



# Addressing AOD Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Workers' Salaries and Professional Development Needs

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January 2022

## Citation details

McEntee, A. & Skinner, N. (2022). Addressing AOD Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Workers' Salaries and Professional Development Needs. Adelaide, South Australia: National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA), Flinders University.

## About NCETA

NCETA is based at Flinders University in South Australia and is an internationally recognised research and training centre that works as a catalyst for change in the alcohol and other drug (AOD) field. NCETA's areas of expertise include training needs analyses, the provision of training and other workforce development approaches. We have developed training curricula, programs and resources, and provided training programs, to cater for the needs of: specialist AOD workers; frontline health and welfare workers; Aboriginal workers; community groups; mental health workers; police officers; and employers and employee groups. The Centre focuses on supporting evidence-based change and specialises in change management processes, setting standards for the development of training curriculum content and delivery modes, building consensus models and making complex and disparate information readily accessible to workers and organisations.

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## Acknowledgements

The National Alcohol and Other Drug Workforce Survey 2019-2020 was funded by the Australian Government Department of Health. The present report was commissioned by the Australian Indigenous Health *InfoNet*. The content, analysis approach and appropriateness of the methodology was developed in consultation with a Project Advisory Group. Members of the Project Advisory Group were:

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We would also like to thank the survey respondents for generously providing their time to complete the survey.

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## Executive Summary

### Introduction

Australian Indigenous Health/InfoNet commissioned the National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA) to explore the salaries and professional development needs of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers in the alcohol and other drug (AOD) sector. A specific focus was whether these employment factors varied by age group, location of employment, sector of employment and qualifications. The project was guided by a Project Advisory Group.

### Method

Secondary analysis of NCETA's National AOD workforce survey 2019-2020 was used to investigate Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers' salaries and professional development needs. The National AOD workforce survey addressed key workforce planning and development issues with a convenience sample of participants across Australia. Ethics approval was granted by Flinders University and Edith Cowan University Human Research Ethics Committees. Eligible responses regarding Indigeneity were received by 1,452 participants, of which 94 identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (6.5%; 1,358 (94.5%) did not identify as either an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander).

### Key results

#### Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander AOD respondents

The Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander survey group were predominately:

- women (67.0%)
- aged under 50 years (56.4%); and
- employed in a direct client services role (75.8%).

Although a high proportion of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers had 10 or more years' experience (38.2%), a considerable proportion (27.9%) were new to the AOD sector (three or fewer years of experience).

Non-Indigenous workers demonstrated a similar profile across gender, age and experience.

Significantly higher proportions of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers than non-Indigenous workers:

- were based in remote/rural locations (61.8% vs 33.7%);
- worked in the non-government (NGO) sector (72.4% vs 56.6%);
- were employed in medium sized organisations (44.3% vs 28.9%);

- had permanent contracts (87.2% vs 75.2%);
- worked full-time (79.1% vs 60.7%); and
- reported having lived experience (83.5%, 62.8%) and among these 76.3% (vs 62.0%) had disclosed their lived experience to their workplace.

## Income

In comparison to non-Indigenous workers, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers were:

- more likely to report an income equivalent to the national average (30.5% vs 19.6%);
- less likely to report a salary above the national average (30.5% vs 41.6%);
- equally likely to:
  - report an income below the national average (39.0% vs 38.9%);
  - be satisfied (57.3% vs 55.9%) with their pay; and
  - be unsatisfied with their pay (20.0% vs 26.6%).

## Qualifications

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers were equally likely to hold AOD-specific qualifications at a vocational or tertiary level as non-Indigenous workers (65.4% vs 64.7%).

Considering workers' highest level of general (non AOD-specific) qualifications, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers were:

- more likely to hold a certificate/diploma qualification (57.1% vs 20.3%);
- less likely to hold:
  - an undergraduate degree qualification (19.0% vs 29.7%);
  - a graduate/Masters degree qualification (15.5% vs 38.0%).

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers with a tertiary qualification were significantly more likely to report an income above the national average (57.7%) than those without a tertiary qualification (18.9%).

## Professional development

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers:

- equally felt they had no or very little difficulty accessing professional development (69.8%) as non-Indigenous workers (60.6%).
- had lower participation in professional development opportunities in the past three years (80.0% vs 89.5%) than non-Indigenous workers.

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers in direct client service roles were equally likely as non-Indigenous workers in direct client service roles to have:

- access to some type of clinical supervision or practice support (80.0% vs 86.4%); and
- reported that clinical supervision or practice support considerably or completely met their needs (56.9% vs 52.8%).

Most Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers had regular (at least monthly) access to:

- line supervision (67.6%);
- peer supervision (73.3%); and
- cultural supervision (56.0%).

The most common barriers to accessing professional development among Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers were:

- personal financial costs (25.3%);
- geographic constraints (20.0%);
- insufficient time at work (18.7%); and
- staff shortages (17.3%).

Compared to non-Indigenous workers, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers were

- less likely to report financial cost to their employer as a barrier to accessing professional development (12.8% vs 21.9%);
- more likely to identify a training gap in the majority of the 10 professional skills training areas, including:
  - clients with trauma (81.3% vs 62.7%);
  - dual diagnoses (78.1% vs 61.1%);
  - acquired brain injury (57.8% vs 45.1%);
  - gambling problems (56.3% vs 42.5%); and
  - working with children and families (62.5% vs 50.1%).

Similar to non-Indigenous workers:

- the majority of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers (73.3%) were satisfied with the progress they had made in their organisation.
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers were unsatisfied with future career opportunities, with only half of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers satisfied with their future chances for getting ahead in their organisation.

Additional analyses were conducted with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander respondents to explore differences on the main variables considered in this study according to age group, location and sector (government, NGO). Key findings are summarised below.

### **Younger and older workers**

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers were grouped as 'younger' (49 years and younger: 56.4%); and 'older' (50+ years: 43.6%).

There were no statistically significant differences between the two age groups on the majority of variables considered in this study except that older Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander were more likely to report lived experience (92.7% vs 76.0%).

### **Workers in metropolitan and rural/remote locations**

Insufficient sample size for non-metropolitan respondents necessitated combining rural and remote Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander respondents into a single group. Across all of the variables considered in this study, differences were observed on four factors. Compared to metropolitan based workers, rural/remote Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers were:

- less likely to have access to internal clinical supervision/practice support (11.1%<sup>#1</sup> vs 38.1%<sup>#1</sup>);
- more likely to be employed on:
  - permanent contracts (93.6% vs 75.0%); and
  - full-time contracts (89.4% vs 67.9%); and
- more likely to identify managing risky behaviours as a training gap (68.3% vs 43.5%).

### **Government and non-government (NGO) workers**

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander government workers were:

- more likely to:
  - be employed in larger organisations (57.1% vs 28.6%);
  - have AOD specific qualifications (61.9% vs 37.0%); and
  - have regular cultural supervision (at least monthly) (81.8%<sup>#1</sup> vs 45.7%);
- less likely to:
  - receive clinical supervision/practice support when they worked in direct client service roles (37.5%<sup>#1</sup> vs 12.2%<sup>#1</sup>), than NGO workers;
  - identify training needs related to:
    - clinical skills for counselling, treatment or therapy (38.9%<sup>#1</sup> vs 69.6%); and
    - providing clinical supervision to others (33.3%<sup>#1</sup> vs 63.0%);

- be satisfied with:
  - the career progress they had made in their organisation (55.0% vs 80.0%)
  - their chance of getting ahead in their organisation (26.3%<sup>#1</sup> vs 58.2%).

No Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander respondents were employed in the private sector.

## Conclusion

Salaries and professional development are clearly priority workforce development issues for the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workforce. The majority of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers earned an income below or equivalent to the national average. However, 57.7% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers with a degree earned above the national average compared to 18.9% of workers without a degree ( $p \leq .001$ ). Improving pathways into tertiary education is one strategy to improve remuneration within the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workforce.

The majority of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers had participated in professional development in the past three years, and most were satisfied with their progress to date in their organisation. Less than half of these workers were satisfied with their future chances for getting ahead in their organisation. These findings were similar for non-Indigenous workers and are indicative of a sector-wide challenge in relation to establishing career pathways for AOD workers. Clinical skills and professional skills training are major workforce development needs for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers, with a clear need for accessible, culturally safe and culturally appropriate programs and training in these areas.

## Introduction

The National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA) conducted the National Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Workforce Survey in 2019-2020 (the 'national survey'), representing the first national survey on the AOD workforce in over a decade. A number of reports, infographics and peer reviewed journal publications resulted from this work and are available online:

<https://nceta.flinders.edu.au/workforce/alcohol-other-drugs-national-workforce-survey>. The

program of work was funded by the Australian Government Department of Health.

In 2021, NCETA was commissioned by Australian Indigenous Health*InfoNet* to use the national survey data to investigate the employment arrangements of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers in the AOD sector, with a focus on salaries and professional development needs. A Project Advisory Group (PAG) provided guidance and advice on the analysis and interpretation of findings.

This report presents key findings regarding the following research questions:

1. What are the current issues and concerns regarding the salaries of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers in the AOD sector?
2. What are the professional development needs of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers in the AOD sector?

The first section of the report considers these research questions in relation to the whole sample of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers. Subsequent sections consider these questions in relation to particular sub-groups of workers, specifically younger and older workers, workers in metropolitan and rural/remote locations, workers in government and non-government organisations and workers with and without degree and AOD-specific qualifications.

## Method

### Data source

Secondary analysis of data collected from NCETAs National AOD Workforce Survey 2019-2020 was used to conduct the analyses. Significant group differences were determined using chi square and t-test analyses.

### Data limitations

The modest number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander respondents in the AOD national workforce survey [1] placed limitations on the analyses that were possible. Some of the reported analyses had low power due to small or insufficient sample sizes. The following symbol and phrase identify analyses and findings which should be interpreted with caution: # *Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases)*. Non-significant contrasts are indicated by 'ns' in text.

How representative the data is to the entire AOD workforce is unknown. The sample is considered one of convenience. Results reported should therefore be interpreted with caution.

### Ethics approval

The Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee provided ethics approval for the National AOD workforce survey project and the current analysis. Reciprocal ethics approval was also granted by Edith Cowan University's Human Research Ethics Committee for the current analysis.

## Results

*“Aboriginal skilled workforce is particularly low and in high demand for new programs. The pool does not grow it moves around and gets thinner across programs. This places even higher burden on staff that remain to carry high loads without opportunities to get proper breaks. Senior staff often do not get leave as services are usually always under-staffed to cover absences of experienced staff without clients being put at risk.”*

*Aboriginal worker*

### Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander AOD workers

The national survey was completed by 1,506 Australian AOD workers [1]. Of these respondents, 1,483 provided a response to the question regarding their Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander identity (31 respondents indicated they preferred not to say and were removed from the current analyses). Of the 1,452 eligible respondents, 94 (6.5%) identified as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (Table 1).

**Table 1 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander survey respondents**

Group	N	%
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	94	6.5
<i>Aboriginal but not Torres Strait Islander</i>	88	6.1
<i>Torres Strait Islander but not Aboriginal</i>	2	0.1
<i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander</i>	4	0.3
Neither Aboriginal nor Torres Strait Islander	1358	93.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>1452</b>	<b>100</b>

*Note: 23 respondents did not provide an answer to this question and 31 selected ‘prefer not to say’. These respondents were removed from the proportion calculations of those identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.*

### Workforce profile

The majority (61.8%) of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers were based in rural or remote locations, compared to one third of non-Indigenous workers (33.7%,  $p \leq .001$ ) (Table 2).

**Table 2 Location of workers**

Location	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	Non-Indigenous
Metropolitan***	38.2	66.3
Rural*	43.4	31.6
Remote***	18.4	2.1

*Note: Overall chi-square statistic significant at  $p \leq .05$  level and comparisons of column proportion significant at either \* $p \leq .05$  or \*\*\* $p \leq .001$ .*

The majority (72.4%) of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers were based in the NGO sector, compared to just over half of non-Indigenous workers (56.6%) ( $p \leq .01$ ) (Table 3).

**Table 3 Sector of employment**

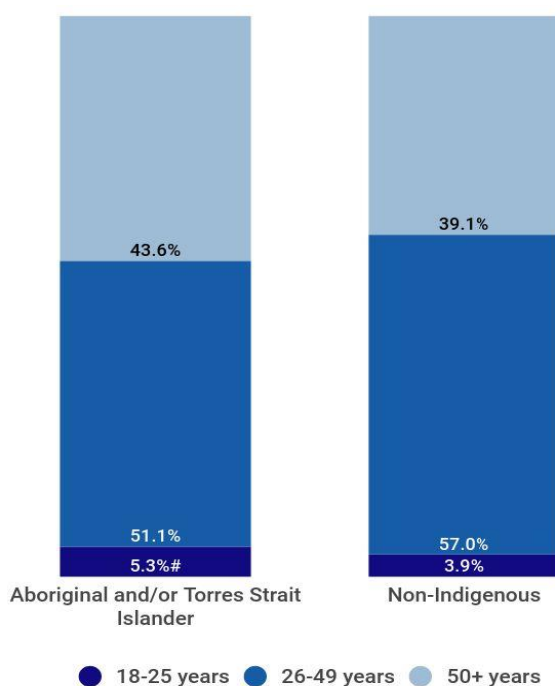
Sector	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	Non-Indigenous
Government*	27.6	39.7
Non-government**	72.4	56.6
Private	0.0	3.7

Note: Overall chi-square statistic significant at  $p \leq .05$  level and comparisons of column proportion significant at either \* $p \leq .05$  or \*\* $p \leq .01$ .

### Personal and social demographics

#### Age

The mean (average) age for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers was 46.6 years, similar to non-Indigenous workers (45.5 years). As Figure 1 shows, just over half (56.4%) of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers were aged under 50 years, with 60.9% of non-Indigenous workers aged under 50 years (this difference did not reach statistical significance).



**Figure 1 Age profile of workers**

Note: # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).

#### Gender

Two thirds (67.0%) of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers were women. Similarly, just over 70% of non-Indigenous workers were women (Figure 2). A different gender identity was not

specified by any Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers. A small proportion (1%) of non-Indigenous workers reported another gender identity.

