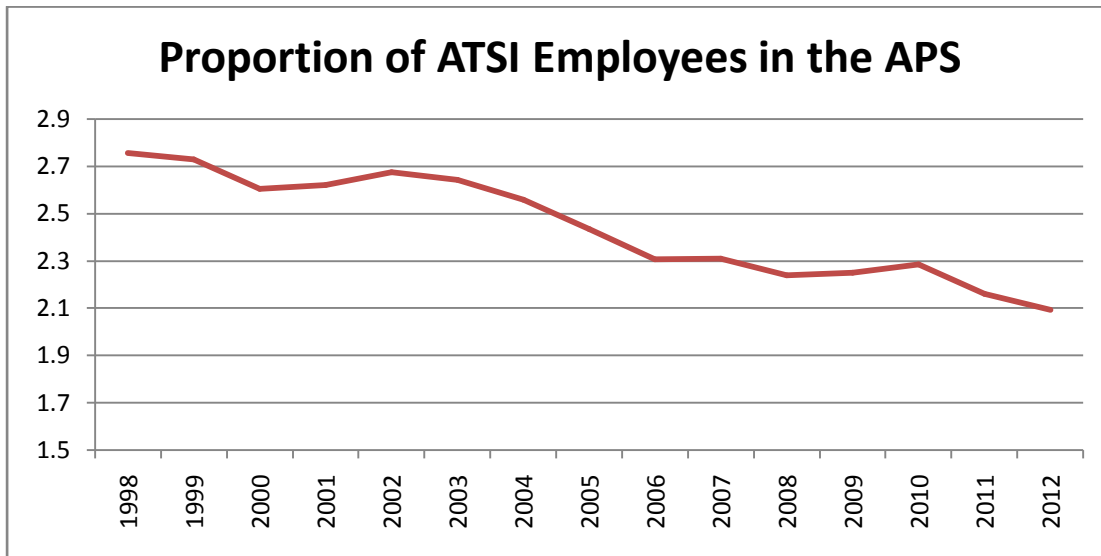


Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment in the APS

Employment Levels

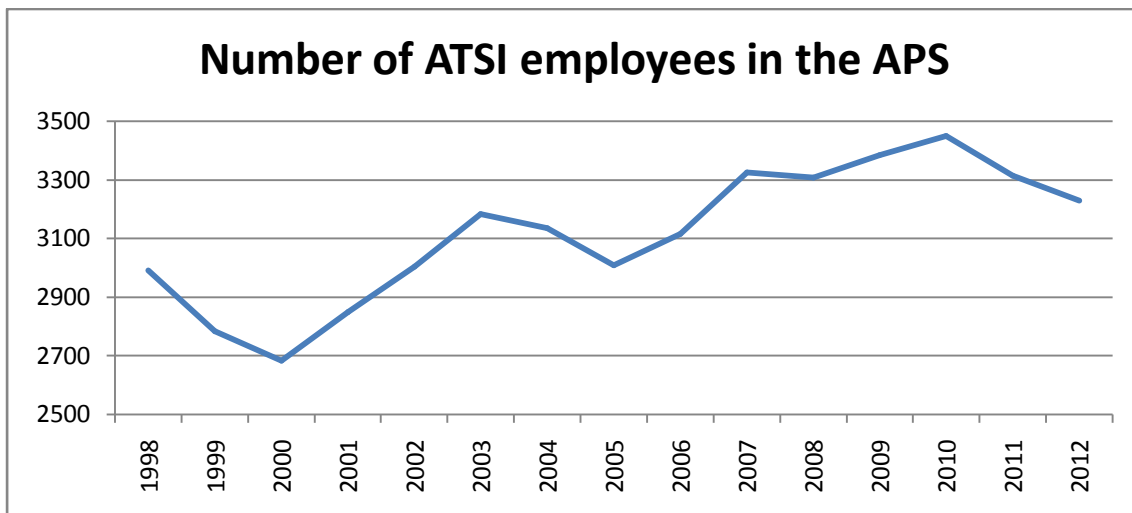
As party to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) National Partnership on Indigenous Economic Participation, the Commonwealth has agreed to increase Indigenous employment across the Commonwealth public sector to 2.7 percent by 2015

However, the proportion of employees in the APS who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander has been steadily declining in the last 15 years. It is now at 2.1%.



