ABORIGINAL RETENTION AND EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

2023- 2026

Our Heritage. Our People. Our Strength.

Ahrens

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY AND TRADITIONAL OWNERS

Ahrens Group acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of all Lands on which we live and work. At Ahrens, we know that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures enrich this nation and we pay our respects to Elders - past, present and emerging.

Ahrens acknowledges the important contribution that First Australians make in creating a strong and vibrant Australian society.

We recognise the pathway forward must be based on close, respectful and collaborative working arrangements with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organisations, peak bodies and communities. We understand the benefits of learning more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, values and beliefs.

We value and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and acknowledge the contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to the education of all children and people in this country that we live in and share together – Australia.

Cover Image

The cover image is taken of Uluru as part of an organised trip for 170 people from around the world as part of the Young Presidents Organisation (YPO).

Stefan Ahrens, Managing Director of Ahrens, organised the trip with the focus to understand the Australian culture. As a group, they spent time with the Mutitjulu community near Uluru, as well as the Jabalbina community near Port Douglas.

As part of the trip, YPO built a camping ground for the local community and a highlight for all was when the local Jabalbina and YPO youth camped at the Cooya Beach camp site, sharing experience.

CREATING A MOBILE AND DIVERSE WORKPLACE

FOREWORD

As a result of Ahrens' commitment to the Aboriginal Retention and Employment Strategy 2021-2023, Aboriginal representation at Ahrens has increased from 2.6% to 3%.

Our goal is to increase Aboriginal employment to 4% or to maintain those levels throughout 2023 to 2026. Our aim is to promote diversity and equal opportunity, developing a culturally safe and inclusive workplace that recognises and respects the values, cultures and traditions of Aboriginal people.

We recognise the value Aboriginal people bring to the workplace and understand that employment of Aboriginal people means a richer environment for all our employees.

The focus of Ahrens' Aboriginal Employment and Retention Strategy will be to:

- create and provide employment opportunities for all Aboriginal people with a focus on Aboriginal youth;
- develop the knowledge and skills of our existing Aboriginal employees with the aim of career progression; and
- ensure that the workplace is respectful, safe and inclusive.

I am confident this can be achieved and look forward to working with all our stakeholders to increase the diversity of our workforce.

Phillip Poole

General Manager – HSQE & People

ACHIEVEMENTS

It is pleasing to note that there were a number of highlights resulting from the previous Ahrens Aboriginal Retention and Employment Strategy, which included:

- 4 employees completed their workplace apprenticeship.
- Further engagement with local schools and employment networks to promote employment opportunities with Ahrens.
- Promotion of cultural events and reconciliation activities, including Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week.
- Reserving key developmental roles for Aboriginal employees.
- Providing tailored counselling support, upon request, through Ahrens' Employee Assistance Program for all Aboriginal employees and their managers.
- Promotion of the 'Call out Racism' campaign.

National Reconciliation Week Poster.

National Reconciliation Week social media post.

STAFF PROFILE

AS OF 30 JUNE 2022, AHRENS HAD 700 EMPLOYEES AND, OF THOSE, 23 EMPLOYEES DECLARED AS BEING OF ABORIGINAL OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER DESCENT, EQUATING TO 3.4% OF THE TOTAL WORKFORCE.

ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGY 2021-2023

Ahrens acknowledges Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of all Lands on which we live and work. At Ahrens, we know that Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander cultures enrich this nation and we pay respects to Elders, past present and emerging.

AIM:

- Develop an Aboriginal Employment and Retention Strategy to assist in increasing the employment, across all classifications, of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Ahrens to 4% by the end of the 2026 financial year.
- Provide diverse employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to support increasing economic and social participation.
- Ensure all existing and new policies are culturally appropriate.
- Attain cultural competency across the Ahrens workforce.
- Acknowledge and respect the positive impact that increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed will have on the work environment across Ahrens and also in expanding the cultural knowledge and world view of staff.
- Improve engagement between the Aboriginal community and Ahrens' services through increasing Aboriginal representation in the Ahrens workforce.

ACTION:

Creating Opportunities

- Identify and create appropriate and accessible employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Ahrens.
- Consult existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff within Ahrens, and appropriate community members around culturally appropriate employment policies to inform the Strategy.

RESPECT AND DEVELOP:

- Embed cultural competency and cultural protocols across Ahrens to aid in the retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and increase the knowledge of non-Aboriginal staff.
- Engage and build relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people to strengthen the capacity of Ahrens to work collaboratively towards improved outcomes.
- Identify and create appropriate development and leadership opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Ahrens.
- Develop staff understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture to position Ahrens as an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates; reduce cultural risks within the workplace; change the attitudes and behaviours of the workforce; increase engagement.
- Successfully attract and retain staff.
- Train staff to a foundation level of cultural competence within Ahrens to provide culturally appropriate and effective systems and service delivery, resulting in better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. For non-Indigenous and Indigenous employees alike, it will result in increased capabilities and learning outcomes.