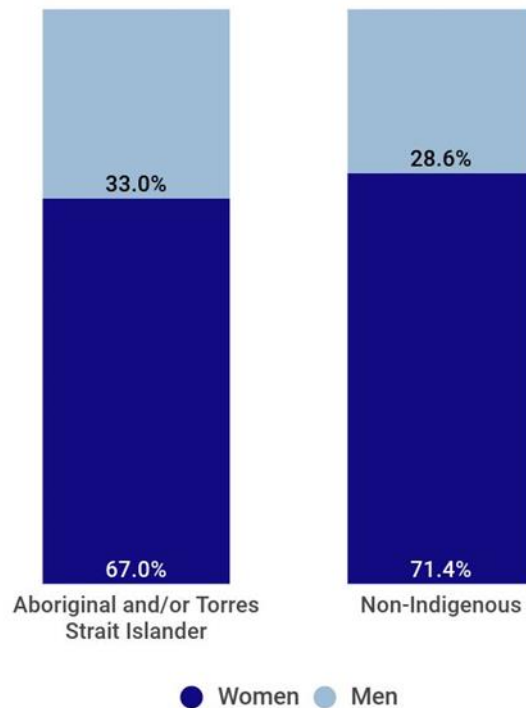


Figure 2 Gender profile of workers

### Caring responsibilities

Almost half of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers (48.9%) reported caring responsibilities for children, an older person or another person. A comparable proportion of non-Indigenous workers also had caring responsibilities (43.6%).

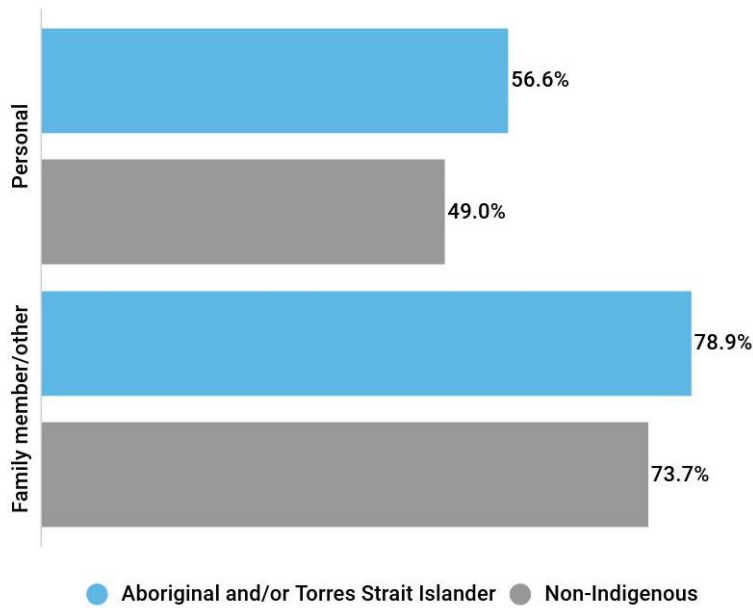
### Lived experience

The majority (83.5%) of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers reported lived experience of alcohol or other drug issues related to their own experience, a family member or other experience. Around two thirds (62.8%) of non-Indigenous workers reported some form of lived experience ( $p \leq .001$ ).

Figure 3 shows that of those workers with lived experience ( $n=889$ ), the majority of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers had family or other experience (78.9%) and over half (56.6%) had personal experience. A similar pattern was observed with non-Indigenous workers.

Further analysis revealed that three quarters (76.3%) of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers with lived experience had disclosed their lived experience status to their workplace.

Disclosure was less likely for non-Indigenous workers with lived experience (62.0%,  $\chi^2(1, 889) = 6.13$ ,  $p = .013$ ).



**Figure 3 Workers with lived experience: type of lived experience**

*Note: Proportions do not sum to 100% due to multiple response option. Other experience reported by respondents included a range of circumstances including friends, ex-partners and community experiences of problematic alcohol or other drug use.*

### Employment demographics

#### Work roles

Direct client service was the most common work role reported by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (75.8%) and non-Indigenous (71.4%) workers. As Figure 4 shows, around one quarter of workers reported administration as one of their main work roles. One fifth of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers also reported management as a main work role (one quarter of non-Indigenous workers).

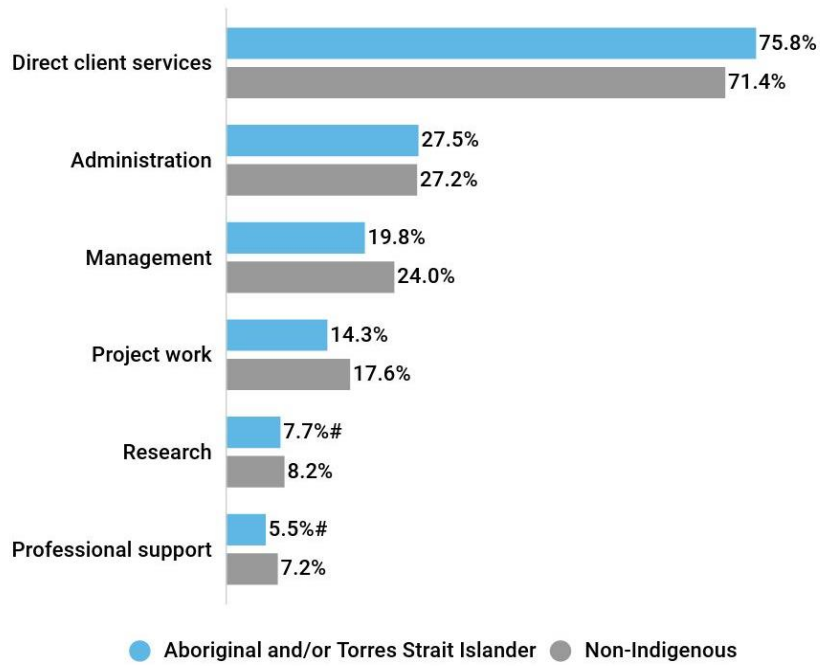
#### AOD experience

A large cohort (27.9%) of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers were new to the AOD sector, with three or fewer years of experience, which is comparable to non-Indigenous workers (29.8%). One third (33.8%) of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers had 4 to 9 years of experience in the AOD sector and 38.2% had 10+ years' AOD experience. Similarly, 29.5% of non-Indigenous workers had 4 to 9 years' AOD experience and 40.7% had 10+ years' experience.

#### Organisation size

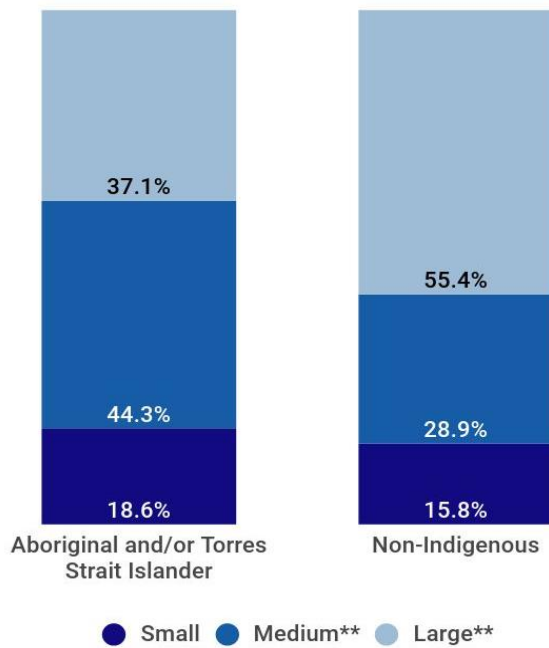
Most Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers (81.4%) were employed in large (100+ employees) or medium sized (20 - 99 employees) organisations (Figure 5). Similarly, 84.3% of non-Indigenous respondents worked in medium or large organisations. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers were less likely to work in large organisations, and more likely to work in medium sized organisations compared to non-Indigenous workers ( $p \leq .01$ ).

AOD Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers' salaries and professional development needs



**Figure 4 Main work roles**

Note: Proportions do not sum to 100% due to multiple response option. # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).

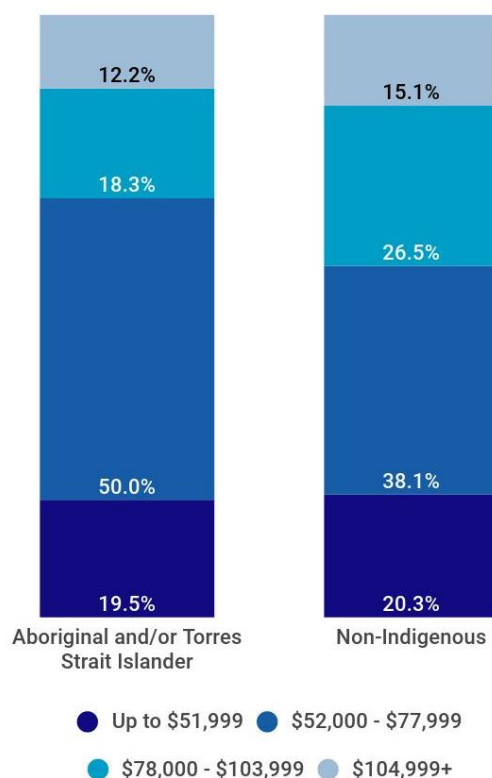


**Figure 5 Organisation size**

Note: Organisation size defined as large (100+ employees), medium (20 - 99 employees) or small (< 10 – 9 employees). Overall chi-square statistic significant at  $p \leq .05$  level and comparisons of column proportion significant at **\*\* $p \leq .01$** .

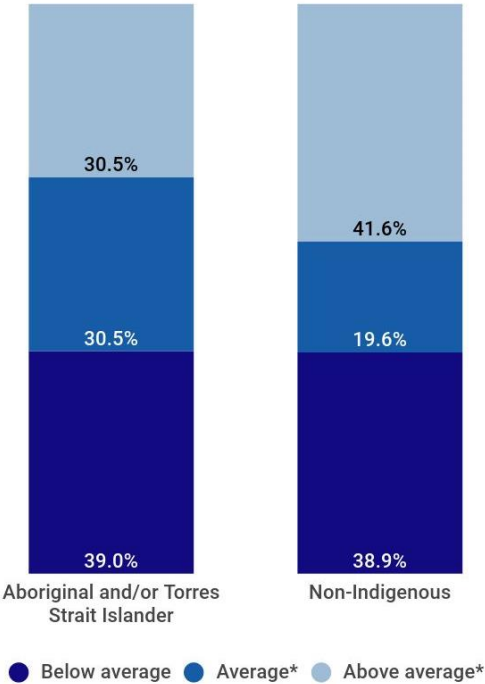
## Income

Survey respondents reported their salary using Australian Census categories. Half of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers (50.0%) earned between \$52,000 – \$77,999 per annum (Figure 6). Income ranges were transformed into a comparative measure against the Australian average income at the time of survey completion. The Australian average weekly income in November 2019 was \$1,257 (\$65,000 p.a.) for all employees [2]. Significantly higher proportions of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers earned the national average and significantly fewer earned above the national average, compared to non-Indigenous workers ( $p \leq .05$ ) (Figure 7). There was no difference in the proportion of workers earning below the national average by Indigenous identity.



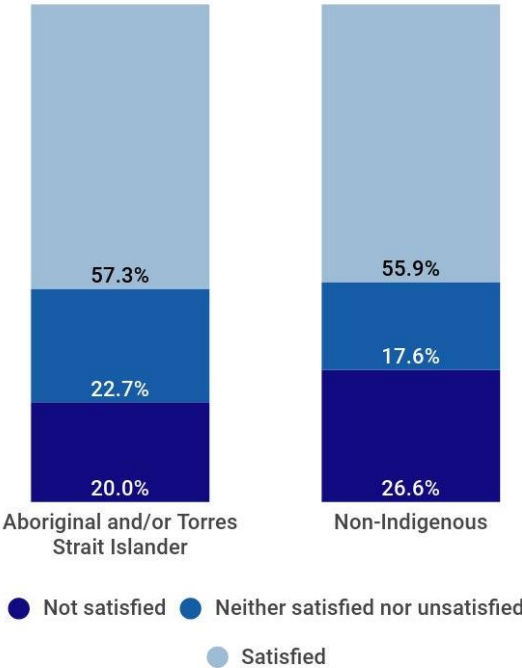
**Figure 6 Income in current job**

Just over half (57.3%) of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers were satisfied with their pay and 20.0% were unsatisfied (Figure 8). Similarly, 55.9% of non-Indigenous workers were satisfied with their pay, with 26.6% unsatisfied.



**Figure 7 Income in current job compared to national average**

Note: Overall chi-square statistic significant at  $p < .05$  level and comparisons of column proportion significant at  $*p \leq .05$ .



**Figure 8 'Considering your work skills and effort, how satisfied are you with your pay?'**

Note: 'Not satisfied' combines 'completely unsatisfied' and 'unsatisfied' response categories; 'Satisfied' combines 'completely satisfied' and 'satisfied' response categories.

## Qualifications

*"You have to be flexible and continue to study and keep up with all the latest research"*

Torres Strait Islander worker

Most (57.1%) Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers held a certificate or diploma as their highest general (non-AOD) qualification which was a significantly higher proportion than non-Indigenous workers (20.3%,  $p \leq .001$ ) (Table 4). Non-Indigenous workers were more likely to hold general qualifications at the undergraduate (29.7%, 19.0% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers,  $p \leq .05$ ) or graduate/Masters (38.0%, 15.5% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers,  $p \leq .001$ ) level.

**Table 4 Highest level of general (non-AOD) qualification**

General qualification	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	Non-Indigenous
High school	3.6#	3.0
Certificate/diploma***	<b>57.1</b>	<b>20.3</b>
Undergraduate*	<b>19.0</b>	<b>29.7</b>
Graduate/Masters***	<b>15.5</b>	<b>38.0</b>
Postgraduate	4.8#	9.0

*Note: Overall chi-square statistic significant at  $p < .05$  level and comparisons of column proportion significant at either \* $p \leq .05$  or \*\*\* $p \leq .001$ . # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*

As Table 5 shows, approximately one-third of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers and non-Indigenous workers did not hold AOD-specific qualifications (34.6% and 35.3%, respectively). Similar proportions of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers and non-Indigenous workers held AOD short course or core competencies qualifications (19.8% and 19.9%, respectively). One third (34.6%) of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers held certificate IV/Diploma AOD qualifications.

