

5TH FUTURE OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT FORUM

*The problematisation of Aboriginal
employment policy in the workplace*

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10:50AM – 11:30AM

Acknowledgement to Country

I would like to acknowledge that the land we meet on here today is the traditional lands of the Cadigal people. I would like to pay my respect to elders past, present and future and any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people attending this forum.



Within this presentation the term Aboriginal is inclusive of Torres Strait Islander people.

Presentation Outline

1. Brief introduction of who I am and what I do
2. Explanation of the steps in this presentation (to demonstrate the issues in existing policy through problematisations leading on to what a good policy actually looks like)
3. General overview of problematisation
4. Examples of problematisations in Aboriginal employment policy
5. What does a good Aboriginal employment policy look like?

1. Who am I and what do I do?

- Employed in the NSW public sector in frontline and senior level Identified Aboriginal positions leading Aboriginal policy **(2009 to 2018)**.
- Undergraduate qualification – Bachelor Business Management **(2007)**.
- Postgraduate qualifications – Graduate Diploma in Adult Education **(2008)**, Master of Social Science **(2009)**, and Graduate Diploma in Public Sector Management **(2012)**.
- Currently undertaking Master of Research (MRes) **(2018)** / Doctor of Indigenous Philosophy (PhD) Indigenous Studies **(2019)** Macquarie University.
- MRes research area is focused on the problematisation of Aboriginal employment policy in the NSW public sector from the 1970s to 2018.
- PhD research area focused on exploring problematisation of Aboriginal employment policy in other states and territories and investigating the qualitative (lived experiences) of Aboriginal people working in the public sector.

2. Explanation of the steps in this presentation

1. Provide an overview of problematisation & problem representations in policy
2. Explain the “What's the problem represented to be? (WPR)” approach to policy analysis
3. Demonstrate the issues in existing policy through problematisations within a selected case study
4. Leading on to what a good policy actually looks like

3. General overview of problematisation

- My research has scrutinised Aboriginal employment policy approaches through the 'WPR approach' (Bacchi, 2009).
- Bacchi (2009) explains that every policy is a problematisation (creating a problem in order to solve the problem) which contains implicit problem representations.
- Bacchi (2009) states that we are governed through problematisations rather than through policies.
- Researchers must study problematisations (through analysing the problem representations in policy) rather than the problems.
- Overall, it is the problematisations and problem representations in Aboriginal employment policy that govern and shape the professional working lives of Aboriginal people in organisations with such policies.

3. General overview of problematisation

- In my research, the ‘WPR’ approach is used to identify how:
 - a) the ‘Aboriginal employment problem’ in policy is represented; and
 - b) to subject this problem representation to critical scrutiny through applying a set of six questions (only two of the questions are below) (Bacchi, 2009):
 1. **What’s the ‘problem’ represented to be in the specific policy?**
 2. **What presuppositions or assumptions underpin this representation of the ‘problem’?**
- **Note:** Only the first 2 out of the 6 questions will be answered in this presentation and applied to the selected case study example of problematisations in Aboriginal employment.

4. Examples of problematisation in policy

- Crown Resorts Reconciliation Action Plan 2015-2017

1. What's the problem represented to be?	2. What assumptions and presuppositions underpin the representation of the problem?
<p>As one of Australia's largest private sector employers, Crown has always understood that we have a responsibility to do what we can to provide employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Since launching our Indigenous Employment Program, we are now recognised nationally as one of the industry leaders in this space (Page 6, Rowan Craigie, Chief Executive Officer).</p> <p>Problem representation: Prior to the launch of its Indigenous Employment Program (federal government funded program for employers), Crown Resorts did what it can to provide employment opportunities for Aboriginal people. Through the Federal Governments Indigenous Employment Program, Crown has a responsibility to the government to provide employment opportunities for unemployed Aboriginal people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To provide employment opportunities for unemployed Aboriginal people in Crown Resorts, the organisation must develop and implement an Indigenous Employment Program. - Since launching the Indigenous Employment Program, Crown Resorts has transformed into a national leader in the Indigenous Employment arena. - However, Crown Resorts will only do what it can to provide employment opportunities for Aboriginal people.

