

Submission 8. Name Withheld

Designing and delivering a culturally competent program requires understanding diverse cultural backgrounds, educating the team, and building a diverse staff group. Conducting community assessments to identify specific needs and preferences and adapting communication to be culturally appropriate will result in better outcomes. Cultural practices must be respected and ongoing training for staff in cultural competence provided. Building trust with the community, avoiding stereotypes, and offering flexible services is also a crucial element in service design. Seeking feedback and continuously improving, addressing any cultural barriers will assist in creating an inclusive environment that celebrates diversity and values all individuals. Cultural competence is an ongoing process, requiring continuous learning and a commitment to providing fair and effective care to diverse communities.

To help employers to hire First Nations people who have been incarcerated the following strategies are recommended:

Funding Incentives: Introduce funding incentives specifically tailored for Supply Nation companies and enterprises that prioritise cultural safety. Additionally, extend financial support to companies that have a Reconciliation Action plan in place, incorporating a robust cultural competency framework.

Educational and Awareness Initiatives: Launch an educational campaign to raise awareness among employers about the numerous benefits of hiring individuals from diverse backgrounds, including those who have previously experienced incarceration. Through these initiatives, the goal must be to dispel misconceptions and break down stigmas associated with this population. To foster a supportive and inclusive work environment, provide employers with specialised training programs. These sessions should focus on enhancing employers' understanding of the challenges faced by formerly incarcerated individuals, promoting the recognition and elimination of biases, and equipping them with the necessary tools to effectively support the successful reintegration of such individuals into the workforce.

Pre-employment support: This support should include job readiness training, resume building, interview preparation, and skills development workshops, empowering candidates for successful job searches. By addressing barriers early on, a smooth transition into the workforce is more likely. Employers will benefit from well-prepared candidates, promoting a more inclusive and diverse workforce.

Job Fairs and Networking Events: Organise dedicated job fairs and networking events specifically tailored to First Nations individuals who have experienced incarceration. These events will create opportunities for direct connections between potential candidates and employers, facilitating open communication and mutual respect.

Employment Incentives: Government agencies will play a crucial role in incentivising employers to actively hire First Nations individuals with a history of incarceration. This will be achieved through the provision of tangible incentives, such as tax credits, grants, or financial support to cover training and integration costs.

Post-Employment Support: Recognise the importance of a seamless transition and long-term success for hired individuals. As such, there should be a commitment to providing ongoing support to both the employees and their employers. This support may include well-structured mentorship programs, access to counselling services, and dedicated assistance in navigating any potential challenges.

Collaboration with Community Organisations: To maximise impact, establish strategic partnerships with community organisations dedicated to supporting formerly incarcerated individuals. Through these collaborations, extend reach and facilitate meaningful connections with employers who are enthusiastic about hiring from this unique population.

Tracking and Measuring Progress: A robust tracking and measurement system should be implemented to assess the efficacy of the program and quantify the positive impact of hiring First Nations individuals with a history of incarceration. This data-driven approach will enable continued advocacy for support and effectively showcase the tangible benefits to other employers.

By providing comprehensive support, education, and incentives, employers will be empowered across Australia to embrace diversity and inclusivity by actively hiring First Nations people with incarceration experience.

Culturally safe training, employment, and barrier management program for First Nations people pre and post-incarceration should include collaboration with elders and the community. The program should actively involve Indigenous community leaders, elders, and knowledge keepers in its design and implementation. Their guidance ensures that the program respects cultural values, traditions, and beliefs, making it more relevant and effective. The involvement of elders also provides invaluable wisdom and insights into the specific challenges faced by individuals rejoining their communities after incarceration. Furthermore, the program should foster strong partnerships with the broader community, promoting understanding and inclusivity. By engaging elders and the community, the program should be delivered in a supportive and culturally enriched environment for the successful reintegration of program participants.