanation
Indigenous ambassadors and facilitators of culture	Comments that suggest advocates of cultural competence can positively impact cultural competence in the APS.
Negative experience	Comments that suggest or indicate behaviour.
Organisational understanding	Comments that suggest organisational understanding of cultural competence needs to improve.

Child Node: What is required to build cultural competence

Grandchild Node	Explanation
Incentives aligned with outcomes for accountability	Comments that suggest incentives support accountability for cultural competence.
Recruitment and retention	Comments that indicate recruitment and retention is required to support cultural competence.
Sharing peoples experiences	Comments that suggest sharing of experiences support cultural competence.
Valuing diversity through culture	Comments that suggest cultural diversity is required to value cultural competence.

Child Node: What managers think of the effectiveness of existing cultural competence practice	
Grandchild Node	Explanation
1. Good	Comments that suggest cultural competence in practice is good.
2. Average	Comments that suggest cultural competence in practice is average.
3. Poor	Comments that suggest cultural competence in practice is poor.

Unconscious Bias

Child Node: Addressing unconscious bias behaviour	
Grandchild Node	Explanation
Accountability	Comments that either directly or imply who is accountable for addressing unconscious behaviour.
Checking personal behaviour	Comments that refer to personal awareness of unconscious bias.
Having the time to reflect and respond (growth environment)	Comments that refer to the ability to self-reflect to encourage a greater understanding of unconscious bias.
Increasing awareness	Comments that offer advice on how to increase awareness of unconscious bias.
Structural workplace impediments to overcome	How structure (people, policy, processes) in the APS impedes responses to responding to unconscious bias.
Supporting leaders and managers	Comments that refer to supporting managers and leaders.

Child Node: Barriers	
Grandchild Node	Explanation
Assumptions inform decision-making	How decision-making informed by assumptions unconsciously becomes a barrier in one's mind.
Gender inequality	Comments that mention gender as a barrier.
Lip service, tokenism, assumptions	Comments that identify lip service/tokenism assumptions as barriers to addressing unconscious behaviour.
Racism	Comments that suggest unconscious bias presents as forms of racism.
Recruitment and promotion	Comments that suggest recruitment and/or promotion opportunities are biased.
Time restraints can encourage unconscious bias behaviour	How time restraints within the APS can encourage unconscious behaviour.
Westminster influence of senior management on inclusion	Comments that highlight the positional influence of dominant Anglo/Celtic leaders as a barrier to addressing unconscious behaviour.

Child Node: Challenges and needs	
Grandchild Node	Explanation
Behavioural (employees)	Behavioural implications for addressing challenges and needs of employees.

Environment (internal and external)	Environmental implications for addressing challenges and needs for the APS as an institution.
Social Systems (work environment in which things get done)	Social system implications for addressing challenges and needs of an APS workplace.
Structure and processes (formal relationship of the employee in the organisation)	Structural implication on how employees relate to others in performing their role in the APS.
Technical (essential resources and equipment to perform your role)	Technology that provides the resources which employees perform their work tasks.

Child Node: Diversity

Grandchild Node	Explanation
Ethnocentric nature of opportunities and practice	Comments that discuss the dominant Anglo/Celtic ethnocentric nature of the APS as a contributor to unconscious bias.
Experience in working with diverse peoples	Comments that suggest that despite commitment to diversity, unconscious bias is still experience because of ignorance of cultural identity.
Modelling inclusive behaviour	Comments that suggest ways in which to model inclusive behaviour to reduce unconscious behaviour.

Child Node: How has unconscious bias been experienced

Grandchild Node	
Affinity bias	Comments that favour people with whom we feel we have a connection or similarity with.
Being excluded	Bias that has resulted in employee experience deliberate exclusion.
Gender bias	Bias that has been experienced as a result of gender.
Indigenous people only good for Indigenous jobs	Comments that suggest stereotypes of capability limit Indigenous employees to Indigenous specific jobs.
Indigenous employees seen as less capable	Comments that imply Indigenous employees are seen to be less capable than other employees.
Institutional UB behaviour	Institutional behaviour that results in unconscious behaviour.
Making assumptions on appearance or identity	How employee assumptions of Aboriginal identity demonstrate poor knowledge of Aboriginal identity in today's contemporary Australian workplace.
Performance discussion	Unconscious bias being experienced in performance discussion.
Process on the run	Comments that highlight procedural limitation in the workplace can actually encourage unconscious bias behaviour.
Racial discrimination	Direct or implied instances of Racial discrimination.
Stereotyped behaviour	Comments that discuss instances of where unconscious bias is experienced as stereotyped behaviour.
When identity is revealed	Comments that indicate behaviour changes once Aboriginality becomes known.
Witnessing behaviour	Instances where unconscious bias has been witnessed.

Child Node: Unconscious bias training	
Grandchild Node	Explanation
Considerations for future training design	Implications for future unconscious bias training.
Cultural Change	Comments that suggest how or where unconscious bias training is required for cultural change within the APS.
Format of training	Implications for format of unconscious bias training.
What happens after training	Implications for after training, what is required?
What is training revealing	What is training revealing for the APS?
Why training	What are the lessons being learnt from training.

Child Node: What do employees think is UB?	
Grandchild Node	Explanation
Being unaware of how our personal experience leads to perceiving others	How employees explain their own personal awareness of unconscious bias.
Judging others on appearances	Personal unconscious behaviour that judges others.
Perceptions, Prejudices & stereotypes	Instances of unconscious bias based on perceptions, prejudices and stereotypes.
Unintentional discrimination	Unintentional discrimination as a result of unconscious bias.
We don't understand unconscious bias enough	Comments that indicate unconscious bias is not understood consistently across the APS.

Child Node: What do managers think is UB	
Grandchild Node	Explanation
Being unaware of how our personal experience leads to perceiving others	How managers explain their own personal awareness of unconscious bias.
Decision-making that is potentially racist and or discriminatory	Comments that suggest unconscious bias results in racist and/or discriminatory behaviour.
Environmental or cultural influence on decision-making	Environmental elements of unconscious bias (within the APS as a living entity).
Incomplete judgement of others	Comments that indicate how unconscious bias allows judgements to be made of others.
Organisation constraints that encourage unconscious bias	Behaviour and/or practice that encourages unconscious bias behaviour.
Perceptions, Prejudices & stereotypes	Instances of unconscious bias based on perceptions, prejudices and stereotypes.
Personal interpretation of others	Those personal attributes that base our interpretations of others on.

Workplace Congruence

Child Node: Challenges and needs	
Grandchild Node	Explanation
Environment (internal and external)	Environmental implications for addressing challenges and needs for the APS as an institution.
Behavioural (employees)	Behavioural implications for addressing challenges and needs of employees.
Social systems (work environment in which things get done)	Social system implications for addressing challenges and needs of an APS workplace.
Structure and processes (formal relationship of the employee in the organisation)	Structural implication on how employees relate to others in performing their role in the APS.
Technical (essential resources and equipment to perform your role)	Technology that provides the resources which employees perform their work tasks.

Child Node: Diversity	
Grandchild Node	Explanation
Capability for empathy	Comments that suggest the APS workplace does not reflect support for a diverse and inclusive environment, which limits its ability to empathise.
Congruence of expectations	Do managers and employees share the same expectations in supporting diversity?
Critical considerations to embrace diversity	Comments that highlight critical requirements for creating an inclusive workplace.
Experience of diversity	What employees and manager think of their experience of diversity in the APS?
Support advocates	The role and/or importance of advocates in supporting diversity.

Child Node: Expectations	
Grandchild Node	Explanation
Career development	Comment on career development expectations.
Congruence of expectations	Level of congruence of expectations between managers and employees.
Context of communication	Context of communication and what how expectations are interpreted.
Corporate commitment	Differing views on the level of congruence between what corporate areas and business lines.
Employee experience	What employees are experiencing in the workplace.
Executive leaders	Comments that suggest executive leaders need to change expectations.
Expressing cultural identity	Comments that highlight difficulty of working in the APS because of cultural identity.
Leadership	Implications for leadership.
Performance Management	Performance management expectations.

Setting up to fail	Comments that suggest Indigenous employees can be step up to fail.
Tokenism	Feelings of being taken for granted, tokenistic expectations.
Unrealised contribution	Comments that suggest employee expectations are not being met and helps to explain why employees leave the APS.
Workforce planning	Considerations required for future workforce planning.

Child Node: Fairness and equity in the workplace

Grandchild Node	Explanation
Employee perspective	What employees think is fairness and equity.
Manager perspective	What managers think is fairness and equity.

Child Node: Limitations in workplace practice

Grandchild Node	Explanation
Career aspirations	What is limiting career aspirations (examples)?
Corporate messaging	Is corporate messaging meeting expectations.
Cultural inclusion – valued or not	Comments that suggest cultural inclusion is not adequately valued.
Interpretation and use of merit	Examples where recruitment practice is flawed because of principles of merit are perceived not to matter.
Workplace practice	Comments that suggest workplace practice is not consistent, presenting as challenging and difficult to adjust to through either expectations or roles.

Child Node: Perceptions of harassment

Grandchild Node	Explanation
Job role expectations	Comments that highlight tension between what is expected in performing a job role as an employee, and what employees expects is reasonable in performing their role.
Lateral violence	Indigenous employees who experience lateral violence.

Child Code: Supporting individuals and careers

Grandchild Node	Explanation
Development beyond regional boundaries	Comments that discuss development opportunities beyond the Canberra centric approach to development.
Employee support programs	Initiatives to support Indigenous development.
Managers	Role of managers in supporting employee career aspirations.
Support and confidence to do your job	Comments that identify importance of having the support and confidence to perform your role.

Child Node: Trust

Grandchild Node	Explanation
Business line support	Having trust in Business line support.

Communication	Comments that discuss the importance of building trust through communication.
Conversations with managers	Implications for managers in building trust through communication.
Leadership	Reasons why leadership may not be trusted.
Lowered expectations	Trust is low because of lowered expectations.
Potential for lip service	Lip service does not generate trust.
Truth telling through stories	How trust is lessened when truth telling impacts negatively on Indigenous employees.
Virtual team challenge	How trust has been strengthened through virtual teams.

Child Node: What is required to thrive in the APS

Grandchild Node	Explanation
APS Cultural change	Comments that offer advice on what is required for cultural change.
Employment expectations	Key needs that encourage employees to have clear expectations on what is required as an APS employee.
Flexibility of job fit	Comments that suggest being flexible to get the most out of one's employment.
Myth busting (pigeonholing and stereotypes)	Comments that identify the need to break down stereotypes and lip service.
On the job development	Comments that support using broader on-the-job development mechanisms.
Skilled leadership	Implications for managers and leaders in supporting staff to thrive.
Strengthening relationships through conversation	Importance of communication in forging relationships between managers/leaders and employees.
Take responsibility for own learning	Implications for employees in taking control of their own career learning.
Walking in two worlds	Comments that discuss the need to understand Indigenous employees walk in two worlds, i.e. cultural identity and the need to comply with expectations as an APS employee.

Child Node: Wish list for change

Grandchild Node	Explanation
Education - Growing cultural competence	Comments that highlight the importance of cultural awareness and competence education.
Having conversations	Encouraging cultural understanding through conversation
Institutional change	Areas where institutional change is required to support a more culturally inclusive APS.
Leadership capability & accountability	Implications for leadership in improving personal cultural competence.
Diversity and inclusion change	Diversity and inclusion suggestions that can apply across the whole APS to support change.