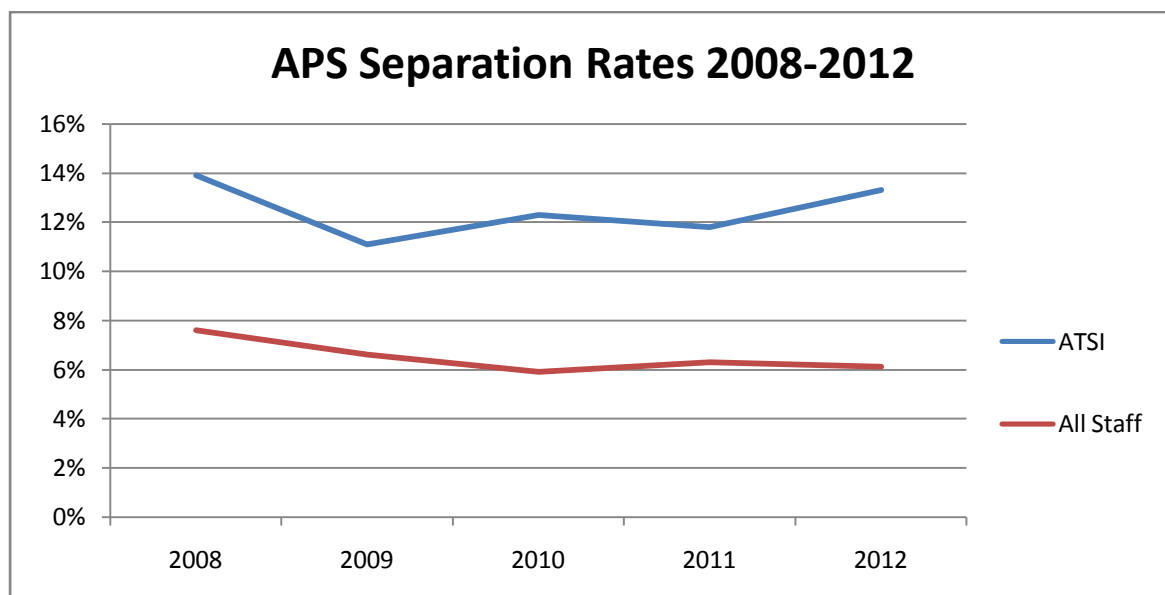
Source: APS State of the Service Reports

In the last 2 years the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the APS has also declined. The number of ongoing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees decreased from 3,314 in 2010–11 to 3,229 in 2011 -12, representing a decrease of 2.6% compared with an overall increase in the APS workforce of 0.6%.



Engagements and Separations

The decline in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment is largely because the separation rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees is much higher than for non- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. The overall separation rate in 2011–12 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees was 13.1%, nearly double the APS rate of 6.6%.



Not only are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees leaving at a greater rate, they are leaving earlier in their career. Ongoing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees continue to have shorter lengths of service before leaving than do other APS employees. During 2011-12, 16.1% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees separated from the APS less than one year after their ongoing engagement, almost twice the rate of non- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees (6.4%).¹

The engagement rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees have not been making up for the high separation rates and in two of the last five years have been lower than the employment target of 2.7%.