**Table 5 Highest level of AOD-specific qualification**

AOD-specific qualification	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	Non-Indigenous
No AOD qualification	34.6	35.3
Short course / core competencies	19.8	19.9
Certificate IV/diploma	34.6	23.7
Undergraduate/grad certificate/diploma	6.2#	14.5
Postgraduate	4.9#	6.6

*Note: # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*

## Professional development and supervision

*“More local opportunities for workforce development in consultation with workers prior to date/time/location releases as some workers are only P/T and miss out if there is anything even offered.”*

Aboriginal worker

Most Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers (80.0%) had participated in professional development activities over the previous three years (e.g., training courses, professional conferences). This was slightly lower than the participation rate for non-Indigenous workers (89.5%,  $\chi^2(1, 1,311) = 7.22, p=.007$ ).

### *Barriers to accessing professional development*

*“We require up dated training that is in our local area. More funds to organisations to assist with professional development as we don't get paid enough to pay for this our self plus take our own leave to attend.”*

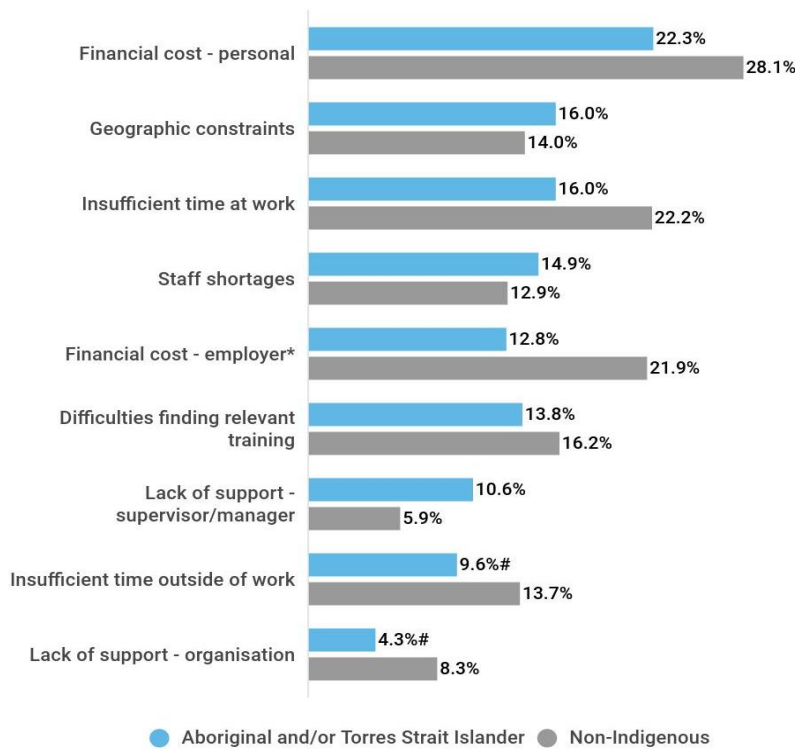
Aboriginal worker

The majority of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers (69.8%) reported they had no or very little difficulty accessing professional development (60.6% of non-Indigenous workers). Moderate to large access difficulties were reported by 30.2% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers and 39.4% of non-Indigenous workers (this difference did not reach statistical significance).

For Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers the most common barriers to accessing professional development were personal financial costs (22.3%), geographic constraints (16.0%), insufficient time at work (16.0%) and staff shortages (14.9%) (Figure 9). Non-Indigenous workers' top barriers to professional development were personal financial cost (28.1%), insufficient time at work (22.2%), financial cost to employer (21.9%) and difficulties finding relevant training (16.2%).

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers were significantly less likely to report financial cost to employer as a barrier to professional development (12.8%) than non-Indigenous workers (21.9%,  $\chi^2(1, 1,452) = 4.41, p=.036$ ).

## AOD Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers' salaries and professional development needs



**Figure 9 Barriers to accessing professional development**

Note: Proportions do not sum to 100% due to multiple response option. Overall chi-square statistic significant at  $p < .05$  level and comparisons of column proportion significant at  $*p \leq .05$ . # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).

### Training gaps

*“People working in the AOD sector need training in mental health, dual diagnosis”*

Aboriginal worker

Just over 80% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers identified a need for further training related to working with clients with trauma and dual diagnoses, respectively (Table 6).

Nearly two thirds (62.5%) of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers would prefer more training on working with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients. Both working with children and families in general, and working with clients with experience of family violence, was also identified as a training gap by 60.9% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers were more likely than non-Indigenous workers to identify training gaps related to clients with trauma, dual diagnoses, acquired brain injury, gambling problems and with working with children and families.

*“Ongoing training for Indigenous communities especially around dual diagnosis. Support pathways for Indigenous AOD workers to access higher learning avenues.”*

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander worker

**Table 6 Training gaps: Client group**

Client group	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	Non-Indigenous
Clients with experiences of trauma**	<b>81.3</b>	<b>62.7</b>
Clients with dual diagnoses/co-occurring mental health issues**	<b>78.1</b>	<b>61.1</b>
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients	62.5	52.2
Children and families*	<b>62.5</b>	<b>50.1</b>
Clients with current/past experience of family violence	60.9	51.9
Forensic AOD clients	59.4	49.5
Clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds	57.8	46.5
Acquired brain injury clients*	<b>57.8</b>	<b>45.1</b>
Clients with gambling problems*	<b>56.3</b>	<b>42.5</b>
Lesbian/gay/bisexual/trans/intersex/queer clients	51.6	42.1
Older clients	43.8	44.4

*Note: Proportions do not sum to 100% due to multiple response option.*

*Overall chi-square statistic significant at  $p \leq .05$  level and comparisons of column proportion significant at either \* $p \leq .05$  or \*\* $p \leq .01$ .*

With regard to professional skills, around 70% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers identified a need for more training on responding to multiple and complex needs (Table 7). Over 60% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers desired upskilling in professional skills related to leadership and management, clinical skills and evidence-based practice. Around 60% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers wanted more training on alcohol or other drugs. With the exception of service delivery and specific interventions, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers were more likely to identify a training gap with regard to each category of professional skills.

**Table 7 Training gaps: Professional skills**

Professional skills	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	Non-Indigenous
Responding to multiple and complex needs**	<b>71.2</b>	<b>55.5</b>
Leadership and management skills**	<b>63.6</b>	<b>47.9</b>
Clinical skills for counselling, treatment or therapy***	<b>62.1</b>	<b>41.2</b>
Skills or knowledge to support evidence-based practice***	<b>62.1</b>	<b>37.7</b>
Training on alcohol or other drugs***	<b>59.1</b>	<b>34.5</b>
Managing risky behaviours**	<b>59.1</b>	<b>41.4</b>
Providing clinical supervision to others**	<b>56.1</b>	<b>39.7</b>
Working with multi-disciplinary teams***	<b>56.1</b>	<b>31.5</b>
Service delivery/administration skills	53.0	43.0
Specific interventions or therapies	47.0	44.1

*Note: Proportions do not sum to 100% due to multiple response option.*

*Note: Overall chi-square statistic significant at  $p \leq .05$  level and comparisons of column proportion significant at either \* $p \leq .05$ , \*\*  $p \leq .01$  or \*\*\* $p \leq .001$ .*

### *Clinical supervision*

The majority of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers (80.0%) in direct client service roles had access to some type of clinical supervision or practice support, slightly fewer than non-Indigenous workers (86.4%, ns). The most common arrangement was individual supervision provided within the organisation for both groups (Table 8). Significantly fewer Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders workers in direct client services roles had access to internal group supervision/practice support (23.1%) than non-Indigenous workers (34.1%,  $p \leq .05$ ).

**Table 8 Access to clinical supervision/practice support (direct client service roles only)**

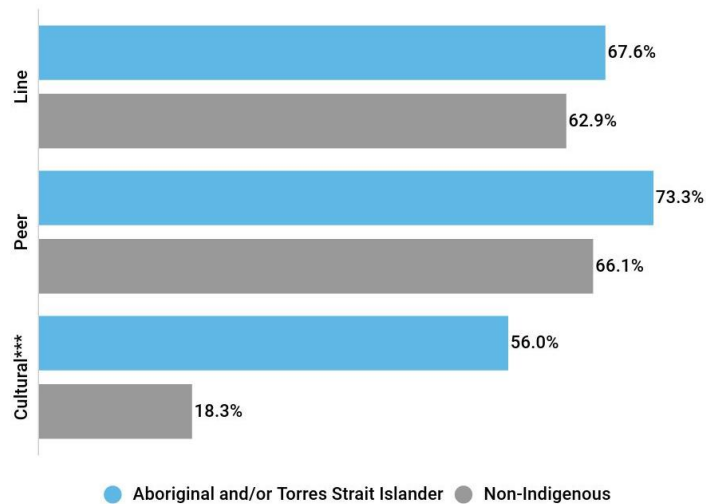
Clinical supervision/practice support	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	Non-Indigenous
Internal individual	63.1	60.1
Internal group*	<b>23.1</b>	<b>34.1</b>
External individual	29.2	25.2
External group	10.8#	8.5
No access	20.0	13.6

*Note: Proportions do not sum to 100% due to multiple response option. Overall chi-square statistic significant at  $p \leq .05$  level and comparisons of column proportion significant at \* $p \leq .05$ . # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*

Around half of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers (56.9%) reported that clinical supervision or practice support considerably or completely met their needs (52.8% of non-Indigenous workers, ns).

### *Line, peer and cultural supervision*

Almost 70% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers had access to line supervision monthly or more frequently (Figure 10). Over 70% had access to peer supervision monthly or more often. Over half (56.0%) of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers had regular access to cultural supervision, compared to 18.3% of non-Indigenous workers ( $p \leq .001$ ). Cultural supervision was reported as not applicable by 35.9% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers and 62.0% of non-Indigenous workers.



**Figure 10 Access to line, peer & cultural supervision monthly, weekly, fortnightly or more**  
 Note: Overall chi-square statistic significant at  $p \leq .05$  level and comparisons of column proportion significant at \*\*\* $p \leq .001$ .

## Employment conditions

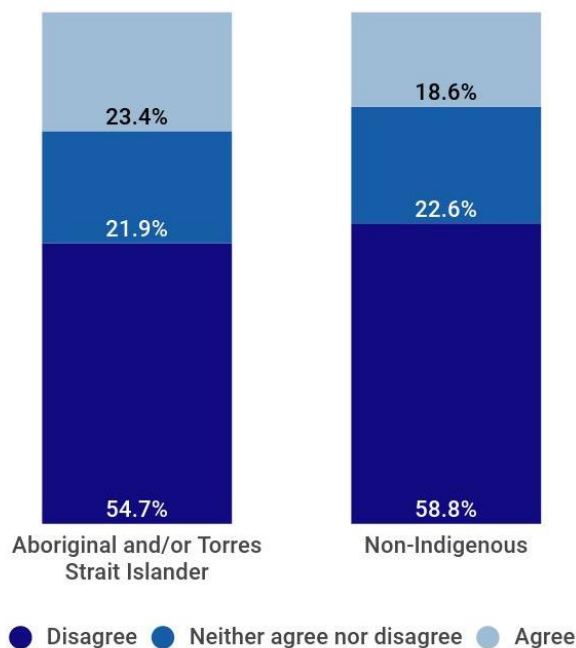
*“Funding cuts is my biggest concern, as I do not feel 100% secure that my position will continue to be funded.”*

*Aboriginal worker*

### Employment security

The majority of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers (87.2%) had permanent employment contracts, which was a higher rate of permanency than non-Indigenous workers (75.2%,  $p \leq .01$ ). Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers were also more likely to be employed full-time (79.1% vs 60.7% of non-Indigenous workers,  $p \leq .001$ ).

Secure employment contracts did not translate to the experience of job security for all permanent employees. As Figure 11 shows, 45.3% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers on permanent employment contracts were unsure about the future security of their jobs. Nearly one quarter of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers on permanent contracts agreed or strongly agreed that they felt insecure about their future job security. Similarly, 41.2% of non-Indigenous workers on permanent contracts felt unsure about their future job security, with nearly one fifth (18.6%) agreeing they felt insecure.



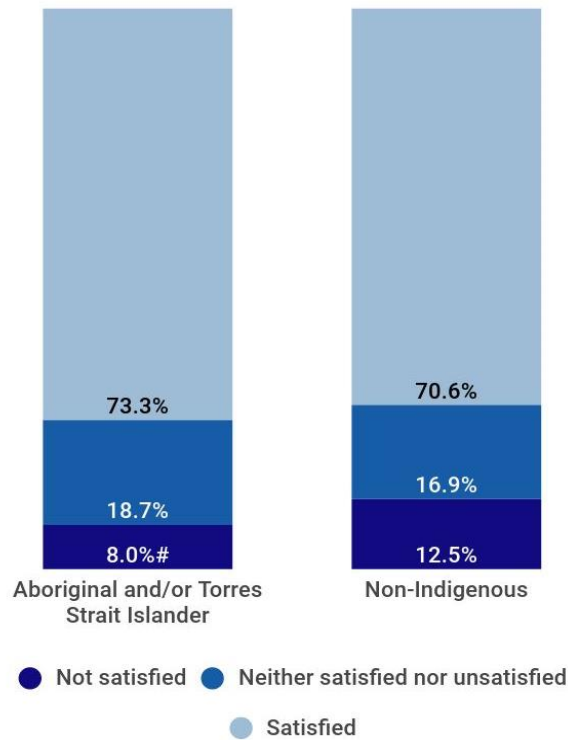
**Figure 11 'I feel insecure about the future of my job', permanent employees**

*Note: 'Disagree' combines 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' response categories; 'Agree' combines strongly agree and agree response categories.*

## Career development

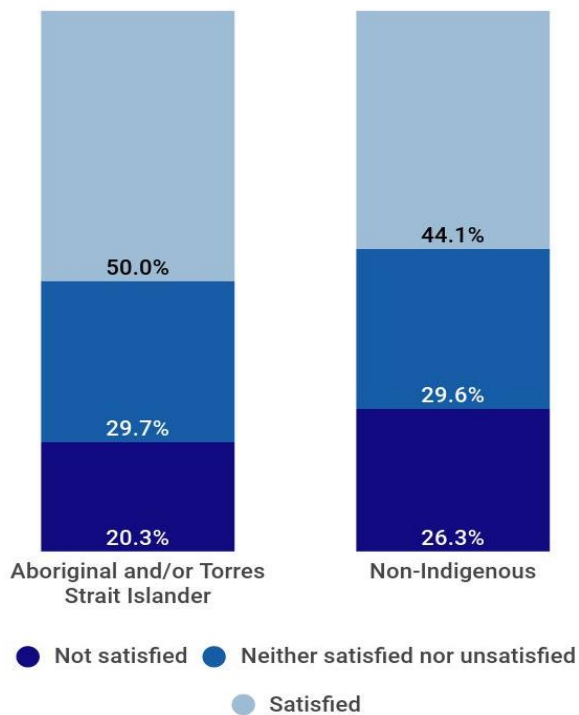
### *Career opportunity and progress*

The majority of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers (73.3%) were satisfied with the progress they had made in their organisation, as were non-Indigenous workers (70.6% satisfied) (Figure 12). However, there was less satisfaction with future opportunities, with only half of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers satisfied with their future chances for getting ahead in their organisation (44.1% of non-Indigenous workers, - the difference between the two groups was not statistically significant) (Figure 13). Around 30% of both groups were ambivalent (neither satisfied nor unsatisfied) about their future career opportunities within their organisation.