Child Node: Workplace Inclusion	
Grandchild Node	Explanation
A number not a person	Employees being perceived as a number or part of a quota and not as an individual
Disheartened from lack of opportunity	Instances where employees feel discouraged from seeking career development opportunities
Diversity	Limitations of a Anglo/Celtic dominant APS
Entry level recruitment	Implications expressed for entry-level programs

Appendix F: Project Goal Table and Employee and Manager Segments Table

Project Goals Table

The Project Goals Table provides a high level summary of the research projects goals that assist in ensuring each project goal is adequately understood in progressing through the Modern QFD process stages.

	Goal Statement	How measured?	Current level	Current level evidence	Target level	By when?	Who judges success?
PG1	Does unconscious bias exist in the APS and if so, how is it experienced in the Australian Public Service?	Quantitatively through 37 participant interviews	No available data at beginning of research	Previous gender and Indigenous employment research into APS practice provides limited insight.	100% participant interviews	December 2021	Researcher Academic Panel
PG2	To what extent is cultural competence supporting an inclusive Australian Public Service workplace?	Quantitatively through 37 participant interviews	No available data at beginning of research	Nil as there is only partial data available, and no shared agreed definition of cultural competence exists in the APS.	100% participant interviews	December 2021	Researcher Academic Panel
PG3	To what extent is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee experience in the APS congruent with expectation of APS employment practice?	Quantitatively through 37 participant interviews	No available data at beginning of research	Closest measure available is 'My agency supports and actively promotes an inclusive workplace' provided in State	100% participant interviews	December 2021	Researcher Academic Panel

	Goal Statement	How measured?	Current level	Current level evidence	Target level	By when?	Who judges success?
				of the Service Reports			
PG4	Determine a level of implicit bias for APS employees.	Australian Aboriginal Implicit Association test	No available data at beginning of research	Nil as no measure of implicit bias has been applied to the APS before	> 500 successfully completed IATs	End May 2021	Researcher Academic Panel

What are the business objectives or success criteria of this project? Typically, financial, market, brand related. Not about the product.

How is the goal measured? Where does data come from? Team members from different functions may see this differently.

What is the current level of performance of the goal statement? How well are we doing now?

What is the desired level of performance of the goal statement? How well would we like to be doing?

What is the target date to reach the target level?

Who or what position will determine if the target level has been reached by the target date? Do they have additional metrics?

Employee and Manager Segments Table

The Employee and Manager Segments Tables is applied at the beginning of the research project's qualitative methodology that breaks each of the three project goals into separate sub-goal statements. This process is to assist in identifying information for employees and managers related to the three project goals used in data collection. Typically questions such as: who, what, where, when, and how are applied for this purpose.

Project Goal	Segment	Who	What	Where	When	Why	How
Capture what managers understand to be unconscious bias in their workplace	Managers	Executive Level 1 through to Senior Executive Service Band 2 employees	To understand what managers perceive unconscious bias is, and how unconscious bias might impact their role as a manager	Four participating Australian Public Service (APS) agencies	At interview	To align workplace expectations between employee and manager	Semi structured one-on-one interviews
Capture what Indigenous employees understand to be unconscious bias in their workplace	Indigenous employees	APS 4 - EL 1 Indigenous employees	To understand how unconscious bias impacts an Indigenous employee's employment experience in the APS	APS workplace	At interview	To align workplace expectations between employee and manager	Semi structured one-on-one interviews
Capture APS employee levels of unconscious bias as measured by the IAT	Four participating research agencies	APS employees generally	To measure individual employee level of unconscious bias	APS workplace	Once through research project	To identify the level of unconscious bias for the respondent group and	Completion of an online Implicit Association Test

Project Goal	Segment	Who	What	Where	When	Why	How
						potential implications for the APS	
Capture what managers think of cultural competence as a workplace inclusion strategy	Managers	Executive Level 1 through to Senior Executive Service Band 2 employees	To determine how well cultural competence is understood as a workplace inclusion strategy by managers	In corporate HR policies, branch level strategic planning processes, and in relationships.	In everyday workplace relationship between managers and employees	To identify what managers understand as the purpose and value of cultural competence in the workplace	Semi structured one-on-one interviews
Capture what Indigenous employees think of cultural competence as a workplace inclusion strategy	Indigenous employees	APS 4 - EL 1 Indigenous employees	To determine how well cultural competence is understood as a workplace inclusion strategy by Indigenous employees	In corporate HR policies, branch level strategic planning processes, and in relationships.	Branch and individual development and knowledge building responses	To identify what Indigenous employees understand as the purpose and value of cultural competence in the workplace	Semi structured one-on-one interviews
What do managers think is required for a positive workplace experience	Managers	Executive Level 1 through to Senior Executive Service Band 2 employees	To understand what is required to maintain positive and productive relationships between	One-on-one formal and informal manager/employee interactions	Everyday workplace roles and duties	To identify what managers view as best practice equitable workplace	Semi structured one-on-one interviews

Project Goal	Segment	Who	What	Where	When	Why	How
			managers and employees			diversity and inclusiveness	
What do Indigenous employees think is required for a positive workplace experience	Indigenous employees	APS 4 - EL 1 Indigenous employees	To understand what is required for a workplace environment to support employee workplace inclusiveness from Indigenous employee perspectives	One-on-one formal and informal manager/employee interactions	Formal - Annually and at mid-term reviews Informal - routine section/team/branch engagement activities	To identify what employees view as best practice equitable workplace diversity and inclusiveness	Semi structured one-on-one interviews

Why would this employee be desirable?

What segment or demographic? What stakeholders?

Who uses product/service/process? Who else could use it? Who might use in the future?

What is the product/service/process used for? What else could it be used for? What future use?

Where is the product/service/process used? Where else could it be used for? Where in the future could it be used?

When is the product/service/process used? When else could it be used?

Why is the product/service/process used? Why else could it be used? What future purpose could it have?

How is the product/service/process used? How else could it be used? How could it be used in the future?

Appendix G: Hypothesis Process Models

The Hypothesised Employee/Manager Process Models (EPM) seeks to understand the roles of employees and managers in the APS, i.e., what 'job' or 'tasks' are being performed in a civil administrative service model? A subset of Indigenous employees and managers from among interviewed participants were asked to complete the EPM. Content recorded is a summary of input provided.

Indigenous employee Hypothesised Process Model

	What are the things that have gone right?	What are the things that have gone wrong	How is satisfaction or dissatisfaction measured?	List any pain points?
I feel I am valued as a respected member of the team	Increased Indigenous representation Staff moved to different seats to buddy up. All staff have had a workplace assessment. Ran mini workshops for staff (Change, Performance management, 3 pillars, Master Plan HR case management.	Staff returning to the workplace under the old regime of behaviours and attitudes. When under pressure staff revert to old behaviours.	Through the APS team census	No transparency in HR process. Perceptions of favouritism, special treatment need to explain why. Not engaging staff from a diverse background Not supporting learning needs of staff from diverse background. Not understanding the employment hurdles for people from a diverse background. Staff do not communicate with each other, leads to lack of trust. No accountability – blame game when things go wrong. Blockers and saboteurs.

	What are the things that have gone right?	What are the things that have gone wrong	How is satisfaction or dissatisfaction measured?	List any pain points?
				Loss of confidence of staff to apply for other positions. Staff not happy at work, high unplanned leave and absences.
I am provided with opportunities to maximise my personal skills and experience	Staff census working party made up of different APS levels and diverse background. Team action plans that contribute to the Branch action plan. Advocating as a change champion Staff are supported and assisted with applying for EOIs including coaching for interviews. Identifying and tracking required mandatory APS level training to ensure all staff are aware of their job functions, accountability and APS values and code of conduct.	Under estimating the blockers and saboteur.	Staff engagement. Mini staff surveys.	Team leaders not communicating with all staff resulting in variance around key points when communicated.

	What are the things that have gone right?	What are the things that have gone wrong	How is satisfaction or dissatisfaction measured?	List any pain points?
	Staff being able to nominate for internal corporate roles in addition to normal duties e.g. Indigenous Cultural Awareness Training facilitators.			
I am provided with clear directions and guidance in regards to what is required of me	Director (manager) is very supportive and provides guidance, but lets me make the final decision whether this is good or bad.	Shared expectation of trust don't always align	HR and code of conduct standards team.	Having a better understanding of emotional intelligence of self and understanding how it drives personality and behaviours.
My work is of high quality and I am provided with affirmation	Yes to both the team and the branch.	Old leadership behaviours come back one takes leave	Staff share with each other. Manager also share with selective staff.	Inexperienced team leader to be mentored by others outside of the immediate team. EL1 to be backfilled by experienced EL1, does not provide development opportunities for staff who want to step up.

	What are the things that have gone right?	What are the things that have gone wrong	How is satisfaction or dissatisfaction measured?	List any pain points?
My personal workforce expectations are met and I feel I am making a difference	Completed the Executive Indigenous Leadership Program 2019. Commenced the Lead2Inspire and Leadership Development Program. Opportunities to higher duties for short-term roles.	Too much leadership development happening concurrently.	Level of personal tiredness. More time studying at home.	Division structural changes and EL staff movements. Constant changes in various management positions and levels through the year. Uncertainty with enjoying the same level of support to develop leadership skills from new incoming managers.

Manager Hypothesised Process Model

	What are the things that have gone right?	What are the things that have gone wrong	How is satisfaction or dissatisfaction measured?	List any pain points?
I know where I contribute to business needs identified in Group and Branch business plans	Being a specific branch I understand where we fit. There is a pretty direct link to desired outcomes. For the most part it is clearly articulated what our key products are and how they related to business goals.	As the plans are written it can be difficult to make the work and outcomes we do fit the statements of the Business Plan. In a changing environment it can be less clear what our inputs contribute more	Staff reaction; annual staff census; pulse polls; unplanned leave is also an indicator. Through informal feedback largely. Routine staff surveys	The limits placed on the work by the language used on the formal documents. More open discussion about the varied forms of 'contribution' and their relative value

	What are the things that have gone right?	What are the things that have gone wrong	How is satisfaction or dissatisfaction measured?	List any pain points?
	The work of each unit is documented within plans for the division, business group department This helps attract staff with matching skills and interests	broadly to our department/agency's goals. Allocation of tasks without a natural 'home', rapid response to peaks and troughs in work distribution Descriptions don't always capture the scale of management tasks – risking 'invisible' work	Feedback through annual performance evaluation processes. Feedback from recipients of advice.	
Section planning and implementation is aligned to business needs	Consistency in articulating between Divisional and branch planning. For regular products we have processes that enable planning. Annual corporate plan triggers regular reviews of activities and functions Managers have some flexibility to reorganise staff to changing priorities Some flexibility for peak work periods across divisions	Being a small branch in the Division our work is not adequately reflected in reporting templates. Sometimes ambiguity from having multiple people involved especially as much work is done with other sections Capacity to plan can be outpaced by changes in the external environment and availability of appropriately skilled staff	Regular feedback sought Routine management discussions	The limitations of the plan as per above The difficulty in re-sorting the work done to fit with high level strategies and statements Can be difficult if tasks change quickly. In any organisation – risk of business needs moving faster than planning/resourcing allows