ATSI engagements and separations as a proportion of all APS engagements and separations

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Engagements	2.6%	3.1%	4.3%	2.2%	3.1%
Separations	3.8%	3.6%	4.4%	3.7%	4.7%

¹ State of the Service Report 2011-12, p 141

Where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are employed

APS Agencies with the highest proportion of ongoing staff identifying as ATSI

Agency	No.	%
Aboriginal Hostels Ltd.	249	74.77%
Torres Strait Regional Authority	22	52.38%
National Mental Health Commission	2	40.00%
AIATSIS	11	24.44%
FaHCSIA	267	8.67%
National Capital Authority	3	6.25%
National Museum of Australia	13	5.88%
DEEWR	234	5.75%
GBRMPA	10	5.52%
Independent Hospital Pricing Authority	1	5.26%
Australian Public Service Commission	13	5.24%

The Agencies with the greatest number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are: DHS (1224), FAHCSIA (267), AHL (249), DEEWR (234), and ATO (155).

The Agencies with the biggest increase in ATSI employment in 2011-12 were:

Agency	ATSI 2011	ATSI 2012	Change
Human Services	1190	1224	34
Regional Australia*	3	27	24
DIISRTE*	18	41	23
Immigration and Citizenship	77	98	21
Defence	136	152	16
Veterans' Affairs	22	34	12
DAFF	78	86	8
APSC	8	13	5
Fair Work Ombudsman	3	8	5
ACCC	2	7	5

The Agencies with the biggest decrease in ATSI employment in 2011-12 were:

Agency	ATSI 2011	ATSI 2012	Change
DEEWR*	291	234	-57
Prime Minister and Cabinet*	42	7	-35
Aboriginal Hostels Ltd.	280	249	-31
Health and Ageing	101	76	-25
FaHCSIA	285	267	-18
Customs & Border Protection	111	103	-8
ABS	26	20	-6
Australian Taxation Office	160	155	-5
National Native Title Tribunal	10	5	-5

* The increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in the Department of Regional Australia and the decrease in Prime Minister and Cabinet are largely due to the transfer of arts and sports functions from PM&C to the Department of Regional Australia.

*Also DEEWR and DIISRTE figures may reflect the transfer of tertiary education functions and staff from DEEWR to DIISRTE.

Classifications

Classifications of ATSI APS employees in 1997, 2011 and 2012

	1997			2011			2012		
	Number	% of classification	% of ATSI	Number	% of classification	% of ATSI	Number	% of classification	% of ATSI
APS 1-2	884	4.1%	27.9%	323	6.7%	10.0%	335	7.5%	10.4%
APS 3-4	1437	3.4%	45.4%	1397	2.8%	43.2%	1392	2.8%	43.1%
APS 5-6	560	1.7%	17.7%	955	1.8%	29.5%	943	1.7%	29.2%
EL	133	0.7%	4.2%	421	1.0%	13.0%	421	1.0%	13.0%
SES	19	1.2%	0.6%	15	0.6%	0.5%	17	0.6%	0.5%
Trainee	117	15.4%	3.7%	95	28.5%	2.9%	79	27.0%	2.4%
Graduate	16	2.6%	0.5%	30	2.1%	0.9%	42	3.1%	1.3%
Total	3167	2.7%	100.0%	3236	2.1%	100.0%	3229	2.1%	100.0%

While the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees decreased at lower and middle classifications, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment increased at senior EL levels.

Over the longer term, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment has become less concentrated at lower classifications. For example, between 1997 and 2012, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees working at APS 1–4 classifications fell from 73.3% to 53.5%. Over the same period, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees at middle management levels (APS 5–6 and EL classifications) almost doubled, from 21.9% to 42.2%.

Non-ongoing employment

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are much more likely to be engaged on a non-ongoing basis in the APS: 13.9% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees engaged on a non-ongoing basis compared with only 8.5% for the total APS.

If non-ongoing employees are counted the proportion of employees in the APS identifying as ATSI increases to 2.2%

APSC measures to increase ATSI employment

Indigenous employment strategies

The APSC developed the APS Employment and Capability Strategy for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Employees. The strategy was developed to assist APS agencies to increase ATSI representation through a range of programs aimed at improving recruitment, retention and career development. In July 2012, the new APS Indigenous Employment Strategy was introduced.