**Figure 12 'How satisfied do you feel with the progress you've made in this organisation'?**

*Note: 'Not satisfied' combines 'completely unsatisfied' and 'unsatisfied' response categories; 'Satisfied' combines 'completely satisfied' and 'satisfied' response categories. # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*



**Figure 13 'How satisfied do you feel with your chance for getting ahead in this organisation'?**

*Note: 'Not satisfied' combines 'completely unsatisfied' and 'unsatisfied' response categories; 'Satisfied' combines 'completely satisfied' and 'satisfied' response categories.*

## Further analyses

Based on feedback received from the project advisory group, further analyses of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander subgroup were undertaken to explore differences by:

- Age (younger and older workers)
- Location (metropolitan and rural/regional workers)
- Sector of employment (government and non-government)
- Qualifications:
  - General (with and without)
  - AOD-specific (with and without)

The results of these analyses are discussed in the following sections.

## Younger and older workers

The following section considers the workforce profile, income, employment and professional development characteristics of younger (i.e., 49 years and under) and older (50 years and over) Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers.

Of the 94 respondents who identified as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (Table 1), 53 (56.4%) were aged under 50 years (Table 9).

**Table 9 Age group of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander survey respondents**

Frequency	49 years and under	50 years and over
n	53	41
%	56.4	43.6

## Workforce profile

Both younger and older Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers were most likely to be based in rural locations, followed by metropolitan, and remote locations (Table 10).

**Table 10 Location of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers by age group**

Location	49 years and under	50 years and over
Metropolitan	37.5	38.9
Rural	42.5	44.4
Remote	20.0#	16.7#

*Note: # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*

Younger Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers were more likely to be employed in the NGO sector (80.0%) compared to older workers (63.9%), although this difference did not reach statistical significance, possibly due to sample size constraints (Table 11).

**Table 11 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers' sector of employment of by age group**

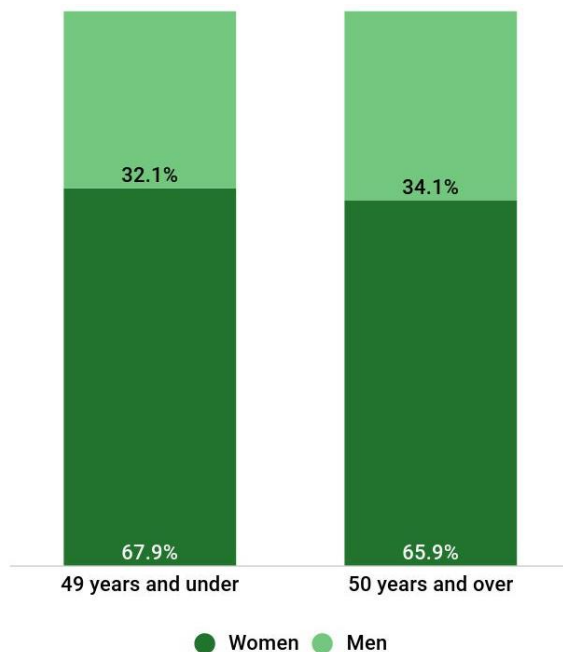
Sector	49 years and under	50 years and over
Government	20.0#	36.1
Non-government	80.0	63.9

*Note: The response option 'private' was not selected by any Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander respondents. # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*

## Personal and social demographics

### Gender

The gender profile of younger and older Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers did not differ from the whole sample: 67.9% and 65.9% of younger and older workers were women, respectively (Figure 14 and Figure 2).



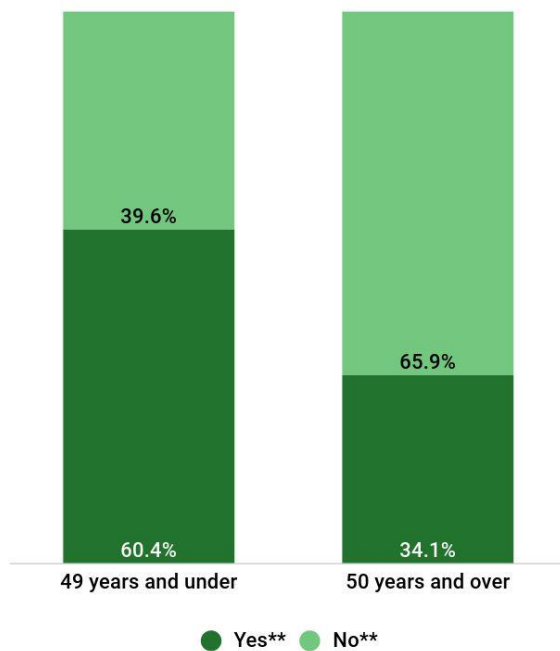
**Figure 14 Gender profile of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers by age group**

**Caring responsibilities**

Three out of five (60.4%) Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers aged under 50 years reported caring responsibilities. Significantly fewer older Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers reported caring responsibilities (34.1%) (Figure 15).

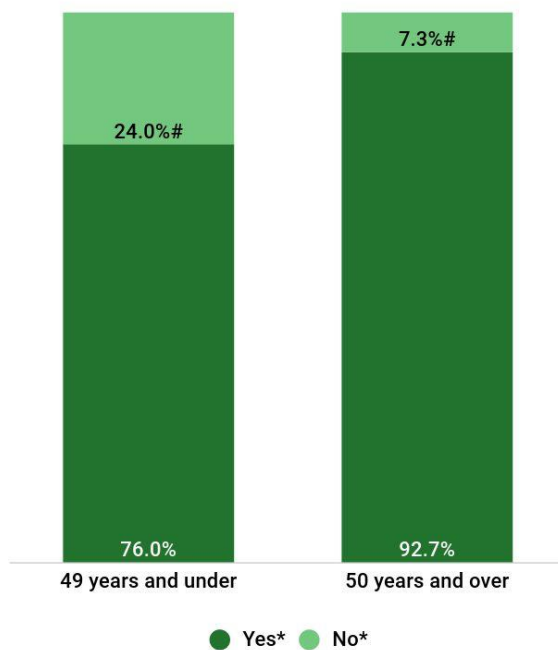
**Lived experience**

Although both younger and older Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers included a high proportion of workers with lived experience, this status was more likely for workers aged 50 years or older (92.7%, 76.0% of younger workers,  $\chi^2(1, 91) = 4.55, p=.033$ ) (Figure 16).



**Figure 15 Caring responsibilities of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers by age group**

Note: Overall chi-square statistic significant at  $p \leq .05$  level and comparisons of column proportion significant at  $**p \leq .01$ .



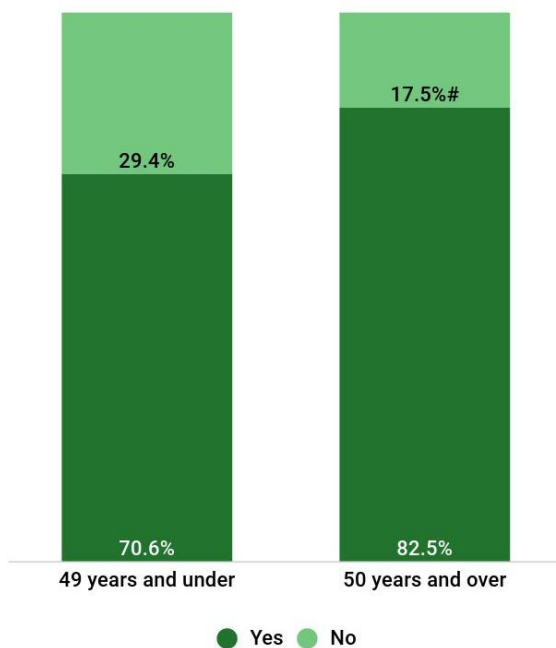
**Figure 16 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers with lived experience by age group**

Note: Overall chi-square statistic significant at  $p \leq .05$  level and comparisons of column proportion significant at  $*p \leq .05$ .

### Employment demographics

#### Work roles

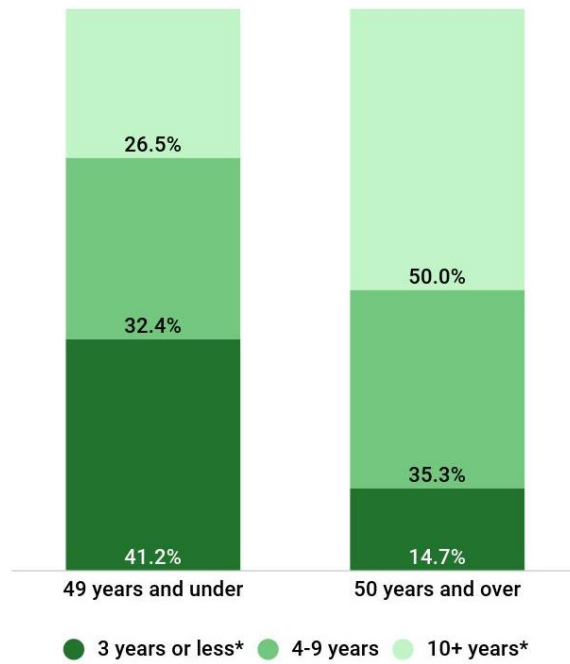
Most older and younger Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander AOD workers were employed in direct client services roles (Figure 4). A slightly higher proportion of older Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers were employed in direct client services role (82.5%, 70.6% of younger workers, ns) (Figure 17).



**Figure 17 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers with direct client services role by age group**  
*Note: # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*

#### AOD experience

As to be expected, older workers had significantly more years' experience in the AOD sector than younger workers (Figure 18).



**Figure 18 Years' experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers in the AOD sector by age group**

Note: Overall chi-square statistic significant at  $p \leq .05$  level and comparisons of column proportion significant at  $*p \leq .05$ .

### Organisational size

Higher proportions of younger workers were employed in large sized organisations whilst older workers were more likely to be employed in medium sized organisations. This difference did not reach statistical significance, possibly due to sample size constraints (Table 12).

**Table 12 Organisation size in which Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers are employed by age group**

Organisational size	49 years and under	50 years and over
Small (1-19 employees)	19.4#	17.6#
Medium (20-99 employees)	38.9	50.0
Large (100+ employees)	41.7	32.4

Note: # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).

### Income

Overall, older and younger workers' income profiles relative to the national average were comparable (Table 13). Over two-thirds (67.5%) of younger workers were satisfied with their pay in relation to their skills and efforts compared to less than half of older workers (45.7%), however this difference did not reach statistical significance possibly due to sample size constraints (Figure 19).

**Table 13 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers' salaries compared to the Australian national average income by age group**

Income	49 years and under	50 years and over
--------	--------------------	-------------------

## AOD Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers' salaries and professional development needs

Below	44.4	32.4
Average	26.7	35.1
Above	28.9	32.4

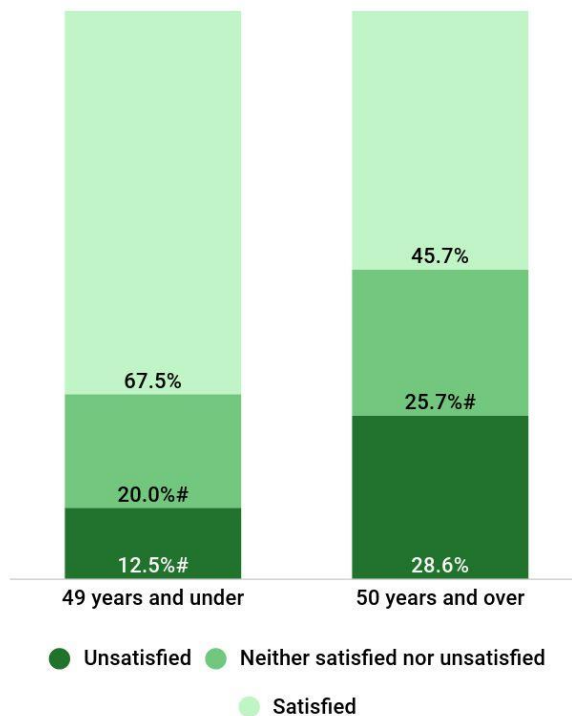
### Qualifications

Older and younger AOD workers held similar levels of general and AOD-specific qualifications (Table 14).

**Table 14 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers' highest level of qualification by age group**

Holds qualification	General degree qualification <sup>1</sup>		AOD-specific qualification <sup>2</sup>	
	49 years and under	50 years and over	49 years and under	50 years and over
Yes	34.1	32.5	46.7	60.0
No	65.9	67.5	53.3	40.0

Note: <sup>1</sup>Tertiary. <sup>2</sup>Tertiary or vocational.