	What are the things that have gone right?	What are the things that have gone wrong	How is satisfaction or dissatisfaction measured?	List any pain points?
Efficient and effective use of team resources (financial and people management)	Transparent decision-making processes. Get to know the people who are your staff. Keep talking. When there have been regular and frequent meetings Formal performance feedback required twice a year. Interim feedback/management discussions are common Formal and regular channels of Tsy, group and division-wide communications	Timeframes don't always allow for full conversations Staff movement limits long-term support. When things have changed quickly without the ability to communicate to all relevant parties. Rapid changes of management and lack of continuity that results Changes in role expectations – adjustment time required	Formal and informal performance feedback	Alignment of understanding between staff needs and leadership priorities
Effective ongoing communication in pursuit of Group, Branch and Team goals	Collaboration at the exec (EL) level to share resources as needed. Supportive management environment. When we have been able to plan.	Under used IPA process to get the best people to their best jobs. When there has been ambiguity or quickly changing situation.	Formal and informal performance feedback	This is being more and more centralised, therefore losing the ability of a local leader to manage their staff/workload ratio Communication of tasks and priorities and the

	What are the things that have gone right?	What are the things that have gone wrong	How is satisfaction or dissatisfaction measured?	List any pain points?
	Financial delegations very limited at the EL2 manager level. Some latitude to attract staff as roles change and people leave.	Changes in recruitment processes can be disruptive in the short term. As roles change staff changes/reskilling to meet changing needs can be slower.		pace of change always presents risks Scaling of task to time and resources.
I have unified leadership and direction amongst my team	Constant conversation between Directors. Set meeting rituals (scrums, formal meetings) with the team and maintained. When the team has been able to talk through the issue. Scope for managers to choose how teams are run – allows for managers to adjust their roles and seek valuable input from teams.	Speed of required decision-making can make some people feel unconsulted if not spoken to due to deadlines. Having multiple EL2s and other key stakeholders like SES can lead to signals that can be interpreted as conflicted. Changes in senior management can lead to changes in expectation that are rapid and require time to adjust – in the short term this can create tension.	Surveys etc. Formal and informal performance feedback.	Effective feedback requires frequent practice and tailoring.

Appendix H: Hierarchy Needs Table

Unconscious Bias

Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
UBN 1 My workplace seeks to understand what unconscious bias is	UBN 1.1 My workplace embraces open and respectful conversation	UBN 1.1.1 Senior managers embrace open two-way discussion of unconscious bias. UBN 1.1.2 I feel reassured that people can accept that they have unconscious bias UBN 1.1.3 I feel reassured people want to understand unconscious bias UBN 1.1.4 I have support to improve my personal knowledge of unconscious bias. UBN 1.1.5 I feel empowered to know how to address unconscious bias in my workplace. UBN 1.1.6 I understand dealing with unconscious bias is everyone's responsibility
	UBN 1.2 I feel everyone needs to be aware of unconscious bias	UBN 1.2.1 I am able to identify my unconscious bias UCN 1.2.2 I am able to measure my own unconscious bias UBN 1.2.3 I am confident in applying my understanding of unconscious bias to improve workplace behaviour UBN 1.2.4 I am confident in applying my understanding of unconscious bias to improve relationships UBN 1.2.5 I feel safe in identifying my own unconscious bias behaviour without fear of judgement.
UBN 2 My agency emphasises cultural education for all employees	UBN 2.1 Cultural competence capability is an ongoing process of development	UBN 2.1.1 I feel confident cultural training compliments my personal strengths UBN 2.1.2 I am confident any cultural training provided supports practical learning needs

		UBN 2.1.3 I accept responsibility for my own cultural learning UBN 2.1.4 I accept I need to contribute to my cultural education learning UBN 2.1.5 I feel confident cultural education compliments my personal strengths UBN 2.1.6 I know cultural competence training is mandatory and not voluntary. UBN 2.1.7 I have confidence in staff being able to seek their own knowledge on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues
	UBN 2.2 All employees feel supported in committing to long-term capability development	UBN 2.2.1 I feel my workplace provides equitable promotional and development opportunities UBN 2.2.2 I feel supported in committing to a journey of educating myself on the impact of unconscious bias
	UBN 2.3 My agency is open to understanding unconscious bias.	UBN 2.3.1 I feel supported to learn with others in a positive, supportive environment. UBN 2.3.2 I am confident everyone understands what cultural safety means. UBN 2.3.3 I am confident in finding time to discuss how we can address unconscious bias behaviour. UBN 2.3.4 I enjoy a safe and trusted environment to discuss unconscious bias in the workplace.
UBN 3 I feel secure in whom I am in the APS	UBN 3.1 I enjoy the same level of expectation of capability afforded to others	UBN 3.1.1 My peers accept me as equal. UBN 3.1.2 I am recognised for my contribution UBN 3.1.3 I feel valued for what I bring not what I am perceived to be capable of

		UBN 3.1.4 I am rewarded for my good work UBN 3.1.5 I am engaged and judged on my merits and not assumptions based on my identity. UBN 3.1.6 I am valued as an individual and not just for my cultural identity
	UBN 3.2 I feel confident employees of different cultural backgrounds are not pigeonholed or stereotyped	UBN 3.2.1 I am not presumed to be the expert on everything indigenous UBN 3.2.2 I am not presumed to be only capable of working in indigenous specific roles. UBN 3.2.3 I feel respected and equal to my peers free from stereotyped perceptions UBN 3.2.4 I feel empowered in supporting others to break down the stereotypes and perceptions placed on indigenous employees UBN 3.2.5 My peers understand what constitutes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity.
UBN 4 I enjoy a culturally inclusive workplace	UBN 4.1 Employees understand the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is vast	UBN 4.1.1 I understand the cultural diversity of First Nations peoples in Australia. UBN 4.1.2 I understand Indigenous Inclusion and diversity is mutually exclusive.
	UBN 4.2 I enjoy a workplace that embraces cultural diversity in everything it does regardless of race	UBN 4.2.1 I feel empowered in being able to contribute in an inclusive workplace UBN 4.2.2 I feel I am genuinely engaged in my workplace and that my voice matters UBN 4.2.3 I am accepted as a valued employee equal with others UBN 4.2.4 I feel valued as an employee

	UBN 4.3 I feel completely safe in a workplace that does not condone racial ignorance and apathy.	UBN 4.3.1 I understand what white privilege means for minorities UBN 4.3.2 I can call out racism in the workplace without fear of retribution UBN 4.3.3 I feel strengthened and capable in responding to racist comments UBN 4.3.4 I work in an environment that condones racism in the workplace
UBN 5 I feel my agency emphasises Indigenous employment	UBN 5.1 Reconciliation Action Plans are valued as a corporate commitment to change	UBN 5.1.1 Non-indigenous employees accept responsibility for understanding what reconciliation means for them, and not abdicating responsibility for their own learning UBN 5.1.2 Language we use to support Indigenous employment is simple, direct and unambiguous, no buzz words UBN 5.1.3 I see change in our rhetoric becoming reality through genuine commitment to reconciliation UBN 5.1.4 All business areas across the agency enjoy a similar level of knowledge of Indigenous matters
	UB CN 5.2 I see Indigenous cultural capability influencing processes positively for change	UBN 5.2.1 I feel confident capability uplifts are integrated into business outcomes, not as a tick and flick exercise. UBN 5.2.2 I feel confident in assessing Indigenous employee capability accurately and consistently. UBN 5.2.3 - I feel reassured people participating in recruitment panels are aware of their blind spots when assessing an applicant's capability

Cultural Competence

Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
CCN 1 Leadership champions cultural inclusion	CCN 1.1 My agency's commitment to cultural inclusion is genuine	CCN 1.1.1 I feel my agency is genuinely committed to cultural inclusion CCN 1.1.2 I observe cultural inclusion being incorporated into business processes CCN 1.1.3 I see alignment between strategic commitment and actual commitment to cultural inclusion
	CCN 1.2 Leadership backs up commitment with action	CCN 1.2.1 Executives fully attend mandated cultural competence development programs CCN 1.2.2 Individual cultural inclusion accountability measures in SES performance agreements are transparent CCN 1.2.3 SES leadership embraces cultural inclusion sharing the 'why' cultural inclusion is required CCN 1.2.4 I see SES demonstrating commitment to cultural inclusion every day CCN 1.2.5 I see middle level managers leading the implementation of cultural inclusion initiatives CCN 1.2.6 I see my workplace's cultural inclusion commitment reflected in corporate policies and strategies
CCN 2 My agency seeks to understand cultural	CCN 2.1 My agency applies a shared understanding of cultural competence	CCN 2.1.1 Cultural concepts like cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, cultural inclusion, cultural integrity etc, are individually understood CCN 2.1.2 We apply cultural concepts to guide cultural inclusion in the APS

competence to drive cultural inclusion		CCN 2.1.3 Everyone understands what cultural competence is CCN 2.1.4 My agency accepts cultural competence is required for an inclusive organisation CCN 2.1.5 My agency accepts cultural competence as an enabler for cultural inclusion to achieve business outcomes
	CCN 2.2 My agency embraces cultural competence education	CCN 2.2.1 I enjoy training delivery that engages me fully CCN 2.2.2 I have time and space to develop my cultural competence skills CCN 2.2.3 My peers embrace cultural competence learning and education CCN 2.2.4 I know how to improve my cultural knowledge and understanding CCN 2.2.5 I accept I have limitations in my cultural knowledge and understanding
CCN 3 My agency leads cultural competence change	CCN 3.1 My agency embeds cultural competence into how we do business	CCN 3.1.1 I see cultural competence becoming business as usual CCN 3.1.2 Non-Indigenous employees become aware of how assumptions drive their interpretation of someone else's identify CCN 3.1.3 Cultural competence outcomes are institutionalised into systems, processes and procedures.