4. Examples of problematisation in policy

- Crown Resorts Reconciliation Action Plan 2015-2017

1. What's the problem represented to be?	2. What assumptions and presuppositions underpin the representation of the problem?
<p><i>Problem representation:</i> Crown have created and continue to build a culturally safe workplace for our Aboriginal employees that celebrates culture and community (Page 42).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Aboriginal employees need a culturally safe workplace – what actually is this?- The current workplace is not culturally safe for Aboriginal employees – why not?- No definition of what a culturally safe workplace would look like, and why it is needed for Aboriginal employees at Crown Resorts, is provided- By celebrating culture and community for Aboriginal employees, they will automatically be culturally safe

4. Examples of problematisation in policy

- Crown Resorts Reconciliation Action Plan 2015-2017

1. What's the problem represented to be?	2. What assumptions and presuppositions underpin the representation of the problem?
<p><i>Problem representation:</i> Eight Aboriginal employees will be supported through Crown's Certificate IV and Diploma courses: Leadership Development Program and Next Generation of Leaders (Page 44).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- A target of eight out of the total number of Aboriginal employees will be eligible to participate in the courses – why the limit?- The remainder of the Aboriginal employees are not entitled to participate in this training- Belief that Aboriginal employees would <u>only</u> undertake the suggested Certificate IV and Diploma Course- No other tertiary courses and qualifications are offered

4. Examples of problematisation in policy

- Crown Resorts Reconciliation Action Plan 2015-2017

1. What's the problem represented to be?	2. What assumptions and presuppositions underpin the representation of the problem?
<p><i>Problem representation:</i> 10 Aboriginal employees will be enrolled in the Certificate III in Mentoring qualification, to create strong Aboriginal leaders within Crown (Page 44).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- A target of 10 out of the total number of Aboriginal employees will be eligible to participate in mentoring. Aboriginal employees require a mentoring qualification as part of their job. However, by completing a mentoring qualification, an Aboriginal employee will become a strong leader of who within Crown? Other Aboriginal employees or other employees in general?- Assuming that there are no strong Aboriginal employees in Crown- No other professional development qualifications are offered

4. Examples of problematisation in policy

- Crown Resorts Reconciliation Action Plan 2015-2017

2. What assumptions and presuppositions underpin the representation of the problems?

The following **binaries** shape the understanding of the 'problem representations' throughout the policy:

Employment/unemployment, skilled/unskilled, always/sometimes, leader/follower, Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal, responsibility/irresponsibility, recognised/not recognised, opportunity/loss, mentor/mentee, eligible/ineligible

The following are some of the **key concepts** or **abstract labels** from the problem representation:

Employment (**79**), Indigenous Employment Program (**27**), mentor (**20**), leader (**8**), opportunity (**8**), certificate (**8**)

4. Examples of problematisation in policy

- Crown Resorts Reconciliation Action Plan 2015-2017

2. What assumptions and presuppositions underpin the representation of the problems?

The concept of 'employment' has different **meanings** throughout the proposal:

- More than \$18 million in wages have been earned by our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees (Page 11)
- I recommend to community members seeking employment and a career to look to Crown as your first choice (Professor Marcia Langton, Page 12)
- Our Indigenous Employment Program gives employees more than a job: we provide a strong support network and for each employee we create a career development plan (Page 21)

4. Examples of problematisation in policy

- Crown Resorts Reconciliation Action Plan 2015-2017

2. What assumptions and presuppositions underpin the representation of the problems?

The concept of 'cultural safety' has different **meanings** throughout the policy:

- We continue to build an accepting and safe environment, promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture through cultural awareness training that uses formal and informal teaching methods to reinforce and promote the message of reconciliation (Page 18).
- Through our award-winning Indigenous Employment Program, we have created and continue to build a culturally safe workplace for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees that celebrates culture and community (Page 42).