**Figure 19 'Considering your work skills and effort, how satisfied are you with your pay', by age group?**

Note: 'Not satisfied' combines 'completely unsatisfied' and 'unsatisfied' response categories; 'Satisfied' combines 'completely satisfied' and 'satisfied' response categories.

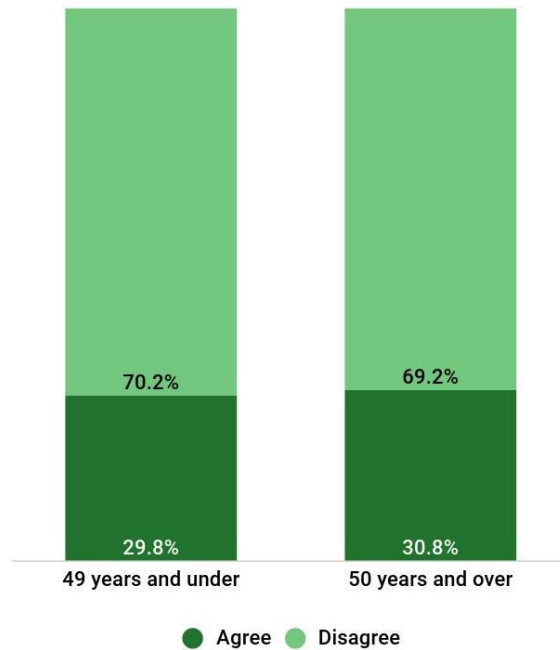
### Professional development and supervision

#### *Barriers to accessing professional development*

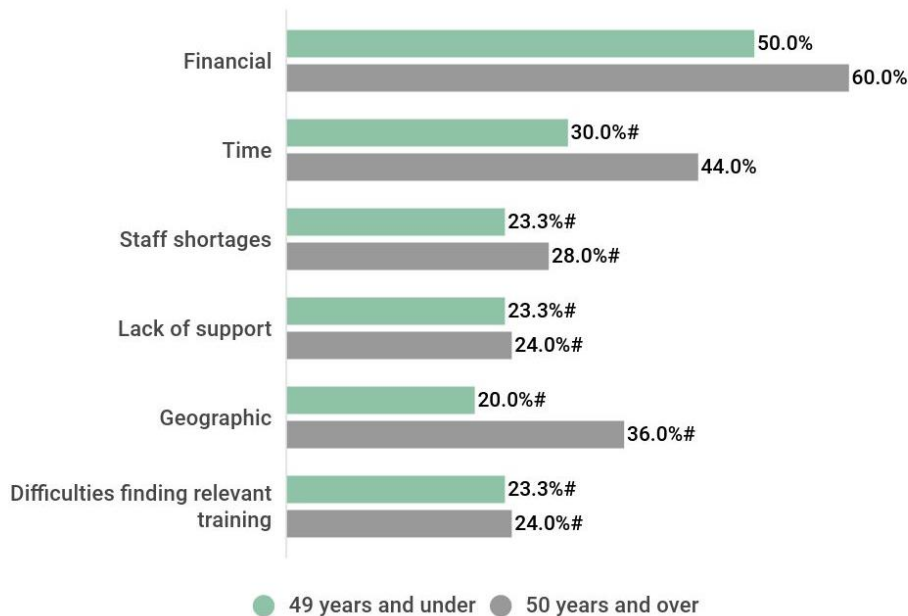
Over three quarters of younger (78.3%) and older (82.1%) Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers had participated in professional development in the past 3 years. However, approximately

three in 10 younger (29.8%) and older (30.8%) workers found it difficult to access professional development opportunities (Figure 20).

The most common barriers to accessing professional development for both younger and older Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander AOD workers were financial costs and insufficient time (Figure 21).



**Figure 20 Difficult to access professional development by age group**



**Figure 21 Barriers to access professional development by age group**

*Note: Proportions do not sum to 100% due to multiple response option. # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*

### Training gaps

The areas in which younger Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers indicated a need for more training were: clients with dual diagnoses (85.3%), clients with trauma (79.4%), and children and families (67.6%). Older workers also identified their high preference for training regarding clients with trauma (83.3%) and clients with dual diagnoses (70.0%), in addition to clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (63.3%). There was no significant difference in reported training needs by age group (Table 15).

**Table 15 Training gaps: Client group, by age group**

Client group	49 and under	50 and over
Clients with dual diagnoses/co-occurring mental health issues	85.3	70.0
Clients with experiences of trauma	79.4	83.3
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients	64.7	60.0
Children and families	67.6	56.7
Clients with current/past experience of family violence	64.7	56.7
Forensic AOD clients	61.8	56.7
Clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds	52.9	63.3
Acquired brain injury clients	58.8	56.7
Clients with gambling problems	58.8	53.3
Lesbian/gay/bisexual/trans/intersex/queer clients	58.8	43.3
Older clients	35.3	53.3

*Note: Proportions do not sum to 100% due to multiple response option.*

Around 70% of younger Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers identified a need for more training on responding to multiple and complex needs and clinical skills for counselling, treatment or therapy (Table 16). Approximately 3 in 4 (75%) older Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers also identified a need for training on responding to multiple and complex needs. There was no significant difference in the proportions of older and younger workers identifying a need for professional skills training in areas listed in Table 16.

**Table 16 Training gaps: Professional skills, by age group**

Professional skills	49 and under	50 and over
Responding to multiple and complex needs	68.4	75.0
Leadership and management skills	63.2	64.3
Clinical skills for counselling, treatment or therapy	68.4	53.6
Skills or knowledge to support evidence-based practice	60.5	64.3
Training on alcohol or other drugs	57.9	60.7
Managing risky behaviours	60.5	57.1
Providing clinical supervision to others	65.8	42.9
Working with multi-disciplinary teams	60.5	50.0
Service delivery/administration skills	57.9	46.4

Specific interventions or therapies	44.7	50.0
-------------------------------------	------	------

Note: Proportions do not sum to 100% due to multiple response option.

### Clinical supervision

The most common type of clinical supervision/practice support arrangement received by both younger and older Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers in direct client service roles was internal individual support (younger: 56.3%, older: 69.7%) (Table 17).

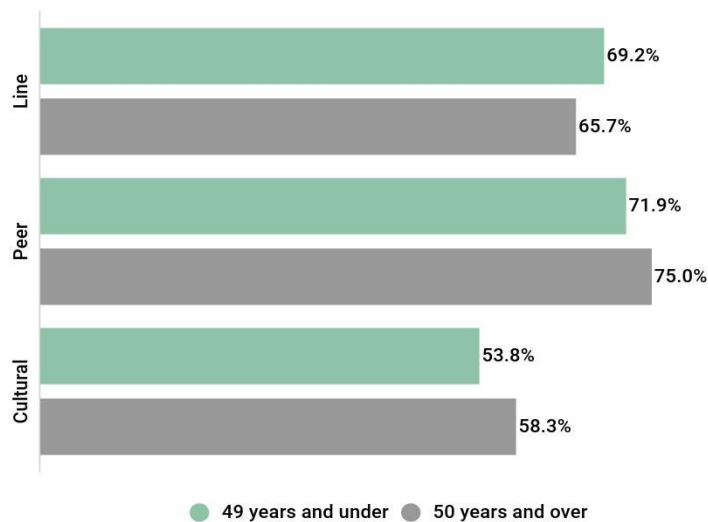
**Table 17 Access to clinical supervision/practice support (direct client service roles only), by age group**

Clinical supervision/practice support	49 and under	50 and over
Internal individual	56.3	69.7
Internal group	28.1#	18.2#
External individual	28.1#	30.3
External group	12.5#	9.1#
No access	25.0#	7.7#

Note: Proportions do not sum to 100% due to multiple response option. # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).

### Line, peer and cultural supervision

The majority of younger and older Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers reported access to peer, line and cultural supervision on at least a monthly basis (Figure 22).



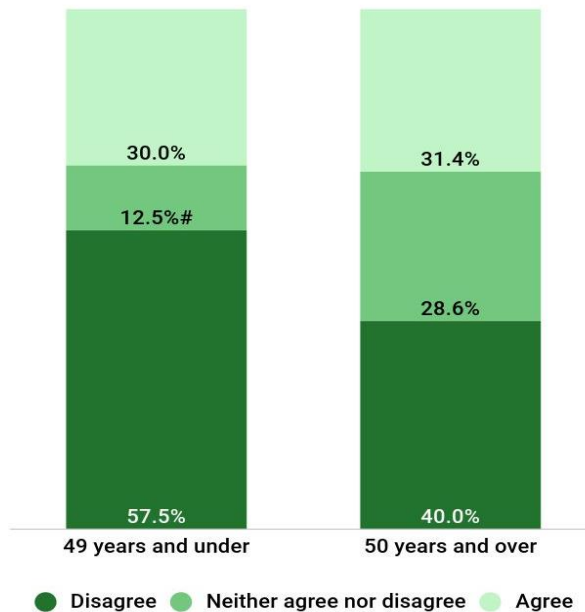
**Figure 22 Access to line, peer & cultural supervision monthly, weekly, fortnightly or more, by age group**

## Employment conditions

### Employment security

Permanent contracts were the norm with 87.0% and 87.5% of younger and older Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers holding permanent roles. A higher proportion of older workers were employed full-time (87.5%) compared to their younger counterparts (71.7%), however this

difference did not reach statistical significance. Among older workers, 40.0% felt secure about the future of their jobs compared to 57.5% of younger workers (Figure 23) (ns).



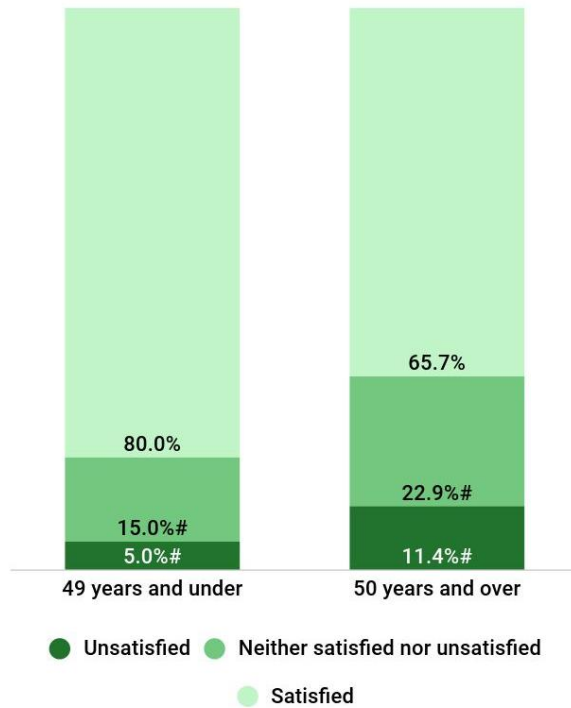
**Figure 23 'I feel insecure about the future of my job', by age group**

*Note: 'Disagree' combines 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' response categories; 'Agree' combines strongly agree and agree response categories. Includes all employees. # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*

## Career development

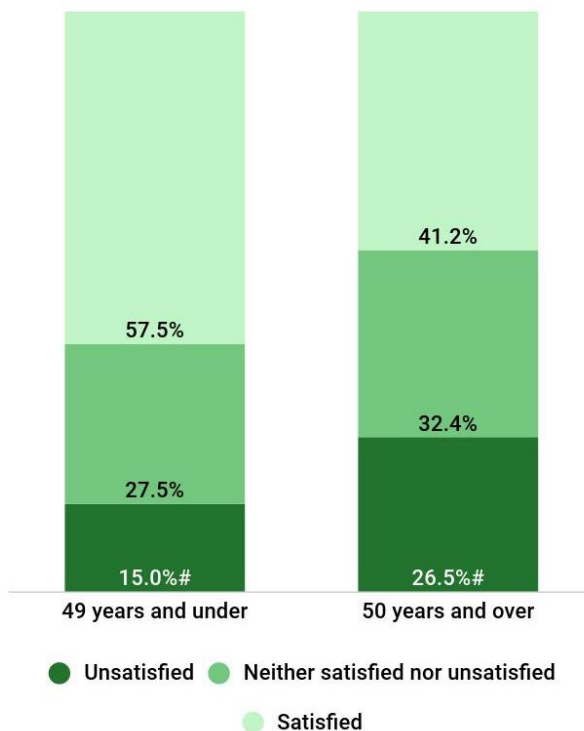
### Career opportunity and progress

A higher proportion of younger Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers were satisfied with the progress they had made in their organisation (80.0%) than older workers (65.7%) (Figure 24). Less than half of older Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers were satisfied with their future chances for getting ahead in their organisation (compared to 57.3% of younger workers) (Figure 25). These did not reach statistical significance possibly due to sample size constraints.



**Figure 24 'How satisfied do you feel with the progress you've made in this organisation?', by age group**

*Note: 'Not satisfied' combines 'completely unsatisfied' and 'unsatisfied' response categories; 'Satisfied' combines 'completely satisfied' and 'satisfied' response categories. # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*



**Figure 25 'How satisfied do you feel with your chance for getting ahead in this organisation?', by age group**

*Note: 'Not satisfied' combines 'completely unsatisfied' and 'unsatisfied' response categories; 'Satisfied' combines 'completely satisfied' and 'satisfied' response categories.*

## Workers in metropolitan and rural/remote locations

The following section considers the workforce profile, income, employment and professional development characteristics of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers in metropolitan and rural/remote locations.

A total of 76 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander respondents identified the geographical location of their workplace. Of these, 30.9% were based in metropolitan locations, 43.4% in rural locations and 18.4% in remote locations (Table 18). Due to the small sample size of remote-based Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander respondents, remote and rural locations were combined in subsequent analyses (61.8%).

**Table 18 Location of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander survey respondents**

Location	N	%
Metropolitan	29	38.2
Rural/remote	47	61.8
<i>Rural</i>	33	43.4
<i>Remote</i>	14	18.4

## Workforce profile

There was no statistically significant difference in the proportion of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander respondents who were based in the government and NGO sector by location (Table 19).

**Table 19 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers' sector of employment by location**

Sector	Metropolitan	Rural/remote
Government	31.0#	25.5
Non-government	69.0	74.5

*Note: The response option 'private' was not selected by any Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander respondents. # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*

## Personal and social demographics

### Age

The age profile of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers in metropolitan and rural/remote locations were similar with approximately an even split of workers aged under and over 50 years of age (Figure 26).