		CCN 3.1.4 Cultural competence outcomes are embedded in various corporate strategies CCN 3.1.5 I feel my workplace is deeply committed to a diverse and culturally inclusive work place.
	CCN 3.2 Employees champion cultural diversity and inclusion	CCN 3.2.1 I observe employees advocating cultural inclusion throughout the whole year endeavour, not just in Reconciliation and NAIDOC weeks CCN 3.2.2 Individual cultural competence becomes a core enabler for workplace inclusion CCN 3.2.3 Cultural safety is advocated in the workplace regardless of ethnicity CCN 3.2.4 My peers understand the difference between equality and equity in supporting a culturally inclusive workplace
CCN 4 Cultural safety improves inclusion	CCN 4.1 I enjoy a culturally safe workplace	CCN 4.1.1 I feel I can share my concerns for cultural safety without fear of being judged CCN 4.1.2 I can express my opinions freely CCN 4.1.3 My opinions are received constructively CCN 4.1.4 My views and opinions of cultural inclusion matter CCN 4.1.5 I feel safe in calling out inappropriate behaviour as being culturally destructive CCN 4.1.6 My cultural identity is not questioned

	CCN 4.2 Relationships is key to engaging effectively with others	CCN 4.2.1 I am able to work effectively across cultures CCN 4.2.2 I am confident in communicating effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples CCN 4.2.3 Engagement in discussion strengthens acceptance of difference CCN 4.2.4 All employee cultures matter

Workplace Congruence Needs Affinity Table

Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
WCN 1 I enjoy working in an inclusive team	WCN 1.1 I feel confident in my team	WCN 1.1.1 I am confident my skills and abilities match my job role WCN 1.1.2 I am confident I understand the cultural differences of team members WCN 1.1.3 I understand the cultural needs of my team members WCN 1.1.4 I feel positive in my ability to contribute to my team effectively WCN 1.1.5 I feel confident in my role WCN 1.1.6 My personal expectations match with what is expected of my role WCN 1.1.7 My views and opinions matter
	WCN 1.2 My team encourages inclusive work practices	WCN 1.2.1 My team functions as a culturally inclusive team WCN 1.2.2 I feel my team is effective because of cultural inclusion WCN 1.2.3 I am confident my peers are able to communicate sensitively and effectively with Indigenous employees WCN 1.2.4

		Relationships in my team are strengthened through better understanding of unconscious bias WCN 1.2.5 I feel my team achieves better outcomes when we engage as an inclusive team WCN 1.2.6 I feel my team achieves better outcomes when we are consulted as a team
	WCN 1.3 My workplace expectations are clear	WCN 1.3.1 My manager shares their expectations with me WCN 1.3.2 I feel my workplace expectations is aligned with my agency because my supervisor understands what is important to me WCN 1.3.3 At all times I understand what is expected of me WCN 1.3.4 My workplace satisfaction is a priority for my manager WCN 1.3.5 I feel my workplace provides a safe place where I can learn from my mistakes
	WCN 1.4 I enjoy trust in my workplace	WCN 1.4.1 I feel I can trust my peers at all times WCN 1.4.2 I feel I can trust my manager at all times WCN 1.4.3 I feel I can trust senior management at all times WCN 1.4.4 I feel there is trust between non-Indigenous and Indigenous staff

		WCN 1.4.5 I observe senior management's commitment to building and maintaining trust with employees WC CN 1.4.6 My workplace contributions are acknowledged
WCN 2 I feel comfortable with my employment in the APS	WCN 2.1 I feel respected and valued as an APS employee	WCN 2.1.1 My manager seeks open and respectful performance conversation with me WCN 2.1.2 My workplace satisfaction increases because my manager values me as an employee WCN 2.1.3 I feel my workplace satisfaction increases because I accept responsibility WCN 2.1.4 I feel my workplace attitudes remain positive despite changes in senior management
	WCN 2.2 I feel I fit into the APS and not the APS fit me	WCN 2.2.1 I feel the APS genuinely values and respects who I am regardless of my cultural identify WCN 2.2.2 I feel the APS accepts Indigenous leadership attributes WCN 2.2.3 Indigenous employee cultural identity is not marginalised by the dominant culture of the APS WCN 2.2.4 I am treated fairly in all aspects of workplace expectations WCN 2.2.5 I am treated equitably in all aspects of workplace expectations WCN 2.2.6 I am confident my agency considers personal and corporate workplace needs equitably

WCN 3 Recruitment practice is culturally inclusive	WCN 3.1 Cultural inclusion drives Indigenous employment practice	WCN 3.1.1 We do not recruit people who look and think like ourselves WCN 3.1.2 Culturally inclusive attraction and recruitment strategies reflect regional area needs WCN 3.1.3 My agency includes cultural considerations in arriving at evidence-based recruitment and promotion decisions WCN 3.1.4 Culturally inclusive recruitment of Indigenous employees maximises opportunities for achieving a successful APS career WCN 3.1.5 I feel confident recruitment panels are culturally competent in removing biases when assessing candidate capability WCN 3.1.6 I feel the principle of merit in the APS is applied equitably in recruitment decision-making
	WCN 3.2 All employees are aware why cultural inclusion drives Indigenous employment practice	WCN 3.2.1 I feel the APS has a consistent understanding and approach to Indigenous employment WCN 3.2.2 I feel confident all employees in my agency understand the importance of Indigenous employment outcomes for the APS WCN 3.2.3 All employees are knowledgeable of the Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy WCN 3.2.4 I understand how my agency's focus on celebrating cultural diversity supports Indigenous employment outcomes

WCN 4 I feel my career aspirations are important	WCN 4.1 My manager shares my career aspirations	WCN 4.1.1 I am confident my manager understands my career expectations WCN 4.1.2 I am confident my manager can provide me with the right support to realise my expectations WCN 4.1.3 I feel my manager is able to support my career aspirations WCN 4.1.4 My career developmental needs are not merely seen as a transactional requirement WCN 4.1.5 I feel confident in my manager's ability to facilitate regular and meaningful career conversations with me WCN 4.1.6 My career pathway is understood to more than that a linear development process
	WCN 4.2 I am encouraged to accept responsibility for my own career development	WCN 4.2.1 I am encouraged to get out of my comfort zone WCN 4.2.2 I am encouraged to develop new capabilities but this does not mean I need to be seeking promotions WCN 4.2.3 My development goals remain flexible in reflecting my career aspirations WCN 4.2.4 I feel I can achieve my career goals
WCN 5 I observe culturally	WCN 5.1 My agency develops cultural inclusion through cultural competency	WCN 5.1.1 My agency enjoys a shared understanding of what culturally competent inclusion means

competent inclusion practice		WCN 5.1.2 My agency accepts cultural competence is required for an inclusive organisation regardless of cultural identity or ethnicity WCN 5.1.3 My agency accepts cultural competence enhances organisational performance WCN 5.1.4 My agency accepts cultural competency is a development process
	WCN 5.2 My manager embraces cultural inclusion	WCN 5.2.1 I feel my manager is never complacent in how we perceive others around us WCN 5.2.2 My manager is adept at managing people with diverse cultural differences WCN 5.2.3 My manager is equipped to lead culturally diverse workplaces WCN 5.2.4 My manager is culturally competent WCN 5.2.5 Mandatory training for my manager includes cultural competence training
	WCN 5.3 I see the benefits of a culturally inclusive workplace	WCN 5.3.1 I understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity to be more than skin colour WCN 5.3.2 Managers see diversity in people and are able to adapt their feedback, support, guidance and coaching in different ways WCN 5.3.3 I see my agency communicating the 'why' cultural inclusion is required

		WCN 5.3.4 I understand how the unique cultural strengths of Indigenous employees assists in better conversations with communities
	WCN 5.4 I see cultural competence reflected in corporate practice	WCN 5.4.1 I see cultural competence learning outcomes embedded into policy, processes and procedures WCN 5.4.2 I see cultural competence accepted as a genuine skill set required responding to unconscious bias WCN 5.4.3 Cultural competence development is accepted as essential for all employees working in and with diverse client groups WCN 5.4.4 I am confident Executive and Senior Executive leaders accept responsibility for developing their own cultural competence WCN 5.4.5 Executive and Senior Executive performance agreements include measures to demonstrate commitment to cultural competence

Appendix I: Indigenous employee and manager need hierarchy

For an explanation of what and how weight, global weight and local weight are determined see Chapter 4.

Unconscious Bias (Managers)

Primary need category	Secondary need category	Tertiary (local) need	Local Priority	Global Priority	Rank
UBN 1 – My workplace seeks to understand unconscious bias Weight: 15%	UBN 1.1 – My workplace embraces open and respectful conversation Global weight: 6% Local weight: 38%	UBN 1.1.1 – Senior managers embrace open two-way discussion of unconscious bias	27.3%	2%	25
		UBN 1.1.2 – I feel reassured that people can accept that they have unconscious bias	16.8%	1.0%	38
		UBN 1.1.3 – I feel reassured people want to understand unconscious bias	14.7%	0.9%	42
		UBN 1.1.4 – I have support to improve my personal knowledge of unconscious bias.	23.0%	1.4%	29
		UBN 1.1.5 – I feel empowered to know how to address unconscious bias in my workplace.	9.1%	0.5%	48
		UBN 1.1.6 – I understand dealing with unconscious bias is everyone's responsibility.	9.1%	0.5%	49
			100%		
	UBN 1.2 – I feel everyone needs to be aware of unconscious bias Global weight: 10%	UBN 1.2.1 – I am able to identify my unconscious bias	26.9%	3%	13
		UBN 1.2.2 – I am able to measure my own unconscious bias	29.8%	3%	9
		UBN 1.2.3 – I am confident in applying my understanding of unconscious bias to improve workplace behaviour	10.6%	1%	37

	Local weight: 62%	UBN 1.2.4 – I am confident in applying my understanding of unconscious bias to improve relationships	20.4%	2%	20
		UBN 1.2.5 – I feel safe in identifying my own unconscious bias behaviour without fear of judgement.	12.3%	1%	33
			100%		
UBN 2 – My agency emphasises cultural education for all employees Weight: 18%	UBN 2.1 – Cultural competence capability is accepted as an ongoing process of development Global weight: 5% Local weight: 28%	UBN 2.1.1 – I feel confident cultural training compliments my personal strengths.	17.0%	1%	43
		UBN 2.1.2 – I am confident any cultural training provided supports practical learning needs.	15.7%	1%	44
		UBN 2.1.3 – I accept responsibility for my own cultural learning.	7.7%	0%	51
		UBN 2.1.4 – I accept I need to contribute to my cultural learning.	7.0%	0.4%	52
		UBN 2.1.5 – I feel confident cultural training compliments my personal strengths.	15.6%	0.8%	45
		UBN 2.1.6 – I know cultural competence training is mandatory and not voluntary.	18.0%	0.9%	41
		UBN 2.1.7 – I have confidence in staff being able to seek their own knowledge on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues	19.0%	1.0%	39
			100%		
	UBN 2.2 – All employees feel supported in committing to	UBN 2.2.1 – I feel my workplace provides equitable promotional and development opportunities	44.0%	2.7%	12

	long-term capability development	UBN 2.2.2 – I feel supported in committing to a journey of educating myself on the impact of unconscious bias.	56.0%	3.4%	6	
	Global weight: 6%					
	Local weight: 34%					
				100%		
	UBN 2.3 – My agency is open to understanding unconscious bias	UBN 2.3.1 – I feel supported to learn with others in a positive, supportive environment.	29.8%	2%	18	
Global weight: 7%	UBN 2.3.2 – I am confident everyone in my workplace understands what cultural safety means	27.8%	2%	22		
	Local weight: 38%	UBN 2.3.3 – I am confident in finding time to discuss how we can address unconscious bias behaviour.	23.1%	2%	27	
	UBN 2.3.4 – I enjoy a safe and trusted environment to discuss unconscious bias in the workplace.	19.3%	1%	30		
			100%			
UBN 3 – I feel secure in whom I am in the APS	UBN 3.1 – I enjoy the same level of expectation of capability afforded to others	UBN 3.1.1 – My peers accept me as equal.	21.5%	3%	7	
		UBN 3.1.2 – I am recognised for my contribution	20.4%	3%	8	
	Global weight: 15%	UBN 3.1.3 – I feel valued for what I bring not what I am perceived to be capable of	11.7%	2%	24	
		Local weight: 68%	UBN 3.1.4 – I am rewarded for my good work	18.9%	3%	11
		UBN 3.1.5 – I am engaged and judged on my merits and not assumptions based on my identity.	8.3%	1%	32	