4. Examples of problematisation in policy

- Crown Resorts Reconciliation Action Plan 2015-2017

2. What assumptions and presuppositions underpin the representation of the problem?

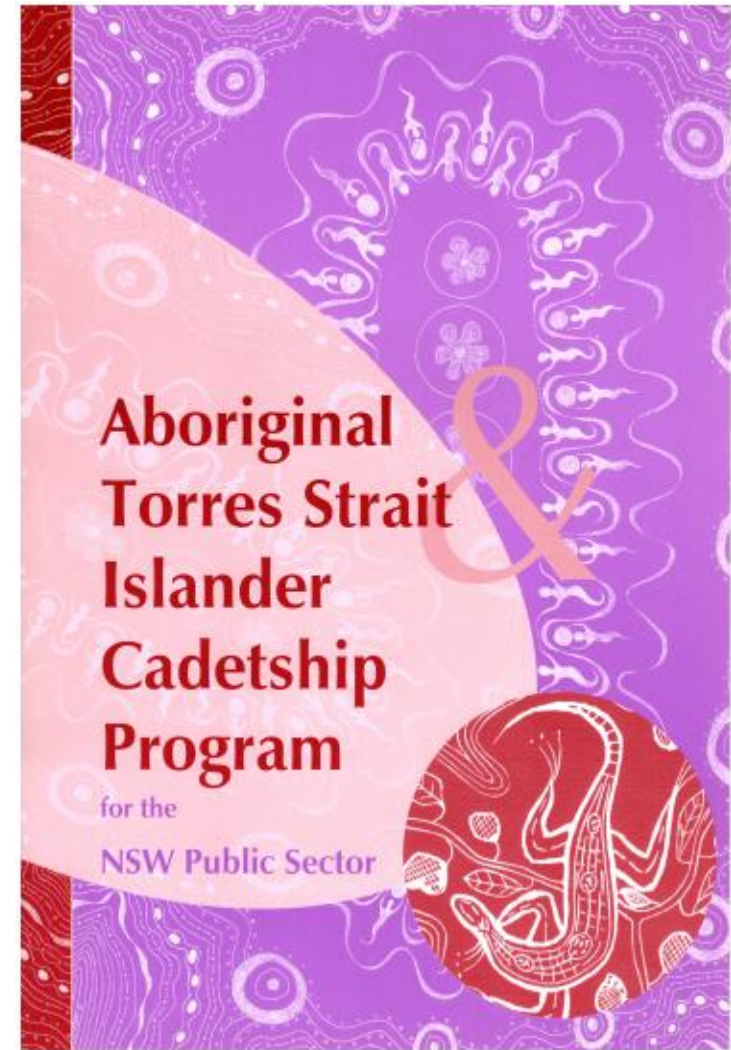
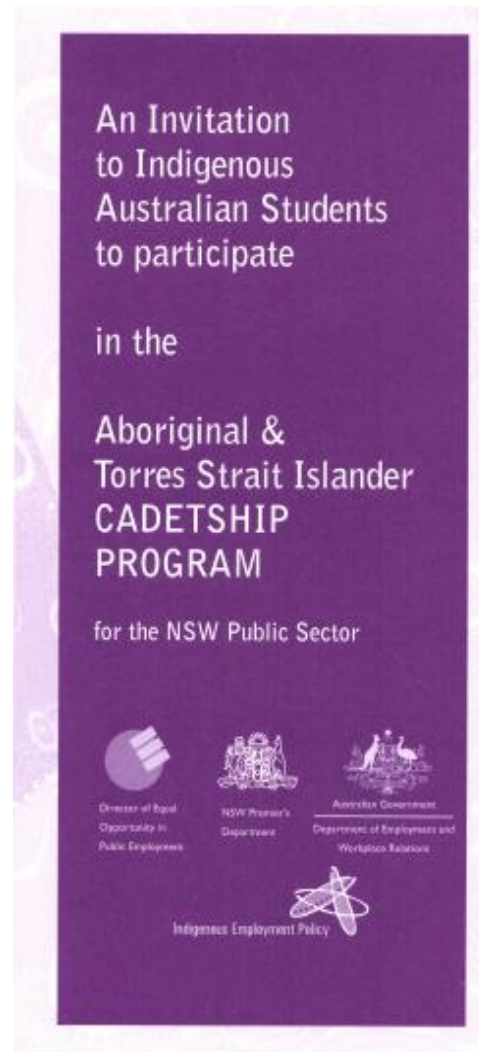
The following **categories** are made up throughout the policy to give meaning to the problem representation:

People categories:

Aboriginal **youth**, Aboriginal **Australians**, Aboriginal **Communities**, Aboriginal **Elders**, Aboriginal **Reference Group**, Aboriginal **people**, **non-Indigenous** Crown Employees, Aboriginal **entertainers** and **artists**, Aboriginal **managers**, Aboriginal **leaders**.

4. What does a good Aboriginal employment policy look like?

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cadetship Program for the NSW Public Sector (2001-2010)
- **This policy problematizes the previous policy and creates a better policy outcome for Aboriginal people.**



4. What does a good Aboriginal employment policy look like?

1. What's the problem represented to be?	2. What assumptions and presuppositions underpin the representation of the problem?
<p><i>Problem representation:</i> The Indigenous Cadetship Program is a renewed approach encouraging Government agencies to consider new ways of managing services to Indigenous people and Indigenous employment initiatives (Page 3).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Government agencies require <i>new</i> ways and approaches for managing services to Indigenous people and Indigenous employment initiatives.

4. What does a good Aboriginal employment policy look like?

1. What's the problem represented to be?	2. What assumptions and presuppositions underpin the representation of the problem?
<p><i>Problem representation:</i> The Indigenous Cadetship Program offers the sector a chance to help develop its own pool of highly skilled and tertiary qualified Indigenous employees. It improves employment opportunities in jobs under-accessed by Indigenous Australians (Page 3).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- There is an over-representation of Aboriginal people in identified Aboriginal positions and low skilled positions/classifications.- There is an under-representation of Aboriginal people in highly skilled and tertiary qualified positions.

4. What does a good Aboriginal employment policy look like?

1. What's the problem represented to be?	2. What assumptions and presuppositions underpin the representation of the problem?
<p><i>Problem representation:</i> I believe this program will be a powerful tool for Public Sector agencies to help achieve the governments commitment to Indigenous employment (Page 3, Carol Davies, Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The Indigenous Cadetship Program is a well designed and robust program.- There has been a failure in achieving governments Indigenous employment commitments.

4. What does a good Aboriginal employment policy look like?

1. What's the problem represented to be?	2. What assumptions and presuppositions underpin the representation of the problem?
<p><i>Problem representation:</i> This program provides opportunities for NSW Public Sector agencies to support Indigenous people to combine tertiary study with employment in the agency. There are no limits to the number of cadetships an agency can offer and cadetships are invited from all tertiary disciplines (Page 9).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- There is no limit on the number of Aboriginal Cadetships available.- There is no support for agencies to provide employment opportunities pathways for Aboriginal tertiary students to combine study with employment.

4. What does a good Aboriginal employment policy look like?

1. What's the problem represented to be?	2. What assumptions and presuppositions underpin the representation of the problem?
<p><i>Problem representation:</i> A high quality mentoring relationship is vital to the success of the cadetship. It is essential that non-Aboriginal mentors who hold little knowledge or experience of Aboriginal culture undertake an introduction to cultural awareness (Page 9).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Successful cadetships require high quality mentoring relationships.- Mentors have had minimal knowledge or experience of Aboriginal culture.- Aboriginal cultural awareness training is essential for all mentors.

4. What does a good Aboriginal employment policy look like?

2. What assumptions and presuppositions underpin the representation of the problems?

The concept of 'employment' has **similar** meanings throughout the policy:

- The employment program will increase the pool of tertiary qualified Indigenous employees across all levels of the Public Sector (Page 3).
- The employment of tertiary skills and agency trained professional Indigenous employees to enhance corporate goals and service delivery to Aboriginal people and the wider community (Page 4).