KEY TO SUCCESS

1 CREATING OPPORTUNITIES.
INCREASE NUMBER OF ABORIGINAL EMPLOYEES IN AHRENS.

PRIORITY		ACTION	MEASURE	WHO
1.1	**Employment Representation**	Increase representation of Aboriginal employees in Ahrens.	2023: 3% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Employment 2024: 3.2% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Employment 2025: 3.6% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Employment 2026: 4% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Employment	RWG
1.2	**Priority Consideration**	Aboriginal candidates via Aboriginal candidate pools are considered as priority candidates before the commencement of a formal recruitment process.	Increase in number of employment contracts offered to Aboriginal people	Human Resources (to source suitable candidate) Business Units (to consider and employ)
1.3	**Establish pool of job ready Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander candidates**	Create an Aboriginal candidate register to draw upon for all vacancies.	Aboriginal candidate register created and populated	Human Resources

KEY TO SUCCESS

1.4	**Promote job opportunities and Ahrens as employer of choice**	Develop promotional material to highlight varied employment opportunities at Ahrens, specifically targeting the Aboriginal community. Attend various career expos to promote Ahrens job opportunities to the Aboriginal community. Promote all Graduate positions to local schools and universities and, where appropriate, other Aboriginal employment networks.	Attend a career expo targeting Aboriginal community Advertisements for all Graduate roles to be sent to local schools and universities	Human Resources Human Resources
1.5	**Traineeships**	Ensure Ahrens traineeships entry level positions are promoted to the Aboriginal community/job networks	Appointment of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander persons - unless no suitable candidates are available	Business Unit Heads

- **Aboriginal Employment and Retention Strategy to be led by our Reconciliation Working Group (RWG) and Group Management .**
- **Cultural Competency principles to be addressed in performance and behavioural expectations across Ahrens.**

KEY TO SUCCESS

2 RESPECT.
RETAIN AND DEVELOP ABORIGINAL EMPLOYEES.

PRIORITY		ACTION	MEASURE	WHO
2.1	**Induction**	Induction pack developed and provided to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees new to Ahrens.	Induction pack developed and provided to new employee within first 2 weeks of commencement	Human Resources
2.2	**Mentoring and peer support**	Aboriginal employees to be brought together as a group and provided with networking opportunities, work shadowing opportunities, the opportunity to hear success stories from more senior Aboriginal employees, as well as job skills training towards the end of formal Traineeship.	Meetings held quarterly	Human Resources
2.3	**Wellbeing support**	Ensure Aboriginal counsellors are available via Ahrens Employee Assistance Program.	Aboriginal counsellors are available via Ahrens Employee Assistance Program.	Human Resources
2.4	**Cultural protocols**	Implement cultural protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country. Traditional Owner to be invited to provide a Welcome to Country at all publicly accessible events. Include written and spoken Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of key internal meetings i.e. Group Management Meetings, Corporate training sessions.	• Publish cultural protocols on Intranet • Traditional Owner invited to provide Welcome to Country at public events • Acknowledgement of Country is spoken at 100% of key internal meetings/training sessions	Group Management RWG Group Management Corporate training - HR/ Facilitators

KEY TO SUCCESS

2.5	**Cultural respect**	Provide opportunities for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. Develop and participate in National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week events. Communication from Ahrens to all staff to encourage participation in National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week events. Hold an internal National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week event. Recognise the anniversary of various significant dates to the Aboriginal community.	At least 1 National Reconciliation Week activity per year All staff email to be sent to recognise significant dates in Aboriginal community	RWG Human Resources
2.6	**Anti-discrimination initiatives**	Provide information to develop awareness around *Racism*.	At least 1 Anti-racism campaign event to be run per year	Human Resources

CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN TO INFORM THE STRATEGY

AHRENS EMPLOYEES WERE CONSULTED AND ENCOURAGED TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK DURING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS ABORIGINAL RETENTION AND EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

Jaconen Wingfield
Boilermaker

Harvey Syron
RAES

Debbie Astbury
HSE Manager

Phil Poole
General Manager – HSQE & People

Tamara Houben
Employee Relations Manager

Lareesa MacDougall
Accounts Clerk

EXTERNAL RESOURCES WERE CONSULTED AND ENCOURAGED TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK DURING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS ABORIGINAL RETENTION AND EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY:

David Minear
Board Director

Ken Lechleitner
A proud Anmatjere / Arrernte man

Ahrens Managing Director Stefan Ahrens

OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

Our vision for reconciliation is an Australia that has removed barriers such as disparity when it comes to equal opportunities for all races, the lack of recognition for and protection of culture, as well as adverse race relations, by taking a holistic approach to reconciliation through engagement with the wider community. We strive to not only meet, but to enhance the changing needs of the communities in which we operate.

Developing good relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will bring to our organisation, a greater awareness and understanding of the cultural connection Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have with the land.

Ahrens Group commits to work towards closing the gap in employment equality between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians. We're committed to welcoming, supporting and promoting equality and diversity in all that we do for our staff, our clients and our community.

Stefan Ahrens
Managing Director

Ahrens

ahrens.com.au

ahrens@ahrens.com.au

08 8521 0000

Ahrens Group