		UBN 3.1.6 – I am valued as an individual and not just for my cultural identity.	19.2%	3%	10
			100%		
	UBN 3.2 – I feel confident employees of different cultural backgrounds are not pigeonholed or stereotyped Global weight: 7% Local weight: 32%	UBN 3.2.1 – I am not presumed to be the expert on everything indigenous.	29.6%	2%	17
		UBN 3.2.2 – I am not presumed to be only capable of working in indigenous specific roles.	26.6%	2%	23
		UBN 3.2.3 – I feel respected and equal to my peers free from stereotyped perceptions	15.3%	1%	36
		UN 3.2.4 – I feel empowered in supporting others to break down the stereotypes and perceptions placed on indigenous employees	10.2%	1%	46
		UBN 3.2.5 – My peers understand what constitutes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity	18.3%	1%	31
			100%		
UBN 4 – I enjoy a culturally inclusive workplace Weight: 20%	UBN 4.1 – Employees understand the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is vast Global weight: 11% Local weight: 53%	UBN 4.1.1 – I understand the cultural diversity of First Nations peoples in Australia	23%	2%	14
		UBN 4.1.2 – Indigenous Inclusion and diversity is understood to be mutually exclusive	77%	8%	1
			100%		
	UBN 4.2 – I enjoy a workplace that embraces	UBN 4.2.1 – I feel empowered in being able to contribute in an inclusive workplace.	37.4%	2%	16

	cultural diversity in everything it does regardless of race Global weight: 6% Local weight: 29%	UBN 4.2.2 – I feel I am genuinely engaged in my workplace and that my voice matters	26.9%	2%	26
		UBN 4.2.3 – I am accepted as a valued employee, equal with others	15.8%	1%	40
		UBN 4.2.4 – I feel valued as an employee	19.9%	1%	34
			100%		
	UBN 4.3 – I feel completely safe in a workplace that does not condone racial ignorance and apathy Global weight: 4% Local weight: 18%	UBN 4.3.1 – I understand what white privilege means for minorities	29.6%	1%	35
		UBN 4.3.2 – I can call out racism in the workplace without fear of retribution	16.2%	1%	47
		UBN 4.3.3 – I feel strengthened and capable in responding to racist comments	14.2%	1%	50
		UBN 4.3.4 – I work in an environment that condones racism in the workplace	40.0%	1%	28
			100%		
			100%		
UBN 5 – I feel my agency emphasises Indigenous employment Weight: 25%	UBN 5.1 – Reconciliation Action Plans are valued as a corporate commitment to change Global weight: 15% Local weight: 61%	UBN 5.1.1 – Non-indigenous employees accept responsibility for understanding what reconciliation means for them, and not abdicating responsibility for their own learning	25.5%	4%	4
		UBN 5.1.2 – Language we use to support Indigenous employment is simple, direct and unambiguous, no buzz words.	24.5%	4%	5
		UBN 5.1.3 – I see change in our rhetoric becoming reality through genuine commitment to reconciliation	12.9%	2%	19
		UBN 5.1.4 – All business areas across the agency enjoy a similar level of knowledge of Indigenous matters.	37.1%	6%	2

			100%		
	UBN 5.2 – I see Indigenous cultural capability influencing processes positively for change Global weight: 10% Local weight: 39%	UBN 5.2.1 – I feel confident capability uplifts are integrated into business outcomes, not as a tick and flick exercise.	56.8%	6%	3
		UBN 5.2.2 – I feel confident in assessing Indigenous employee capability accurately and consistently.	23.7%	2%	15
		UBN 5.2.3 – I feel reassured people participating in recruitment panels are aware of their blind spots when assessing an applicant's capability	19.5%	2%	21
			100%		

Unconscious Bias (Indigenous employees)

Primary need category	Secondary need category	Tertiary (local) need	Local Priority	Global Priority	Rank
UBN 1 – My workplace seeks to understand unconscious bias Weight: 18%	UBN 1.1 – My workplace embraces open and respectful conversation Global weight: 11% Local weight: 65%	UBN 1.1.1 – Senior managers embrace open two-way discussion of unconscious bias	18.0%	2%	21
		UBN 1.1.2 – I feel reassured that people can accept that they have unconscious bias	19.9%	2%	13
		UBN 1.1.3 – I feel reassured people want to understand unconscious bias	14.4%	2%	29
		UBN 1.1.4 – I have support to improve my personal knowledge of unconscious bias.	17.6%	2%	23
		UBN 1.1.5 – I feel empowered to know how to address unconscious bias in my workplace.	18.7%	2%	18
		UBN 1.1.6 – I understand dealing with unconscious bias is everyone's responsibility.	11.4%	1%	37
			100%		
	UBN 1.2 – Everyone is aware of his or her own unconscious bias Global weight: 6% Local weight: 36%	UBN 1.2.1 – I am able to identify my unconscious bias	14.8%	1%	48
		UBN 1.2.2 – I am able to measure my own unconscious bias	32.3%	2%	22
		UBN 1.2.3 – I am confident in applying my understanding of unconscious bias to improve workplace behaviour	19.5%	1%	41
		UBN 1.2.4 – I am confident in applying my understanding of unconscious bias to improve relationships	13.1%	1%	51

		UBN 1.2.5 – I feel safe in identifying my own unconscious bias behaviour without fear of judgement.	20.3%	1%	39
			100%		
UBN 2 – My agency emphasises cultural education for all employees Weight: 29%	UBN 2.1 – Cultural competence capability is accepted as an ongoing process of development Global weight: 12% Local weight: 40%	UBN 2.1.1 – I feel confident cultural training compliments my personal strengths.	16.2%	2%	25
		UBN 2.1.2 – I am confident any cultural training provided supports practical learning needs.	11.5%	1%	36
		UBN 2.1.3 – I accept responsibility for my own cultural learning.	8.8%	1%	44
		UBN 2.1.4 – I accept I need to contribute to my cultural learning.	11.6%	1%	35
		UBN 2.1.5 – I feel confident cultural training compliments my personal strengths.	18.6%	2%	17
		UBN 2.1.6 – I know cultural competence training is being mandatory and not voluntary.	19.4%	2%	12
		UBN 2.1.7 – I have confidence in staff being able to seek their own knowledge on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues	13.9%	2%	30
			100%		
	UBN 2.2 – All employees feel supported in committing to	UBN 2.2.1 – I feel I will have equitable access to promotional and development opportunities being judged on my full workplace experiences.	40.5%	4%	4

	long-term capability development	UBN 2.2.2 – I feel supported in committing to a journey of educating myself on the impact of unconscious bias.	59.5%	5%	1
	Global weight: 9%				
	Local weight: 30%				
			100%		
	UBN 2.3 – My agency adopts an open learning approach to understanding unconscious bias	UBN 2.3.1 – I feel supported to learn with others in a positive, supportive environment.	24.9%	2%	16
	Global weight: 9%	UBN 2.3.2 – I am confident everyone in my workplace understands what cultural safety means.	23.4%	2%	20
		UBN 2.3.3 – I am confident in finding time to discuss cultural how we can address unconscious bias behaviour.	33.8%	3%	7
		UBN 2.3.4 – I enjoy a safe and trusted environment in which to discuss unconscious bias behaviour in the workplace.	17.9%	2%	32
			100%		
UBN 3 – I feel secure in whom I am in the APS Weight: 21%	UBN 3.1 – I enjoy the same level of expectation of capability afforded to others	UBN 3.1.1 – My peers accept me as equal.	13.5%	2%	19
		UBN 3.1.2 – I am recognised for my contribution	15.4%	2%	11
		UBN 3.1.3 – I feel valued for what I bring not what I am perceived to be capable of	11.5%	2%	27
		UBN 3.1.4 – I am rewarded for my good work	24.3%	4%	3
		UBN 3.1.5 – I am engaged and judged on my merits and not assumptions based on my identity.	17.8%	3%	9
		UBN 3.1.6 – m My peers and colleagues value me as an individual and not for my Indigeneity	17.5%	3%	10
			100%		

	UBN 3.2 – I feel confident employees of different cultural backgrounds are not pigeonholed or stereotyped	UBN 3.2.1 – I am not presumed to be the expert on everything indigenous.	30.8%	2%	26
	Global weight: 6% Local weight: 28%	UBN 3.2.2 – I am not presumed to be only capable of working in indigenous specific roles.	16.5%	1%	46
		UBN 3.2.3 – I feel respected and equal to my peers free from stereotyped perceptions	21.3%	1%	38
		UBN 3.2.4 – I feel empowered in supporting others to break down the stereotypes and perceptions placed on indigenous employees	14.6%	1%	50
		UBCN 3.2.5 – My peers accept me as Indigenous despite not fitting the stereotyped image of an Indigenous Australians	16.8%	1%	45
			100%		
UBN 4 – I enjoy a culturally inclusive workplace Weight: 16%	UBN 4.1 – Employees understand the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is vast	UBN 4.1.1 – I understand the cultural diversity of First Nations peoples in Australia	43%	3%	8
	Global weight: 7% Local weight: 41%	UBN 4.1.2 – Indigenous Inclusion and diversity is understood to be mutually exclusive	57%	4%	2
			100%		
	UBN 4.2 – I enjoy a workplace that embraces cultural diversity in everything it does regardless of race	UBN 4.2.1 – I feel empowered in being able to contribute in an inclusive workplace.	23.0%	1%	47
		UBN 4.2.2 – I feel I am genuinely engaged in my workplace and that my voice matters	26.9%	1%	42
		UBN 4.2.3 – I am accepted as a valued employee, equal with others	21.0%	1%	49

	Global weight: 4% Local weight: 26%	UBN 4.2.4 – I feel equally valued as an employee, not just as an Indigenous employee	29.1%	1%	40
			100%		
	UBN 4.3 - I feel completely safe in a workplace that does not condone racial ignorance and apathy Global weight: 5% Local weight: 32%	UBN 4.3.1 – I understand what white privilege means for minorities	28.8%	1%	33
		UBN 4.3.2 – I can call out racism in the workplace without fear of retribution	12.3%	1%	52
		UBN 4.3.3 – I feel strengthened and capable in responding to racist comments	20.9%	1%	43
		UBN 4.3.4 – I work in an environment that condones racial comments in the workplace.	38.0%	2%	24
			100%		
UBN 5 – I feel my agency emphasises Indigenous employment Weight: 16%	UBN 5.1 – The Reconciliation Action Plan is held with the same level of respect to that of other major corporate strategies Global weight: 10% Local weight: 65%	UBN 5.1.1 – Non-indigenous employees accept responsibility for understanding what reconciliation means for them, and not abdicating responsibility for their own learning	32.4%	3%	5
		UBN 5.1.2 – Language we use to support Indigenous employment is simple, direct and unambiguous, no buzz words.	30.8%	3%	6
		UBN 5.1.3 – I see change in narrowing the gap between rhetoric and reality in Indigenous employment in the APS.	21.3%	2%	15
		UBN 5.1.4 – All business areas across the agency enjoy a similar level of knowledge of Indigenous matters.	15.5%	2%	31
			100%		
	UBN 5.2 – Increasing success for Indigenous employees in	UBN 5.2.1 – I feel confident capability uplifts are integrated into business outcomes, not as a tick and flick exercise.	40.3%	2%	14

	middle and senior management levels	UBN 5.2.2 – I feel confident in assessing Indigenous cultural capability accurately and consistently in recruitment actions.	27.3%	1%	34
	Global weight: 5% Local weight: 35%	UBN 5.2.3 – I feel reassured people participating in recruitment panels are aware of their blind spots when assessing someone's capability	32.4%	2%	28
			100%		