### Gender

Rural and remote Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers comprised 40.4% men and 59.6% women, representing a more balanced gender profile. However, this gender profile was not statistically different from that observed for metropolitan-based Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers (men: 20.7%; women: 79.3%) (Figure 27).

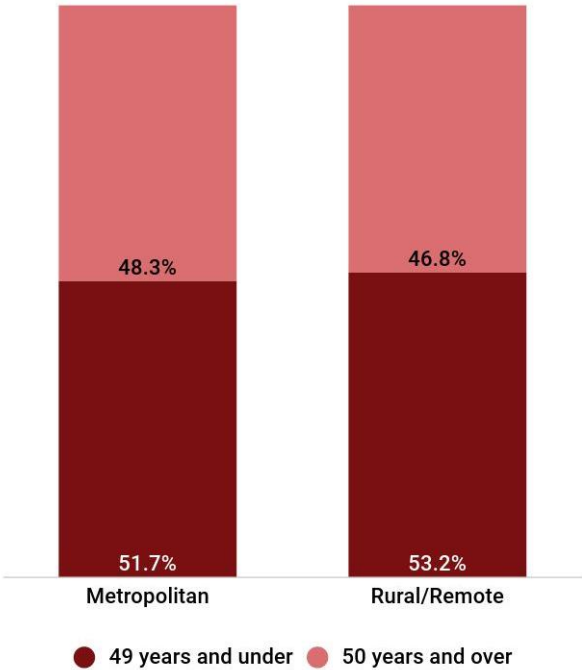


Figure 26 Age profile of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers by location

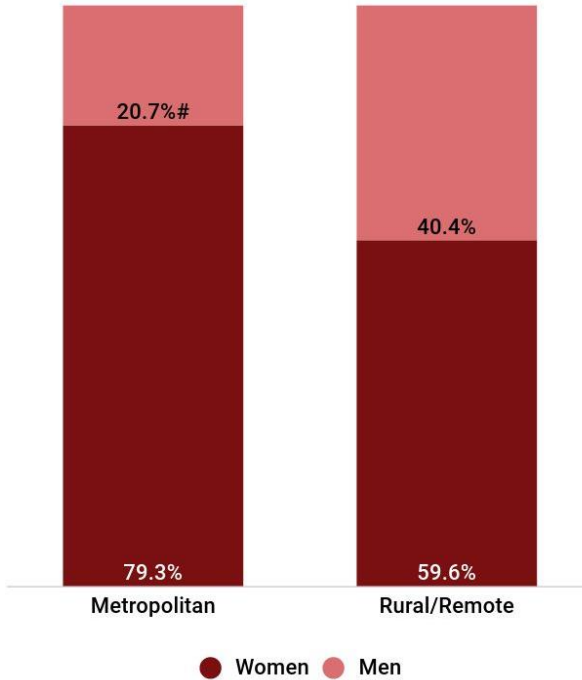


Figure 27 Gender profile of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers by location

Note: # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).

**Caring responsibilities**

With regard to caring responsibilities (Figure 28), Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers in rural/remote locations were more likely to report caring responsibilities (53.2%; 55.2% of workers in metropolitan locations). However, these differences did not reach statistical significance.

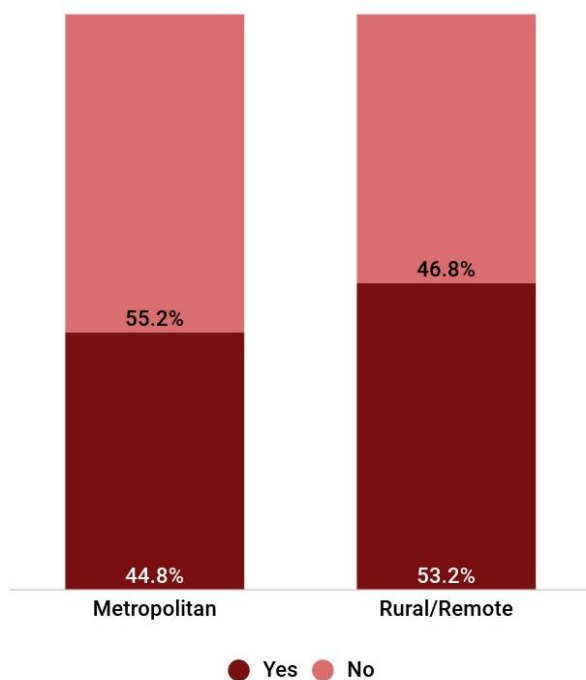


Figure 28 Caring responsibilities of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers by location

### Lived experience

Comparable proportions of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers had lived AOD experience in metropolitan (82.1%) and rural/remote (83.0%) locations (Table 20).

Table 20 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers with lived experience by location

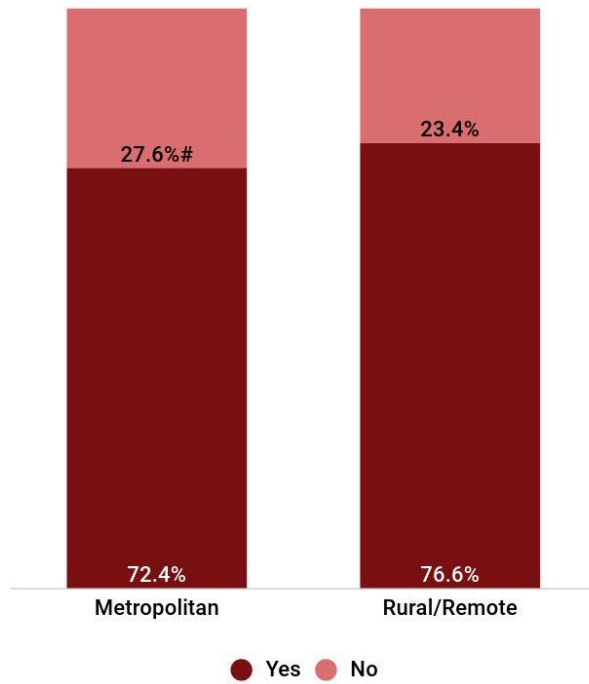
Lived experience	Metropolitan	Rural/remote
Yes	82.1	83.0
No	17.9#	17.0#

Note: # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).

### Employment demographics

#### Work roles

Approximately three quarters of the metropolitan and rural/remote Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees worked in direct client service roles (72.4% and 76.6%, respectively) (Figure 29).

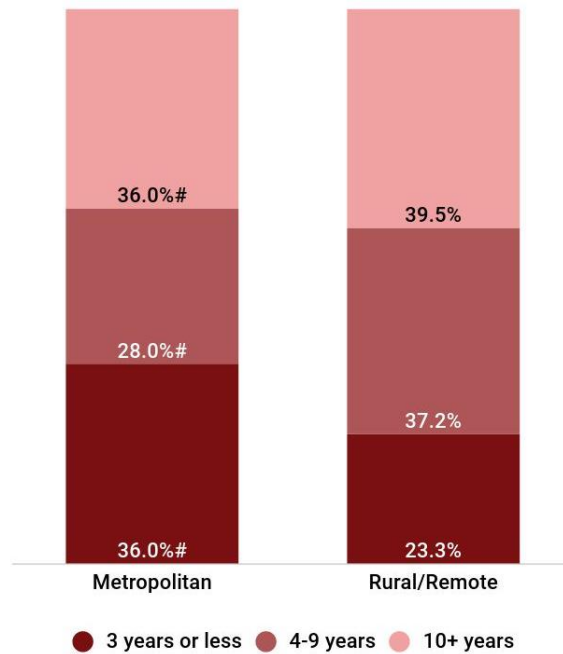


**Figure 29 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers with direct client services role by location**

*Note: # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*

**AOD experience**

As shown in Figure 30, workers in rural/remote locations were more likely to have 4+ years' of AOD experience (76.7%; 64% of metropolitan workers, ns).



**Figure 30 Years' experience in the AOD sector by location**

*Note: # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*

### Organisational size

Over half of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers based in metropolitan locations were employed in large organisations (54.2%). Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders who worked in rural/remote locations were more likely to work in medium sized organisations (52.2%) (this difference did not reach statistical significance possibly due to sample size constraints) (Table 21).

**Table 21 Organisation size in which Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers are employed by location**

Organisational size	Metropolitan	Rural/remote
Small (1-19 employees)	16.7#	19.6#
Medium (20-99 employees)	29.2#	52.2
Large (100+ employees)	54.2	28.3

Note: # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).

### Income

Overall, the income of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees across locations was similar despite a higher proportion of metropolitan-based workers earning below the national average (46.2%, 36.2% of workers in rural/remote locations) (Table 22).

**Table 22 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers' salaries compared to the Australian national average income by location**

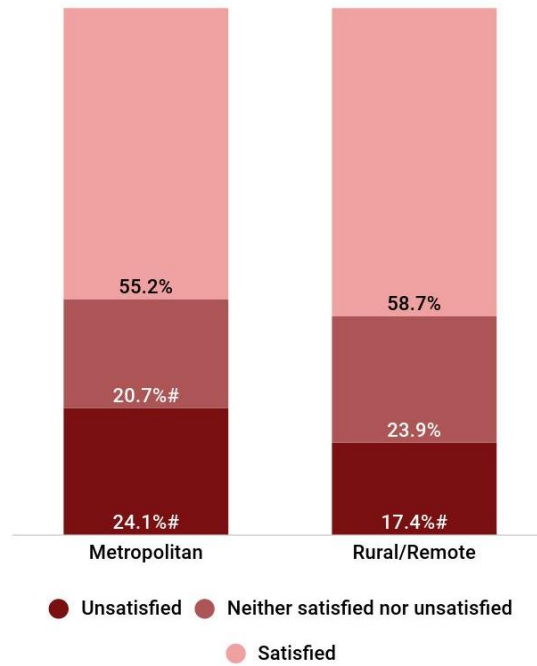
Income	Metropolitan	Rural/remote
Below	46.2	36.2
Average	23.1#	27.7
Above	30.8#	36.2

Note: # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).

As Figure 31 shows, over half of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers in metropolitan and rural/remote locations were satisfied with their pay.

### Qualifications

In regard to general degree qualifications, one-third of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers in rural/remote locations held a general degree qualification compared to 44.8% of workers in metropolitan locations (ns) (Table 23). A higher proportion of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers in rural/remote locations held AOD-specific qualifications (61.7%) than their counterparts working in metropolitan locations (46.4%, ns).



**Figure 31 'Considering your work skills and effort, how satisfied are you with your pay'? by location**

Note: 'Not satisfied' combines 'completely unsatisfied' and 'unsatisfied' response categories; 'Satisfied' combines 'completely satisfied' and 'satisfied' response categories. # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).

**Table 23 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers' highest level of qualification by location**

Holds qualification	General degree qualification <sup>1</sup>		AOD-specific qualification <sup>2</sup>	
	Metropolitan	Rural/remote	Metropolitan	Rural/remote
Yes	44.8	32.6	46.4	61.7
No	55.2	67.4	53.6	38.3

Note: <sup>1</sup>Tertiary. <sup>2</sup>Tertiary or vocational.

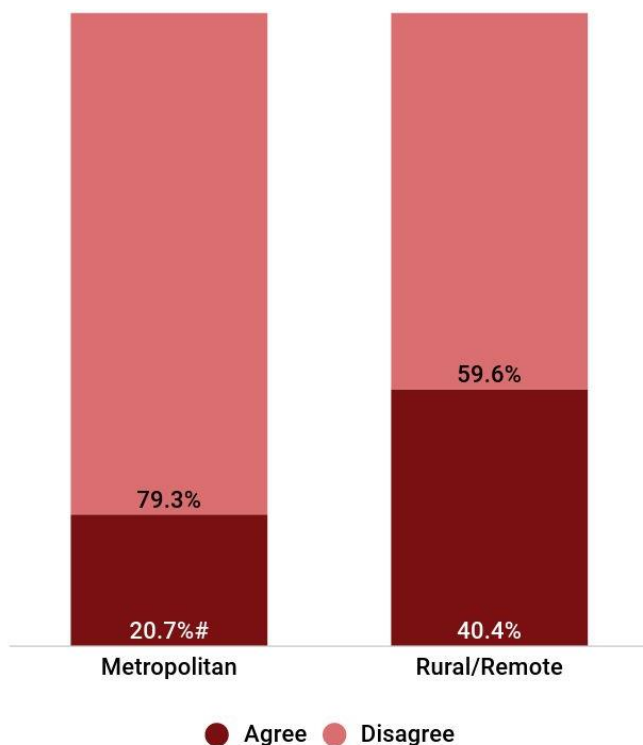
## Professional development and supervision

### *Barriers to accessing professional development*

A higher (albeit non-significant) proportion of rural/remote Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers had accessed professional development (87.2%) than metropolitan workers (72.4%).

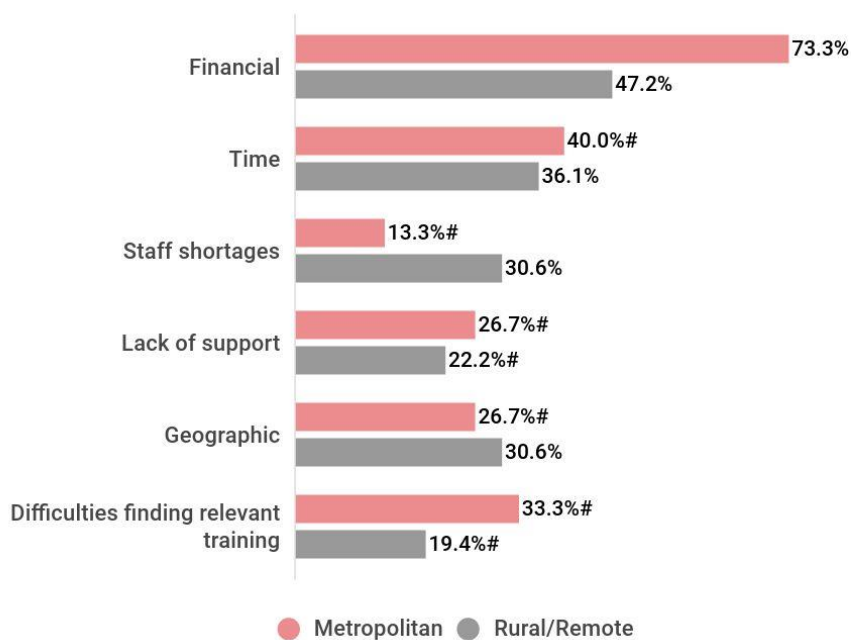
Although rural/remote workers were more likely to report difficulty accessing professional development opportunities, the difference did not reach statistical significance (40.4%, 20.7%# of metropolitan workers, ns) (Figure 32).