In 2011–2012 the APSC worked with more than 50 agencies to provide employment pathways for 163 ATSI Australians through the APS Indigenous Pathways Program. The program promoted the APS as an employer of choice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job seekers and provided entry-level opportunities for Indigenous trainees (65), cadets (64) and graduates (34). The pathways program accounted for more than 45% of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians recruited to the APS in 2011–2012.²

However, it should be noted that the proportion of ongoing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainees actually fell from 35.7% of all trainees in 2010–11 to 27.0% in 2011–2012.³

The strategy also supported Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees through a range of professional development and networking opportunities. Including the Indigenous Career Trek program delivered tailored learning and development programs to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees across Australia. In 2011–2012, 277 ATSI employees participated in this program. Sixteen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees participated in a leadership excellence program designed to support ongoing career development into senior leadership positions.

Identified Positions

Identified positions are positions with specific selection criteria that signify that the role has a strong involvement in issues relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Typically, these roles will involve the development of policies or programs targeted at Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients, or which involve direct interaction with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities.

Historically, two selection criteria have been used when advertising these positions. They are not legislated—their use is based on long-standing APS policy, and best practice in the careful consideration and determination of appropriate selection criteria for particular jobs. The key requirements of the criteria are:

- an understanding of the issues affecting Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people; and
- an ability to communicate sensitively and effectively with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.⁴

Special Measures (from the APSC website)

The Public Service Commissioner's Directions 1999 work with the provisions of the Racial Discrimination Act to enable agency heads to put in place 'special measures' to identify particular opportunities as open only to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants. An example of this is the Indigenous cadetships but Special Measures can be used to recruit to any position including non-ongoing engagements and ongoing engagements, promotions and movements at any level.

The APSC website states: 'It is important for agency heads to consider and record their justification for using the special measures provisions. Key factors justifying their legality include the inequitable employment outcomes experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a group, and

² Ibid, p 142

³ Ibid, p 140

⁴ Taken from the APSC website - <http://www.apsc.gov.au/publications-and-media/current-publications/building-an-indigenous-employment-strategy-kit/focus-area-2-attraction-and-recruitment>

the fact that this situation is not improving. It can therefore be argued that the necessity for the use of special measures has been met.⁵

Pay equity

Agencies with a high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, and that provide services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are more likely to be among the lowest paid in the APS. The three agencies with the highest proportion of ATSI employees are mentioned below:

- **Aboriginal Hostels Limited:** 74.8% of AHL employees are of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage. Although, the CPSU bargaining team secured pay increases of between 7.75% and 13% on commencement of the 2011 enterprise agreement which were aimed at addressing pay inequities, AHL still remains the lowest paid agency in 6 out of 8 APS classification levels.
- **Torres Strait Regional Authority:** 52.4% of TSRA employees are of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage. Again in the 2011 bargain, CPSU secured pay rises of 12 per cent over the three years of the agreement. Including 6 per cent on commencement of the agreement. However, TSRA remains in the bottom 25% of pay rates in 6 out of 8 classifications.
- **Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies:** 24.4% of AIATSIS employees are of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage. AIATSIS employees receive the fourth lowest pay of all agencies in 4 of 8 classifications and are in the lowest paid 10% in the rest.

CPSU GC Motion (2011)

Governing Council repeats its call on the Federal Government as part of its Closing the Gap strategy to provide full subsidisation of salaries in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dominated agencies to address pay inequities. We specifically condemn the pay inequities in Aboriginal Hostels Limited and call on the Minister for FaHCSIA to take immediate action to address the situation where the APS agency with the highest percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff has the lowest pay rates in the APS.

Governing Council also notes the outcomes achieved in bargaining in improving support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and commits to continuing to lobby those Agencies where improvements have not been achieved.

Governing Council endorses the call to include a commitment in the ALP Platform to increasing the number of Indigenous people who are employed in the public sector above the COAG minimum target of 2.7% by 2015 to 3.5% by 2018.

⁵ ibid