Cultural competence (Managers)

Primary need category	Secondary need category	Tertiary (local) need	Local Priority	Global Priority	Rank
CCN 1 – Leadership champions cultural inclusion Weight: 26%	CCN 1.1 – My agency’s commitment to cultural inclusion is genuine Global weight: 19% Local weight: 75%	CCN 1.1.1 – I feel in my agency is genuinely committed to cultural inclusion	50.0%	10%	1
		CCN 1.1.2 – I observe cultural inclusion being incorporated into business processes	26.0%	5%	4
		CCN 1.1.3 – I see alignment between strategic commitment and actual commitment to cultural inclusion	24.0%	5%	5
			100%		
	CCN 1.2 – Leadership backs up commitment with action Global weight: 6% Local weight: 25%	CCN 1.2.1 – Executives fully attend mandated cultural competence development programs	26.4%	2%	21
		CCN 1.2.2 – Individual cultural inclusion accountability measures in SES performance agreements are transparent	18.2%	1%	29
		CCN 1.2.3 – SES leadership embraces cultural inclusion sharing the ‘why’ cultural inclusion is required	13.7%	1%	34
		CCN 1.2.4 – I see SES demonstrating commitment to cultural inclusion every day	12.8%	1%	35
		CCN 1.2.5 – I see middle level managers leading the implementation of cultural inclusion initiatives	12.7%	1%	37
		CCN 1.2.6 – I see my workplace’s cultural inclusion commitment reflected in corporate policies and strategies	16.2%	1%	32
			100%		

CCN 2 – My agency seeks to understand cultural competence to drive cultural inclusion Weight: 24%	CCN 2.1 – My agency applies a shared understanding of cultural competence Global weight: 16% Local weight: 66%	CCN 2.1.1 – Cultural concepts like cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, cultural inclusion, cultural integrity etc, are individually understood	20.8%	3%	9
		CCN 2.1.2 – We apply cultural concepts to guide cultural inclusion in the APS	25.7%	4%	8
		CCN 2.1.3 – Everyone understands what cultural competence is	19.9%	3%	11
		CCN 2.1.4 – My agency accepts cultural competence is required for an inclusive organisation	17.5%	3%	13
		CCN 2.1.5 – My agency accepts cultural competence as an enabler for cultural inclusion to achieve business outcomes	16.1%	3%	15
			100%		
	CCN 2.2 – My agency embraces cultural competence education Global weight: 8% Local weight: 34%	CCN 2.2.1 – I enjoy training delivery that engages me fully	30.2%	3%	16
		CCN 2.2.2 – I have time and space to develop my cultural competence skills	20.6%	2%	22
		CCN 2.2.3 – My peers embrace cultural competence learning and education	16.1%	1%	28
		CCN 2.2.4 – I know how to improve my cultural knowledge and understanding	16.2%	1%	27
		CCN 2.2.5 – I accept I have limitations in my cultural knowledge and understanding	16.9%	1%	26
			100%		
CCN 3 – My agency leads cultural competence change Weight: 32%	CCN 3.1 – My agency embeds cultural competence into how we do business	CCN 3.1.1 – I see cultural competence becoming business as usual	14.9%	1.5%	24
		CCN 3.1.2 – Employees become aware of how assumptions can drive interpretation of someone else's identity	23.2%	2.4%	17

	Global weight: 10% Local weight: 33%	CCN 3.1.3 – Cultural competence outcomes are institutionalised into systems, processes and procedures.	22.7%	2.3%	19
		CCN 3.1.4 – Cultural competence outcomes are embedded in various corporate strategies	22.9%	2.4%	18
		CCN 3.1.5 – I feel my workplace is deeply committed to a diverse and culturally inclusive workplace.	16.3%	2%	23
			100%		
	CCN 3.2 – Employees champion cultural diversity and inclusion Global weight: 21% Local weight: 67%	CCN 3.2.1 – I observe employees advocating cultural inclusion throughout the whole year endeavour, not just in Reconciliation and NAIDOC weeks	30.7%	6%	3
		CCN 3.2.2 – Individual cultural competence becomes a core enabler for workplace inclusion	33.6%	7%	2
		CCN 3.2.3 – Cultural safety is advocated in the workplace regardless of ethnicity	15.2%	3%	10
		CCN 3.2.4 – My peers understand the difference between equality and equity in supporting a culturally inclusive workplace	20.5%	4%	7
			100%		
			100%		
CCN 4 – Cultural safety improves inclusion Weight: 19%	CCN 4.1 – I enjoy a culturally safe workplace Global weight: 6% Local weight: 33%	CCN 4.1.1 – I feel I can share my concerns for cultural safety without fear of being judged	16.2%	1%	33
		CCN4.1.2 – I can express my opinions freely	24.7%	2%	25
		CCN 4.1.3 – My opinions are received constructively	18.0%	1%	31
		CCN 4.1.4 – My views and opinions of cultural inclusion matter	18.9%	1%	30
		CCN 4.1.5 – I feel safe in calling out inappropriate behaviour as being culturally destructive	8.7%	1%	38

		CNN 4.1.6 – My cultural identity is not questioned	13.5%	1%	36
			100%		
	CCN 4.2 – Relationships is key to engaging effectively with others Global weight: 12% Local weight: 67%	CCN 4.2.1 – I am able to work effectively across cultures	21.5%	3%	14
		CCN 4.2.2 – I am confident in communicating effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	24.5%	3%	12
		CCN 4.2.3 – Engagement in discussion strengthens acceptance of difference	37.5%	5%	6
		CCN 4.2.4 – All employee cultures matter	16.5%	2%	20
			100%	100%	

Cultural competence (Indigenous employees)

Primary need category	Secondary need category	Tertiary (local) need	Local Priority	Global Priority	Rank
CCN 1 – Leadership champions cultural inclusion Weight: 23%	CCN 1.1 – My agency’s commitment to cultural inclusion is genuine Global weight: 12% Local weight: 51%	CCN 1.1.1 – I feel in my agency is genuinely committed to cultural inclusion	31.7%	4%	8
		CCN 1.1.2 – I observe cultural inclusion being incorporated into business processes	29.3%	3%	10
		CCN 1.1.3 – I observe cultural inclusion being incorporated into business processes	39.0%	5%	4
			100%		
	CCN 1.2 – Leadership backs up commitment with action Global weight: 11% Local weight: 49%	CCN 1.2.1 – Executives fully attend mandated cultural competence development programs	17.6%	2%	21
		CCN 1.2.2 – Individual cultural inclusion accountability measures in SES performance agreements are transparent	17.7%	2%	20
		CCN 1.2.3 – SES leadership embraces cultural inclusion sharing the ‘why’ cultural inclusion is required	17.2%	2%	22
		CCN 1.2.4 – I see SES demonstrating commitment to cultural inclusion every day	18.2%	2%	17
		CCN 1.2.5 – I see middle level managers leading the implementation of cultural inclusion initiatives	12.8%	1%	28
		CCN 1.2.6 – I see my workplace’s cultural inclusion commitment reflected in corporate policies and strategies	16.5%	2%	23
			100%		

CCN 2 – My agency seeks to understand cultural competence to drive cultural inclusion Weight: 12%	CCN 2.1 – My agency applies a shared understanding of cultural competence Global weight: 8% Local weight: 65%	CCN 2.1.1 – Cultural concepts like cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, cultural inclusion, cultural integrity etc, are individually understood	24.6%	2%	24
		CCN 2.1.2 – We apply cultural concepts to guide cultural inclusion in the APS	18.6%	1%	29
		CCN 2.1.3 – Everyone understands what cultural competence is	18.2%	1%	30
		CCN 2.1.4 – My agency accepts cultural competence is required for an inclusive organisation	14.4%	1%	33
		CCN 2.1.5 – My agency accepts cultural competence as an enabler for cultural inclusion to achieve business outcomes	24.2%	2%	25
			100%		
	CCN 2.2 – My agency embraces cultural competence education Global weight: 4% Local weight: 35%	CCN 2.2.1 – I enjoy training delivery that engages me fully	26.5%	1%	32
		CCN 2.2.2 – I have time and space to develop my cultural competence skills	16.6%	1%	37
		CCN 2.2.3 – My peers embrace cultural competence learning and education	9.1%	0%	38
		CCN 2.2.4 – I know how to improve my cultural knowledge and understanding	20.0%	1%	36
		CCN 2.2.5 – I accept I have limitations in my cultural knowledge and understanding	27.8%	1%	31
			100%		
CCN 3 – My agency leads cultural competence change	CCN 3.1 – My agency embeds cultural competence into how we do business	CCN 3.1.1 – I see cultural competence becoming business as usual	23.5%	4%	5

Weight: 45%	Global weight: 18% Local weight: 41%	CCN 3.1.2 – Employees become aware of how assumptions can drive interpretation of someone else’s identity	18.5%	3%	11
		CCN 3.1.3 – Cultural competence outcomes are institutionalised into systems, processes and procedures.	16.1%	3%	12
		CCN 3.1.4 – Cultural competence outcomes are embedded in various corporate strategies	22.4%	4%	6
		CCN 3.1.5 – I feel my workplace is deeply committed to a diverse and culturally inclusive work place.	19.5%	4%	9
			100%		
	CCN 3.2 – Employees champion cultural diversity and inclusion Global weight: 27% Local weight: 59%	CCN 3.2.1 – I observe employees advocating cultural inclusion throughout the whole year endeavour, not just in Reconciliation and NAIDOC weeks	23.3%	6%	2
		CCN 3.2.2 – Individual cultural competence becomes a core enabler for workplace inclusion	14.5%	4%	7
		CCN 3.2.3 – Cultural safety is advocated in the workplace regardless of ethnicity	23.2%	6%	3
		CCN 3.2.4 – My peers understand the difference between equality and equity in supporting a culturally inclusive workplace	39%	10%	1
			100%		
CCN 4 – Cultural safety improves inclusion Weight: 20%	CCN 4.1 – I enjoy a culturally safe workplace Global weight: 14% Local weight: 71%	CCN 4.1.1 – I feel I can share my concerns for cultural safety without fear of being judged	16.7%	2%	16
		CCN 4.1.2 – I can express my opinions freely	12.2%	2%	27
		CCN 4.1.3 – My opinions are received constructively	14.2%	2%	18
		CCN 4.1.4 – My views and opinions of cultural inclusion matter	19.6%	3%	13

		CCN 4.1.5 – I feel safe in calling out inappropriate behaviour	17.9%	3%	15
		CCN 4.1.6 – My cultural identity is not questioned	19.4%	3%	14
			100%		
	CCN 4.2 – Relationships is key to engaging effectively with others Global weight: 6% Local weight: 29%	CCN 4.2.1 – I am able to work effectively across cultures	34.7%	2%	19
		CCN 4.2.2 – I am confident in communicating effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	18.3%	1%	34
		CCN 4.2.3 – Engagement in discussion strengthens acceptance of difference	31.3%	2%	26
		CCN 4.2.4 – All employee cultures matter	15.7%	1%	35
			100%		