Financial reasons were the most common barrier cited by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers in both metropolitan and rural/remote locations (73.3% and 47.2%, respectively, ns) (Figure 33).



**Figure 32 Difficult to access professional development by location**

*Note: # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*



**Figure 33 Barriers to access professional development by location**

*Note: Proportions do not sum to 100% due to multiple response option. # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*

### Training gaps

The training needs of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers did not vary by location in relation to client-related training (Table 24) or professional skills training (Table 25).

**Table 24 Training gaps: Client group, by location**

Client group	Metropolitan	Rural/remote
Clients with experiences of trauma	78.3	85.0
Clients with dual diagnoses/co-occurring mental health issues	82.6	75.0
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients	65.2	62.5
Children and families	56.5	65.0
Clients with current/past experience of family violence	60.9	60.0
Forensic AOD clients	56.5	60.0
Clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds	47.8	62.5
Acquired brain injury clients	47.8	62.5
Clients with gambling problems	47.8	60.0
Lesbian/gay/bisexual/trans/intersex/queer clients	56.5	47.5
Older clients	39.1#	47.5

*Note: Proportions do not sum to 100% due to multiple response option. # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*

**Table 25 Training gaps: Professional skills, by location**

Professional skills	Metropolitan	Rural/remote
Responding to multiple and complex needs	65.2	75.6
Leadership and management skills	69.6	61.0
Clinical skills for counselling, treatment or therapy	73.9	53.7
Skills or knowledge to support evidence-based practice	47.8	68.3
Training on alcohol or other drugs	60.9	58.5
Managing risky behaviours*	<b>43.5</b>	<b>68.3</b>
Providing clinical supervision to others	65.2	48.8
Working with multi-disciplinary teams	43.5	63.4
Service delivery/administration skills	47.8	58.5
Specific interventions or therapies	56.6	39.0

*Note: Proportions do not sum to 100% due to multiple response option. Chi-square statistic significant at \* $p \leq .05$  for comparisons of column proportion.*

### *Clinical supervision*

**Just over 70% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers with direct client service roles in metropolitan locations reported internal individual supervision (** Table 26), which was a higher proportion compared to workers from rural/remote locations (58.3%, ns). Metropolitan-based workers were more likely to receive internal group supervision/practice support (38.1%#, 11.1%# of rural/remote workers,  $p \leq .05$ ).

**Table 26 Access to clinical supervision/practice support (direct client service roles only), by location**

Clinical supervision/practice support	Metropolitan	Rural/remote
Internal individual	71.4	58.3
Internal group*	<b>38.1#</b>	<b>11.1#</b>

## AOD Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers' salaries and professional development needs

External individual	38.1#	19.4#
External group	23.8#	5.6#
No access	9.5#	25.0#

Note: Proportions do not sum to 100% due to multiple response option. Chi-square statistic significant at  $*p \leq .05$  for comparisons of column proportion. # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).

### Line, peer and cultural supervision

The majority of workers had access to line and per supervision on at least a monthly basis in both metropolitan and rural/remote locations (Figure 34). Frequent cultural supervision was reported by half of employees working in rural/remote locations (62.5% of metropolitan workers, ns).

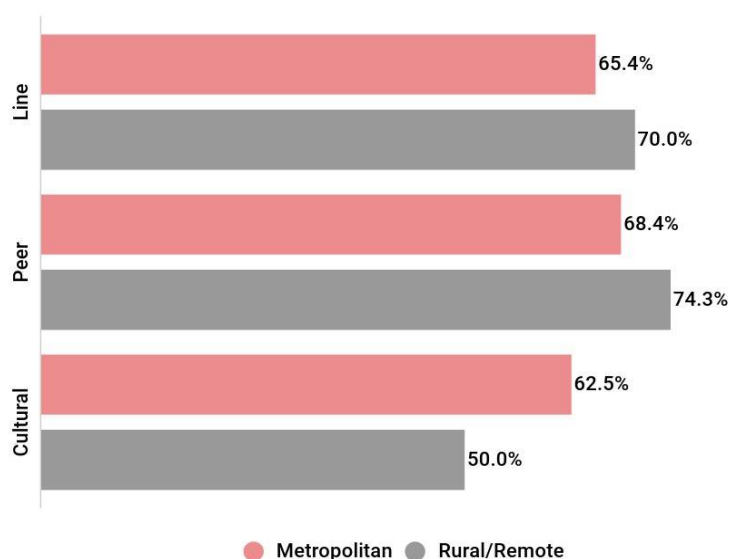
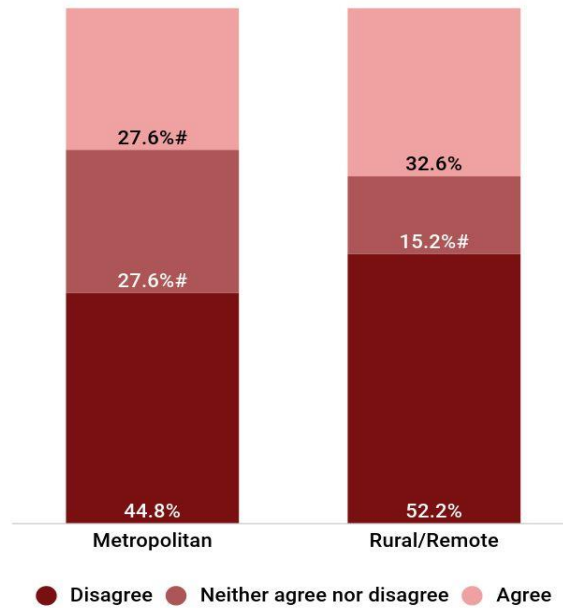


Figure 34 Access to line, peer & cultural supervision monthly, weekly, fortnightly or more, by location

## Employment conditions

### Employment security

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers in rural/remote locations were significantly more likely to be employed on permanent contracts (93.6%) than metropolitan workers (75.0%,  $p \leq .05$ ). Rural/remote workers were also more likely to hold full-time positions (89.4%, 67.9% of metropolitan workers,  $p \leq .05$ ). Although most were on permanent contracts, around one third of rural/remote workers felt insecure about the future of their jobs (32.6%) (Figure 35).



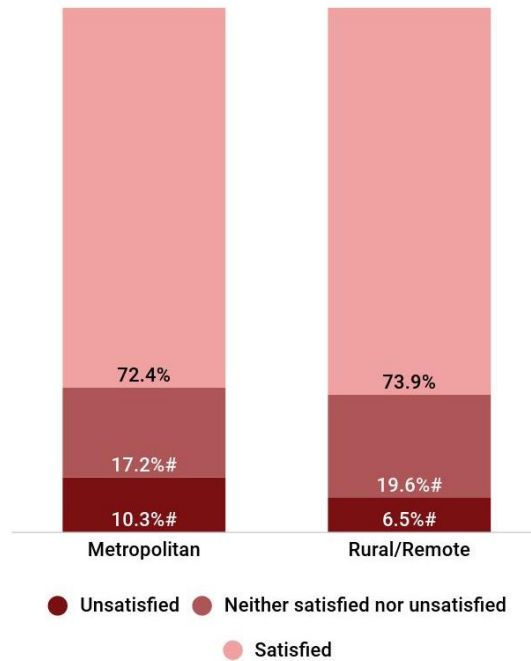
**Figure 35 'I feel insecure about the future of my job', by location**

*Note: 'Disagree' combines 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' response categories; 'Agree' combines strongly agree and agree response categories. Includes all employees. # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*

## Career development

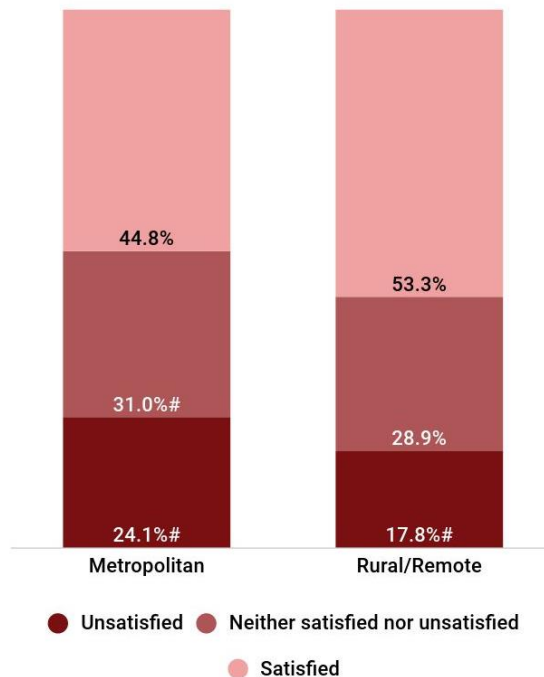
### Career opportunity and progress

There was a high level of satisfaction with the progress workers had made in metropolitan-based (72.4%) and rural/remote based organisations (73.9%) (Figure 36). Most workers (55.2%) based in metropolitan locations felt less satisfied with future opportunities in their organisation; whilst most workers based in rural/remote locations were satisfied with their future opportunities in their organisation (53.3%) (this difference did not reach statistical significance possibly due to sample size constraints) (Figure 37).



**Figure 36 'How satisfied do you feel with the progress you've made in this organisation?', by location**

*Note: 'Not satisfied' combines 'completely unsatisfied' and 'unsatisfied' response categories; 'Satisfied' combines 'completely satisfied' and 'satisfied' response categories. # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*



**Figure 37 'How satisfied do you feel with your chance for getting ahead in this organisation?', by location**

*Note: 'Not satisfied' combines 'completely unsatisfied' and 'unsatisfied' response categories; 'Satisfied' combines 'completely satisfied' and 'satisfied' response categories. # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*

## Government and non-government (NGO) workers

The following section considers the workforce profile, income, employment and professional development characteristics of government and non-government (NGO) Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers.

Sector of employment information was provided by 76 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers, of which 72.4% were employed in NGO organisations (Table 27).

**Table 27 AOD sector of employment of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander survey respondents**

Frequency	Government	Non-government
n	21	55
%	27.6	72.4

## Workforce profile

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers employed in the government sector were most likely to be located in rural locations (47.6%), as were NGO workers (41.8%) (Table 28). A higher proportion of NGO workers were located in remote areas than were government workers (difference did not reach statistical significance possibly due to sample size constraints).

**Table 28 Location of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers by sector of employment**

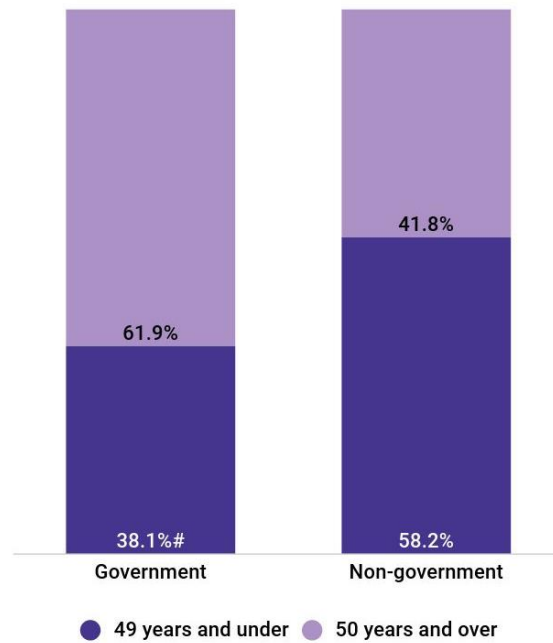
Location	Government	Non-government
Metropolitan	42.9#	36.4
Rural	47.6	41.8
Remote	9.5#	21.8

*Note: # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*

## Personal and social demographics

### Age

The NGO sector had a higher proportion of younger Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers (58.2%, 38.1%# of government workers) (Figure 38), however this difference did not reach statistical significance.



**Figure 38 Age profile of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers by sector of employment**

*Note: # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*

### Gender

A higher proportion of women were employed in government organisations (76.2%, 63.6 for NGO workers), although this contrast did not reach statistical significance (Table 29).

**Table 29 Gender profile of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers by sector of employment**

Gender	Government	Non-government
Women	76.2	63.6
Men	23.8#	36.4

*Note: # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*

### Caring responsibilities

As shown in Table 30, a higher proportion of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait workers had caring responsibilities in the government sector (57.1%) than in the NGO sector (47.3%#, ns).

**Table 30 Caring responsibilities of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers by sector of employment**

Caring responsibilities	Government	Non-government
Yes	57.1	47.3
No	42.9#	52.7

*Note: # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*

### Lived experience

Over 80% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers reported lived experience in both the government (81.0%) and NGO (83.3%) sectors (Table 31).

**Table 31 Lived experience of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers by sector of employment**

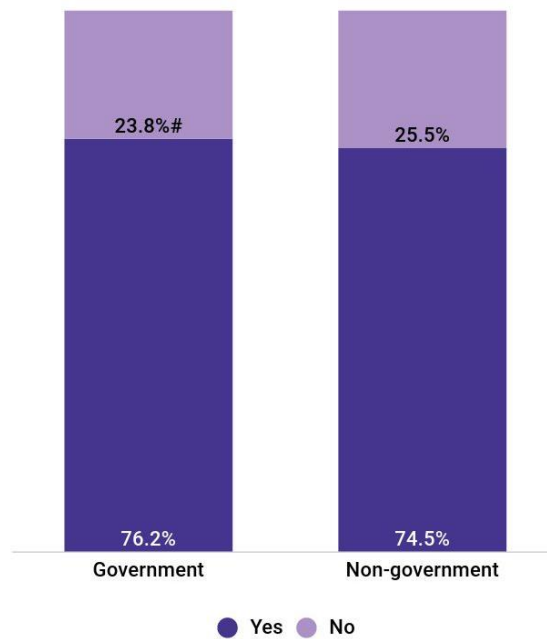
Lived experience	Government	Non-government
Yes	81.0	83.3
No	19.0#	16.7#

Note: # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).