4. What does a good Aboriginal employment policy look like?

2. What assumptions and presuppositions underpin the representation of the problem?

Binaries:

Mentor/mentee
Skilled/unskilled
Professional/unprofessional
Successful/unsuccessful
Eligible/ineligible
Agreement/disagreement

Key Concepts/Labels:

Managing, skilled,
professional, qualified, work
placement, tertiary,
agreement, responsibility,
funding, guidelines

People categories:

Indigenous people,
Aboriginal students,
Indigenous employees

Organisational categories:

NSW Government agencies,
Universities, Director of
Equal Employment,
Aboriginal Education Centre,
Koori Mail, Australian Public
Service, National Indigenous
Cadetship Program

4. What does a good Aboriginal employment policy look like?

Implications for workforce planning, policy and population growth:

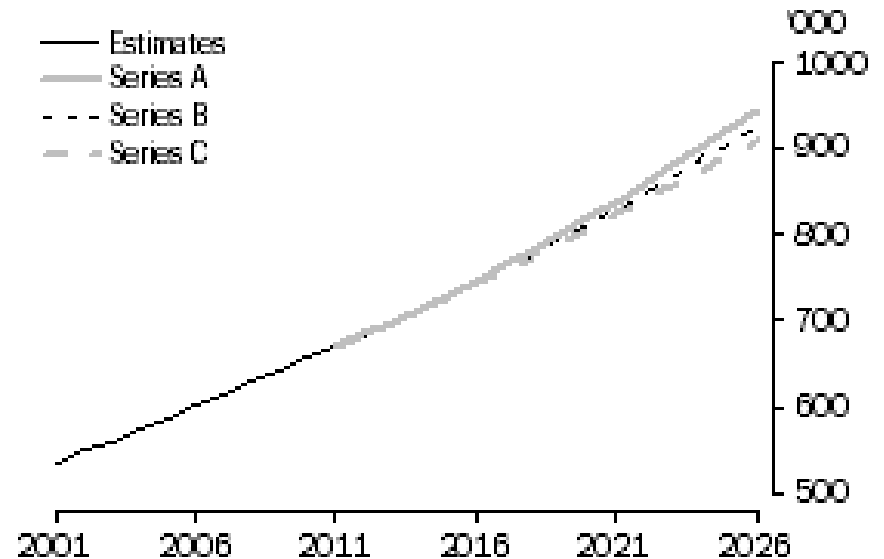
- 649,200 people who identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin in 2016
- 91% were of Aboriginal origin
- 5.0% were of Torres Strait Islander origin
- 4.1% identified as being of both Aboriginal employees origin.



4. What does a good Aboriginal employment policy look like?

- The population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians is projected to increase to 945,600 in 2026 (ABS, 2014).
- The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (0-14 years) is projected to increase from 240,600 in 2011 to 315,200 in 2026. This equates to an increase of between 19% and 31% over the period.