Workplace congruence (Managers)

Primary need category	Secondary need category	Tertiary (local) need	Local Priority	Global Priority	Rank
WCN 1 – I enjoy working in an inclusive team Weight: 25%	WCN 1.1 – I feel confident in my team Global weight: 10% Local weight: 39%	WCN 1.1.1 – I am confident my skills and abilities match my job role	15.7%	2%	23
		WCN 1.1.2 – I am confident I understand the cultural differences of team members	14.5%	1%	25
		WCN 1.1.3 – I understand the cultural needs of my team members	14.3%	1%	26
		WCN 1.1.4 – I feel positive in my ability to contribute to my team effectively	13.4%	1%	31
		WCN 1.1.5 – I feel confident in my role	14.3%	1%	27
		WCN 1.1.6 – My personal expectations match with what is expected of my role	15.2%	1%	24
		WCN 1.1.7 – My views and opinions matter	12.6%	1%	32
			100%		
	WCN 1.2 – My team encourages inclusive work practices Global weight: 4% Local weight: 16%	WCN 1.2.1 – My team functions as a culturally inclusive team	17.6%	1%	51
		WCN 1.2.2 – I feel my team is effective because of cultural inclusion	18.4%	1%	45
		WCN 1.2.3 – I am confident my peers are able to communicate sensitively and effectively with Indigenous employees	18.3%	1%	47
		WCN 1.2.4 – Relationships in my team are strengthened through better understanding of unconscious bias	14.0%	1%	63

		WCN 1.2.5 – I feel my team achieves better outcomes when we engage as an inclusive team	14.3%	1%	62
		WCN 1.2.6 – I feel my team achieves better outcomes when we are consulted as a team	17.4%	1%	52
			100%		
	WCN 1.3 – My workplace expectations are clear Global weight: 7% Local weight: 30%	WCN 1.3.1 – My manager shares their expectations with me	17.9%	1%	29
		WCN 1.3.2 – I feel my workplace expectations is aligned with my agency because my supervisor understands what is important to me	20.9%	2%	22
		WCN 1.3.3 – At all times I understand what is expected of me	16.0%	1%	34
		WCN 1.3.4 – My workplace satisfaction is a priority for my manager	31.3%	2%	14
		WCN 1.3.5 – I feel my workplace provides a safe place where I can learn from my mistakes	13.9%	1%	38
			100%		
	WCN 1.4 – I enjoy trust in my workplace Global weight: 4% Local weight: 15%	WCN 1.4.1 – I feel I can trust my peers at all times	20.6%	1%	46
		WCN 1.4.2 – I feel I can trust my manager at all times	13.3%	0%	67
		WCN 1.4.3 – I feel I can trust senior management at all times	20.0%	1%	49
		WCN 1.4.4 – I feel there is trust between non-Indigenous and Indigenous staff	11.8%	0%	68
		WCN 1.4.5 – I observe senior management’s commitment to building and maintaining trust with employees	15.5%	1%	64
		WCN 1.4.6 – My workplace contributions are acknowledged	18.8%	1%	54
			100%		

WCN 2 – I feel comfortable with my employment in the APS Weight: 30%	WCN 2.1 – I feel respected and valued as an APS employee Global weight: 11% Local weight: 35%	WCN 2.1.1 – My manager seeks open and respectful performance conversation with me	27.4%	3%	5
		WCN 2.1.2 – My workplace satisfaction increases because my manager values me as an employee	25.4%	3%	12
		WCN 2.1.3 – I feel my workplace satisfaction increases because I accept responsibility	26.8%	3%	7
		WCN 2.1.4 – I feel my workplace attitudes remain positive despite changes in senior management	20.4%	2%	17
			100%		
	WCN 2.2 – I feel I fit into the APS and not the APS fit me Global weight: 20% Local weight: 65%	WCN 2.2.1 – I feel the APS genuinely values and respects who I am regardless of my cultural identity	22.6%	5%	1
		WCN 2.2.2 – I feel the APS accepts Indigenous leadership attributes	15.5%	3%	3
		WCN 2.2.3 – Indigenous employee cultural identity is not marginalised by the dominant culture of the APS	11.3%	2%	16
		WCN 2.2.4 – I am treated fairly in all aspects of workplace expectations	14.6%	3%	4
		WCN 2.2.5 – I am treated equitably in all aspects of workplace expectations	14.3%	3%	8
		WCN 2.2.6 – I am confident my agency considers personal and corporate workplace needs equitably	21.7%	4%	2
			100%		
WCN 3 – Recruitment practice is culturally inclusive	WCN 3.1 – Cultural inclusion drives Indigenous employment practice	WCN 3.1.1 – We do not recruit people who look and think like ourselves	35.1%	2%	18
		WCN 3.1.2 – Culturally inclusive attraction and recruitment strategies reflect regional area needs	17.8%	1%	37

Weight: 11%	Global weight: 6% Local weight: 51%	WCN 3.1.3 – My agency includes cultural considerations in arriving at evidence based recruitment and promotion decisions	13.7%	1%	41
		WCN 3.1.4 – Culturally inclusive recruitment of Indigenous employees maximises opportunities for achieving a successful APS career	11.5%	1%	55
		WCN 3.1.5 – I feel confident recruitment panels are culturally competent in removing biases when assessing candidate capability	11.3%	1%	57
		WCN 3.1.6 – I feel the principle of merit in the APS is applied equitably in recruitment decision-making	10.6%	1%	60
			100%		
	WCN 3.2 – All employees are aware why cultural inclusion drives Indigenous employment practice Global weight: 6% Local weight: 49%	WCN 3.2.1 – I feel the APS has a consistent understanding and approach to Indigenous employment	34.5%	2%	19
		WCN 3.2.2 – I feel confident all employees in my agency understand the importance of Indigenous employment outcomes for the APS	21.7%	1%	33
		WCN 3.2.3 – All employees are knowledgeable of the Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy	19.9%	1%	35
		WCN 3.2.4 – I understand how my agency's focus on celebrating cultural diversity supports Indigenous employment outcomes.	23.9%	1%	30
			100%		
WCN 4 – I feel my career aspirations are important	WCN 4.1 – My manager shares my career aspirations	WCN 4.1.1 – I am confident my manager understands my career expectations	17.9%	3%	11

Weight: 21%	Global weight: 15% Local weight: 73%	WCN 4.1.2 – I am confident my manager can provide me with the right support to realise my expectations	18.7%	3%	6
		WCN 4.1.3 – I feel my manager is able to support my career aspirations	18.4%	3%	10
		WCN 4.1.4 – My career developmental needs are not merely seen as a transactional requirement	18.5%	3%	9
		WCN 4.1.5 – I feel confident in my manager’s ability to facilitate regular and meaningful career conversations with me	15.5%	2%	13
		WCN 4.1.6 – My career aspirations are more than just a linear development process	11.0%	2%	21
			100%		
	WCN 4.2 – I am encouraged to accept responsibility for my own career development Global weight: 6% Local weight: 27%	WCN 4.2.1 – I am encouraged to get out of my comfort zone	42.2%	2%	15
		WCN 4.2.2 – I am encouraged to develop new capabilities but this does not mean I need to be seeking promotions	24.9%	1%	28
		WCN 4.2.3 – My development goals remain flexible in reflecting my career aspirations	19.1%	1%	36
		WCN 4.2.4 – I feel I can achieve my career goals.	13.8%	1%	44
			100%		
WCN 5 – I observe culturally competent inclusion practice Weight: 12%	WCN 5.1 – My agency develops cultural inclusion through cultural competency Global weight: 4% Local weight: 33%	WCN 5.1.1 – My agency enjoys a shared understanding of what culturally competent inclusion means	41.1%	2%	20
		WCN 5.1.2 – My agency accepts cultural competence is required for an inclusive organisation regardless of cultural identity or ethnicity	18.1%	1%	48
		WCN 5.1.3 – My agency accepts cultural competence enhances organisational performance	18.0%	1%	50

		WCN 5.1.4 – My agency accepts cultural competency is a development process.	22.8%	1%	40
			100%		
	WCN 5.2 – My manager embraces cultural inclusion	WCN 5.2.1 – I feel my manager is never complacent in how we perceive others around us	38.9%	1%	39
	Global weight: 2% Local weight: 20%	WCN 5.2.2 – My manager is adept at managing people with diverse cultural differences	14.3%	0%	71
		WCN 5.2.3 – My manager is equipped to lead culturally diverse workplaces	16.3%	0%	70
		WCN 5.2.4 – My manager is culturally competent	10.6%	0%	72
		WCN 5.2.5 – Mandatory training for my manager includes cultural competence training	19.9%	0%	65
			100%		
	WCN 5.3 – I see the benefits of a culturally inclusive workplace	WCN 5.3.1 – I understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity to be more than skin colour	31.3%	1%	53
	Global weight: 2% Local weight: 18%	WCN 5.3.2 – Managers see diversity in people and are able to adapt their feedback, support, guidance and coaching in different ways	21.6%	0%	66
		WCN 5.3.3 – I see my agency communicating the ‘why’ cultural inclusion is required	28.7%	1%	58
		WCN 5.3.4 – I understand how the unique cultural strengths of Indigenous employees assists in better conversations with communities	18.4%	0%	69
			100%		
		WCN 5.4.1 – I see cultural competence learning outcomes embedded into policy, processes and procedures	22.4%	1%	43

	WCN 5.4 – I see cultural competence reflected in corporate practice Global weight: 3% Local weight: 28%	WCN 5.4.2 – I see cultural competence accepted as a genuine skill set required responding to unconscious bias	22.6%	1%	42
		WCN 5.4.3 – Cultural competence development is accepted as essential for all employees working in and with diverse client groups	17.7%	1%	61
		WCN 5.4.4 – I am confident Executive and Senior Executive leaders accept responsibility for developing their own cultural competence	18.1%	1%	59
		WCN 5.4.5 – Executive and Senior Executive performance agreements include measures to demonstrate commitment to cultural competence	19.2%	1%	56
			100%		

Workplace congruence (Indigenous employees)

Primary need category	Secondary need category	Tertiary (local) need	Local Priority	Global Priority	Rank
WCN 1 – I enjoy working in an inclusive team Weight: 25%	WCN 1.1 – I feel confident in my team	WCN 1.1.1 – I am confident my skills and abilities match my job role	16.9%	2%	29
		WCN 1.1.2 – I am confident I understand the cultural differences of team members	11.5%	1%	51
		WCN 1.1.3 – I understand the cultural needs of my team members	14.4%	1%	36
		WCN 1.1.4 – I feel positive in my ability to contribute to my team effectively	9.5%	1%	60
		WCN 1.1.5 – I feel confident in my role	13.5%	1%	40
		WCN 1.1.6 – My personal expectations match with what is expected of my role	20.0%	2%	17
		WCN 1.1.7 – My views and opinions matter	14.2%	1%	37
			100%		
	WCN 1.2 – My team encourages inclusive work practices	WCN 1.2.1 – My team functions as a culturally inclusive team	16.6%	1%	67
		WCN 1.2.2 – I feel my team is effective because of cultural inclusion	13.6%	1%	69
		WCN 1.2.3 – I am confident my peers are able to communicate sensitively and effectively with Indigenous employees	13.0%	0%	72
		WCN 1.2.4 – Relationships in my team are strengthened through better understanding of unconscious bias	17.7%	1%	65

		WCN 1.2.5 – I feel my team achieves better outcomes when we engage as an inclusive team	13.3%	1%	71
		WCN 1.2.6 – I feel my team achieves better outcomes when we are consulted as a team	25.8%	1%	52
			100%		
	WCN 1.3 – My workplace expectations are clear	WCN 1.3.1 – My manager shares their expectations with me	19.7%	1%	45
		WCN 1.3.2 – I feel my expectations most align with what is expected of me when my supervisor understands who I am	15.1%	1%	57
		WCN 1.3.3 – At all times I understand what is expected of me	19.6%	1%	46
		WCN 1.3.4 – My workplace satisfaction is a priority for my manager	28.1%	2%	21
		WCN 1.3.5 – I feel my workplace provides a safe place where I can learn from my mistakes	17.5%	1%	50
			100%		
	WCN 1.4 – I enjoy trust in my workplace	WCN 1.4.1 – I feel I can trust my peers at all times	12.3%	1%	62
		WCN 1.4.2 – I feel I can trust my manager at all times	9.8%	1%	68
		WCN 1.4.3 – I feel I can trust senior management at all times	18.8%	1%	42
		WCN 1.4.4 – I feel there is trust between non-Indigenous and Indigenous staff	14.8%	1%	54
		WCN 1.4.5 – I observe senior management's commitment to building and maintaining trust with employees	25.6%	2%	24
		WCN 1.4.6 – My workplace contributions are acknowledged	18.7%	1%	43

			100%		
WCN 2 – I feel comfortable with my employment in the APS Weight: 16%	WCN 2.1 – I feel respected and valued as an APS employee	WCN 2.1.1 – My manager seeks open and respectful performance conversation with me	29.0%	2%	3
		WCN 2.1.2 – My workplace satisfaction increases because my manager values me as an employee	25.1%	2%	9
		WCN 2.1.3 – I feel my workplace satisfaction increases because I accept responsibility	22.9%	2%	14
		WCN 2.1.4 – I feel my workplace attitudes remain positive despite changes in senior management	23.0%	2%	13
			100%		
	WCN 2.2 – I feel I fit into the APS and not the APS fit me	WCN 2.2.1 – I feel the APS genuinely values and respects who I am regardless of my cultural identify	16.2%	1%	44
		WCN 2.2.2 – I feel the APS accepts Indigenous leadership attributes	12.2%	1%	58
		WCN 2.2.3 – Indigenous employee cultural identity is not marginalised by the dominant culture of the APS	11.7%	1%	59
		WCN 2.2.4 – I am treated fairly in all aspects of workplace expectations	13.6%	1%	53
		WCN 2.2.5 – I am treated equitably in all aspects of workplace expectations	15.3%	1%	47
		WCN 2.2.6 – I am confident my agency considers personal and corporate workplace needs equitably	31.0%	2%	6
			100%		
		WCN 3.1.1 – We do not recruit people who look and think like ourselves	29.0%	4%	1

WCN 3 – Recruitment practice is culturally inclusive Weight: 18%	WCN 3.1 – Cultural inclusion drives Indigenous employment practice	WCN 3.1.2 – Culturally inclusive attraction and recruitment strategies reflect regional area needs	14.2%	2%	16
		WCN 3.1.3 – My agency includes cultural considerations in arriving at evidence based recruitment and promotion decisions	11.2%	1%	32
		WCN 3.1.4 – Culturally inclusive recruitment of Indigenous employees maximises opportunities for achieving a successful APS career	14.4%	2%	15
		WCN 3.1.5 – I feel confident recruitment panels are culturally competent in removing biases when assessing candidate capability	17.8%	2%	5
		WCN 3.1.6 – I feel the principle of merit in the APS is applied equitably in recruitment decision-making	13.4%	2%	20
			100%		
	WCN 3.2 – All employees are aware why cultural inclusion drives Indigenous employment practice	WCN 3.2.1 – I feel the APS has a consistent understanding and approach to Indigenous employment	31.1%	2%	26
		WCN 3.2.2 – I feel confident all employees in my agency understand the importance of Indigenous employment outcomes for the APS	18.2%	1%	56
		WCN 3.2.3 – All employees are knowledgeable of the Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy	23.7%	1%	41
		WCN 3.2.4 – I understand how my agency's focus on celebrating cultural diversity supports Indigenous employment outcomes.	27.0%	1%	33
			100%		

WCN 4 – I feel my career aspirations are important Weight: 21%	WCN 4.1 – My manager shares my career aspirations	WCN 4.1.1 – I am confident my manager understands my career expectations	17.9%	2%	11
		WCN 4.1.2 – I am confident my manager can provide me with the right support to realise my expectations	13.1%	1%	31
		WCN 4.1.3 – I feel my manager is able to support my career aspirations	14.5%	2%	22
		WCN 4.1.4 – My career developmental needs are not merely seen as a transactional requirement	18.7%	2%	7
		WCN 4.1.5 – I feel confident in my manager's ability to facilitate regular and meaningful career conversations with me	17.5%	2%	12
		WCN 4.1.6 – My career aspirations are more than just a linear development process	18.3%	2%	10
			100%		
	WCN 4.2 – I am encouraged to accept responsibility for my own career development	WCN 4.2.1 – I am encouraged to get out of my comfort zone	34.8%	3%	2
		WCN 4.2.2 – I am encouraged to develop new capabilities but this does not mean I need to be seeking promotions	25.9%	2%	4
		WCN 4.2.3 – My development goals remain flexible in reflecting my career aspirations	16.6%	2%	27
		WCN 4.2.4 – I feel I can achieve my career goals.	22.7%	2%	8
			100%		
		WCN 5.1.1 – My agency enjoys a shared understanding of what culturally competent inclusion means	23.4%	1%	39

WCN 5.4 – I observe culturally competent inclusion practice Weight: 21%	WCN 5.1 – My agency develops cultural inclusion through cultural competency	WCN 5.1.2 – My agency accepts cultural competence is required for an inclusive organisation regardless of cultural identity or ethnicity.	28.4%	1%	30
		WCN 5.1.3 – My agency accepts cultural competence enhances organisational performance	23.8%	1%	38
		WCN 5.1.4 – My agency accepts cultural competency is a development process.	24.4%	1%	35
			100%		
	WCN 5.2 – My manager embraces cultural inclusion	WCN 5.2.1 – I feel my manager is never complacent in how we perceive others around us	15.8%	1%	70
		WCN 5.2.2 – My manager is adept at managing people with diverse cultural differences	13.7%	1%	63
		WCN 5.2.3 – My manager is equipped to lead culturally diverse workplaces	22.2%	1%	63
		WCN 5.2.4 – My manager is culturally competent	20.1%	1%	66
		WCN 5.2.5 – Mandatory training for my manager includes cultural competence training	28.2%	1%	55
			100%		
	WCN 5.3 – I see the benefits of a culturally inclusive workplace	WCN 5.3.1 – I understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity to be more than skin colour	25.8%	1%	48
		WCN 5.3.2 – Managers see diversity in people and are able to adapt their feedback, support, guidance and coaching in different ways	18.1%	1%	61
		WCN 5.3.3 – I see my agency communicating the 'why' cultural inclusion is required	24.8%	1%	49

		WCN 5.3.4 – I understand how the unique cultural strengths of Indigenous employees assists in better conversations with communities	31.3%	1%	34
			100%		
	WCN 5.4 – I see cultural competence reflected in corporate practice	WCN 5.4.1 – I see cultural competence learning outcomes embedded into policy, processes and procedures	20.0%	2%	23
		WCN 5.4.2 – I see cultural competence accepted as a genuine skill set required responding to unconscious bias	18.7%	2%	28
		WCN 5.4.3 – Cultural competence development is accepted as essential for all employees working in and with diverse client groups	21.0%	2%	19
		WCN 5.4.4 – I am confident Executive and Senior Executive leaders accept responsibility for developing their own cultural competence	19.1%	2%	25
		WCN 5.4.5 – Executive and Senior Executive performance agreements include measures to demonstrate commitment to cultural competence	21.2%	2%	18
			100%		

Appendix J: Diversity and Inclusion Capability Maturity Model

	Transformative	Inclusion embedded in corporate DNA, diversity a given Organisation adoption of continuous 'next practice' future focus. Holistic and inclusive creation. Multi-generational socially minded workforce.	Mutual responsibility/accountability Leadership relational" Regenerative, authentic and inclusive/distributive (change agents modelling inclusion)	Inclusion emphasis Empowered workforce. Demographic and cognitive diversity (multi-variant). Measures: Advanced analytics (augmented AI, AR, cognitive computing	Alignment of personal organisational and social values (individual/collective intentionality). Flexibility mainstreamed. High performing diverse thinking teams. Hyper connected systems. Trust based connectivity culture. Agile management, human centred design thinking.	Collaboration, co-creation and experimentation. Bespoke inclusion programs recognising and valuing individual uniqueness, (drawn from big data, social media etc.) and creating a deep sense of "belonging". Transforming, openness – decision-making/hold organisation to account. New moral ethics obligation.
	Integrative	Inclusion matters, diversity embedded Strategies, mission, policies. Diversity and inclusion integrated into systems and all organisational components.	Top down (primary), with increased bottom-up responsibility. Transformative/integrative, distributive leadership. Strategic HR driven.	Diversity/differences embraced as core organisational element. Inclusion is conscious use of engagement, intrinsic benefits focus on intrinsic engagement (shared purpose). Multi-dimensional and intersectionality focus. Measures: Quantitative and qualitative (maturing analytics, online surveys) Worker profiles, satisfaction levels. Employee experience, inclusion metrics, culture audits.	Shared purpose/benefits negotiated. System barriers addressed. Diversity and inclusion culture embedded and monitored. Multiple role models. Employee and stakeholder preferences listened to and acted on. Increasing dialogue about enhancing a shared sense of belonging and recognising uniqueness	Flexible conditions. Evidence-based programs. Diversity and Inclusion advocacy. Partnerships with stakeholders. Input into work design. Meaningful work.
	Managerial	Diversity for gain Mission, strategies, policies. Aligning organisational/worker needs/goals, competitive advantage (productivity).	Strategic HR Transactional leadership. Vision from senior leaders. Middle managers assume some responsibility.	Unique diversity dimensions harnessed for productivity (visible and invisible dimensions). Inclusion espoused (structural). Measures: Quantitative and qualitative. Demographic numbers and targets. Beginning of analytics online.	Business case articulated. Focus primarily on observable diversity dimensions. Ad-hoc stand-alone initiatives ERG ally.	
	Compliance	Diversity as required Legal framework guiding policies, procedures. Compliance with legislation, mandated, anti-discrimination.	Legal/HR, delegated autocratic limited involvement in driving Diversity and Inclusion forward.	Narrow visible definition of diversity. Largely homogenous workforce. Measures: Quantitative tick boxes 'counts', reporting mandated/limited.	Interventions on opportunity equality. Passive exclusions and individual backlash. Reactive compliance actions. Limited training.	
		Drivers and focus	Responsibility/Leadership	Inclusion and diversity measurement	Mechanisms and defining features	

Source: Adapted from Lundy et al. (2021)