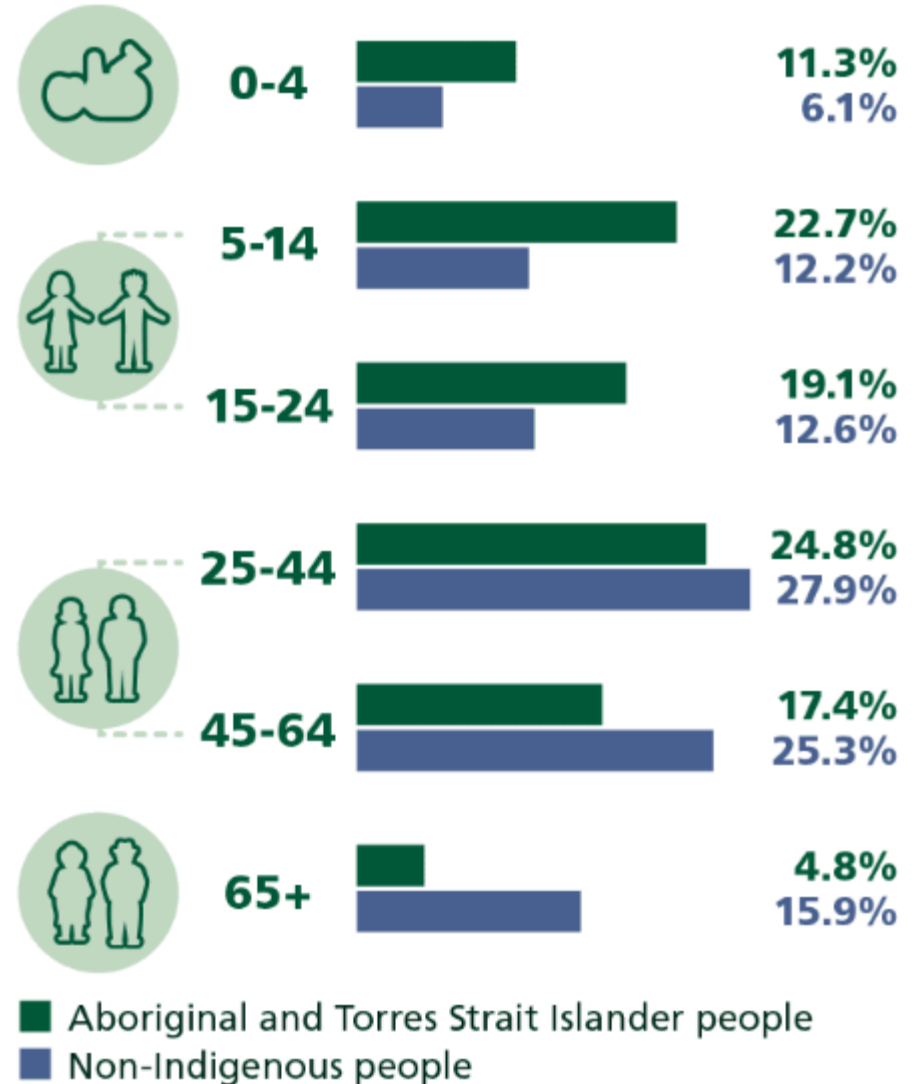
**ESTIMATED AND
PROJECTED ABORIGINAL
AND TORRES STRAIT
ISLANDER
POPULATION, Australia - 2001-
2026**



4. What does a good Aboriginal employment policy look like?

- In 2016, the median age was 23 for Aboriginal employees and 38 for non-Indigenous people. Aboriginal employees have a much younger age profile than the non-Indigenous population.
- In 2016, more than half (53%) of Aboriginal people were aged under 25 years. In comparison, almost one in three (31%) non-Indigenous people were aged under 25.

PROPORTION OF POPULATION BY AGE, 2016 (a)



(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2016

Conclusions and Implications

- Plethora Aboriginal employment policy documents across Australian workplaces in the private, not for profit and government sector
- The very existence of these Aboriginal employment policies indicates the way in which Aboriginal people have been problematised through policy and by policy makers
- Aboriginal employment policy first emerged in the late 1970's – neoliberal discourse problematises Aboriginal people in the workplace requiring intervention through specific actions, programs or strategies
- Deficit language in policy frames Aboriginal employment issues under labels such as attracting, retaining, developing, supporting
- 2% quota remained the same since first introduced in the early 1980's
- The WPR approach provides a useful and insightful policy analysis tool to scrutinise policy
- Significant implications for workforce planning/policy to:
 - meet the changing demographics of Aboriginal people in the next 10-20 years (pathways, skills, qualifications)
 - high expectation relationship with Aboriginal people
 - move away from problematising Aboriginal identity

References

ABS, 2014 Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2001 to 2026 <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Products/C19A0C6E4794A3FACA257CC900143A3D?opendocument>

Bacchi, C., 2009. Analysing Policy: What's the Problem Represented to be? Frenchs Forest: Pearson Education.

Crown Resorts Reconciliation Action Plan 2015-2017. Available on open access at: <https://www.crownmelbourne.com.au/getmedia/62a2f00b-d63d-47cf-8570-84654cfebc08/150730-CrownResorts-General-Media-Release-RAP-Booklet.pdf.aspx>

NSW Public Sector Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cadetship Program, 2001. Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment. NSW Premiers Department. NSW Government and Commonwealth Government Publication.

Thank you.

Questions?