### Employment demographics

#### Work roles

Figure 39 shows that three-quarters of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workforce in both the government and NGO sector worked in direct client services roles.



**Figure 39 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers with direct client services role by sector of employment**

Note: # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).

#### AOD experience

The NGO sector has a more even division of experienced and inexperienced Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers, whilst Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers in the government sector tend to have at least 4 years' experience (Table 32). These contrasts did not reach statistical significance, possibly due to sample size constraints.

**Table 32 Years' experience in the AOD sector by sector of employment**

Years' experience	Government	Non-government
3 years or less	16.7#	32.0
4-9 years	38.9#	32.0
10+ years	44.4#	36.0

Note: # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).

### Organisational size

Over half of government workers were employed in large organisations whilst significantly fewer NGO workers (28.6%,  $p \leq .05$ ) worked in large organisations (Table 33).

**Table 33 Organisation size in which Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers are employed by sector of employment**

Organisation size	Government	Non-government
Small (1-19 employees)	4.8#	24.5
Medium (20-99 employees)	38.1#	46.9
Large (100+ employees)*	<b>57.1</b>	<b>28.6</b>

Note: Overall chi-square statistic significant at  $p < .05$  level and comparisons of column proportion significant at  $*p \leq .05$ . # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).

### Income

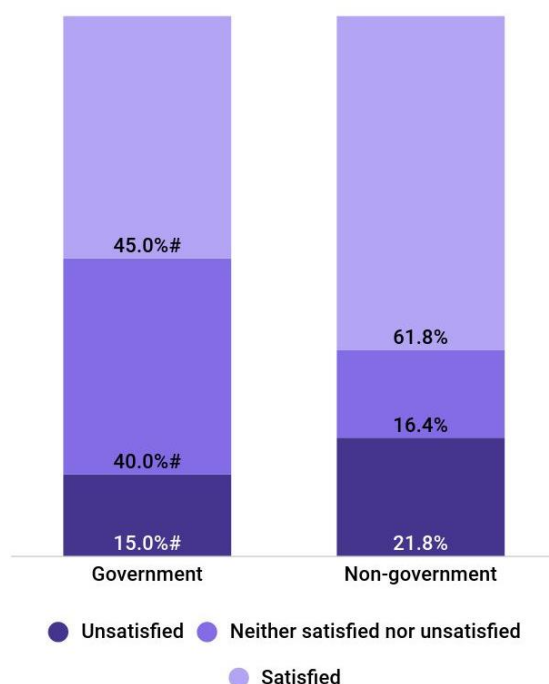
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers in the government sector were most likely to earn an above average income, and those in NGO a below average income. However, this contrast did not reach statistical significance possibly due to sample size constraints (Table 34).

**Table 34 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers' salaries compared to the Australian national average income by sector of employment**

Income	Government	Non-government
Below	33.3#	42.3
Average	23.8#	26.9
Above	42.9#	30.8

Note: # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).

As Figure 40 shows, NGO workers were more satisfied with their pay than government workers (61.8% and 45.0%# respectively, ns).



**Figure 40 'Considering your work skills and effort, how satisfied are you with your pay'? by sector of employment**

*Note: 'Not satisfied' combines 'completely unsatisfied' and 'unsatisfied' response categories; 'Satisfied' combines 'completely satisfied' and 'satisfied' response categories. # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*

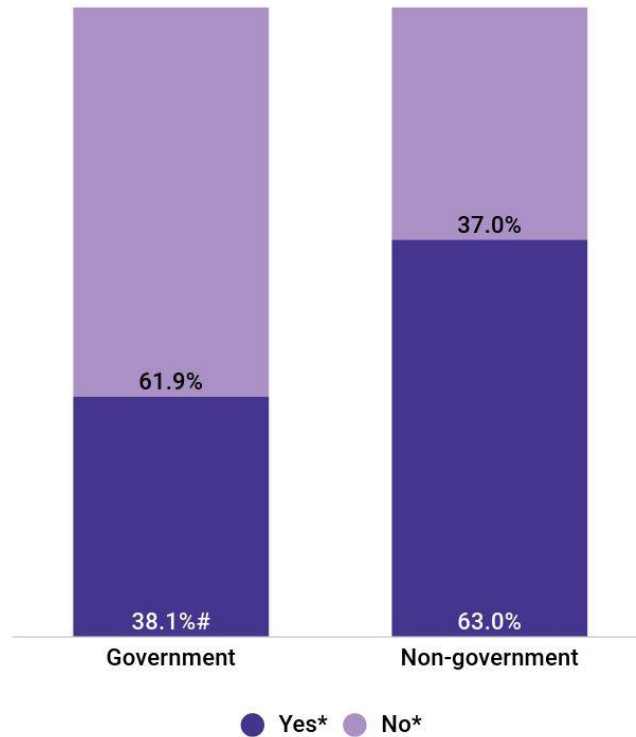
## Qualifications

Most government and NGO Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers did not hold tertiary qualifications (Table 35). As shown in Figure 41, significantly more government workers held AOD-specific qualifications (61.9%) than NGO workers (37.0%,  $p \leq .05$ ).

**Table 35 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers' highest level of general degree qualification by sector of employment**

General degree <sup>1</sup>	Government	Non-government
Yes	42.9	35.2
No	57.1	64.8

*Note: <sup>1</sup>Tertiary.*



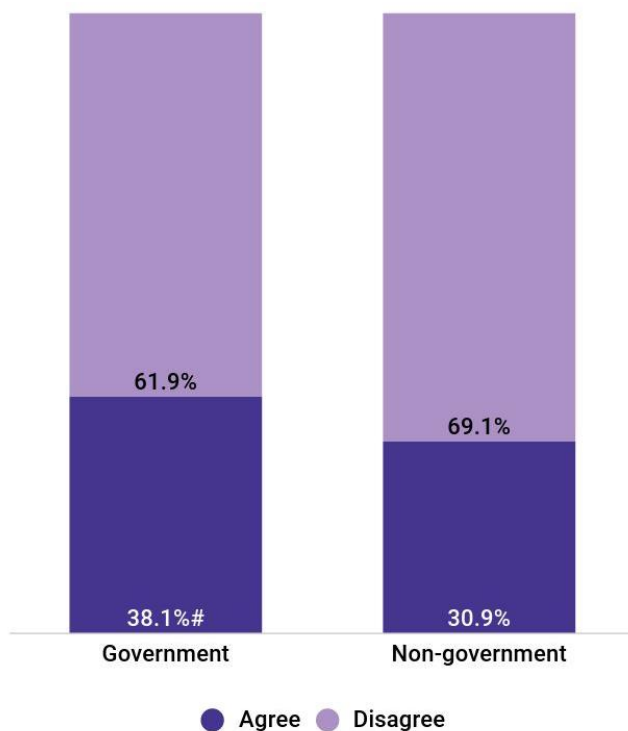
**Figure 41 AOD-specific qualifications of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers by sector of employment**

*Note: Vocational or tertiary qualifications. Overall chi-square statistic significant at  $p < .05$  level and comparisons of column proportion significant at  $*p \leq .05$ .*

## Professional development and supervision

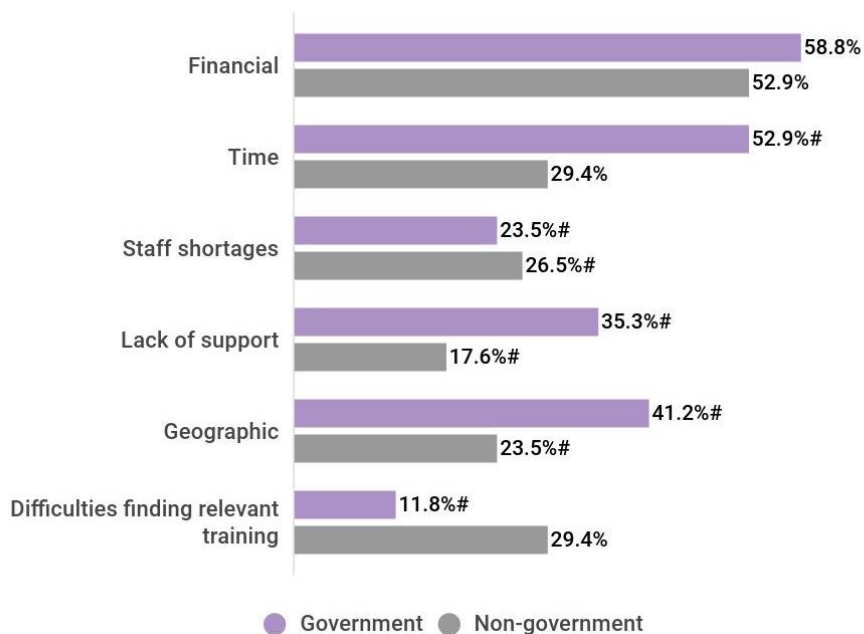
### *Barriers to accessing professional development*

Over 80% of government and NGO Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers had accessed professional development in the previous three years. Approximately one-third of workers in both sectors had experienced difficulties accessing professional development (Figure 42). Financial and time barriers were the two most common barriers cited by both groups. Difficulties finding relevant training was also a common challenge for NGO workers (Figure 43).



**Figure 42 Difficult to access professional development by sector of employment**

*Note: # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*



**Figure 43 Barriers to access professional development by sector of employment**

*Note: Proportions do not sum to 100% due to multiple response option. # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*

### Training gaps

The most common client-related training gaps reported by workers in both sectors were working with clients experiencing trauma, and clients with dual diagnoses or co-occurring mental health issues (Table 36).

**Table 36 Training gaps: Client group, by sector of employment**

Client group	Government	Non-government
Clients with experiences of trauma	88.9	80.0
Clients with dual diagnoses/co-occurring mental health issues	83.3	75.6
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients	72.2	60.0
Children and families	55.6	64.4
Clients with current/past experience of family violence	61.1	60.0
Forensic AOD clients	61.1	57.8
Clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds	55.6	57.8
Acquired brain injury clients	72.2	51.1
Clients with gambling problems	38.9#	62.2
Lesbian/gay/bisexual/trans/intersex/queer clients	50.0#	51.1
Older clients	55.6	40.0

Note: Proportions do not sum to 100% due to multiple response option.

Responding to multiple and complex needs was the most common professional skills training gap reported by government (66.7%) and NGO (73.9%) workers (Table 37). Significantly more NGO workers desired professional skills training on clinical skills for counselling, treatment or therapy (69.6%, 38.9%# of government employees,  $p \leq .05$ ) and providing clinical supervision to others (63.0%, 33.3%# of government employees,  $p \leq .05$ ).

**Table 37 Training gaps: Professional skills, by sector of employment**

Professional skills	Government	Non-government
Responding to multiple and complex needs	66.7	73.9
Leadership and management skills	61.1	65.2
Clinical skills for counselling, treatment or therapy*	<b>38.9#</b>	<b>69.6</b>
Skills or knowledge to support evidence-based practice	61.1	60.9
Training on alcohol or other drugs	44.4#	65.2
Managing risky behaviours	44.4#	65.2
Providing clinical supervision to others*	<b>33.3#</b>	<b>63.0</b>
Working with multi-disciplinary teams	50.0#	58.7
Service delivery/administration skills	55.6	54.3
Specific interventions or therapies	38.9	47.8

Note: Proportions do not sum to 100% due to multiple response option. Chi-square statistic significant at \* $p \leq .05$  for comparisons of column proportion. # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).

### Clinical supervision

Data on clinical supervision by sector should be interpreted with caution due to sample size constraints for government workers. There was some indication that government workers in direct client services roles were less likely to have access to clinical supervision/practice support (Table 38).

**Table 38 Access to clinical supervision/practice support (direct client service roles only), by sector of employment**

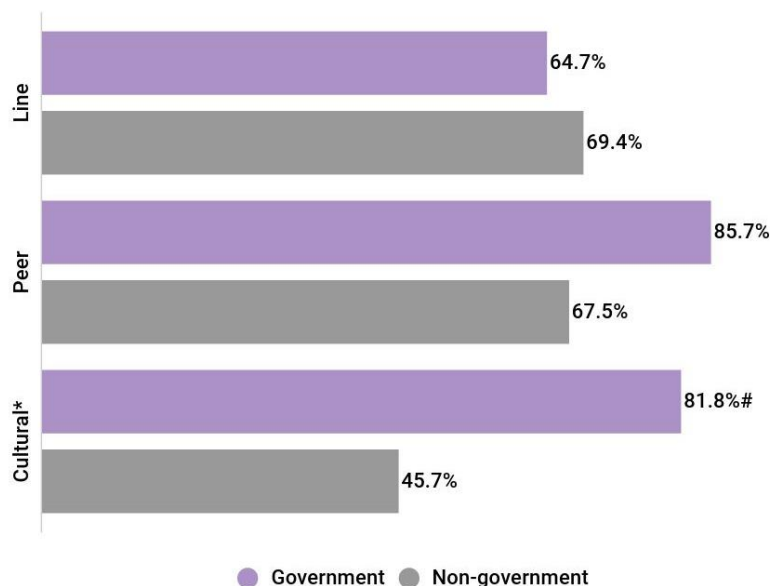
Clinical supervision/practice support	Government	Non-government
Internal individual	43.8#	70.7
Internal group	18.8#	22.0#
External individual	18.8#	29.3
External group	12.5#	12.2#
No access*	<b>37.5#</b>	<b>12.2#</b>

Note: Proportions do not sum to 100% due to multiple response option. Chi-square statistic significant at \* $p \leq .05$  for comparisons of column proportion.

# Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).

### Line, peer and cultural supervision

As Figure 44 shows, significantly more government Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers received frequent cultural supervision (at least once a month, 81.8%#) than their NGO counterparts (45.7%,  $p \leq .05$ ). Although a higher proportion of government workers received peer supervision (85.7%) than NGO workers (67.5%), this difference did not reach statistical significance.



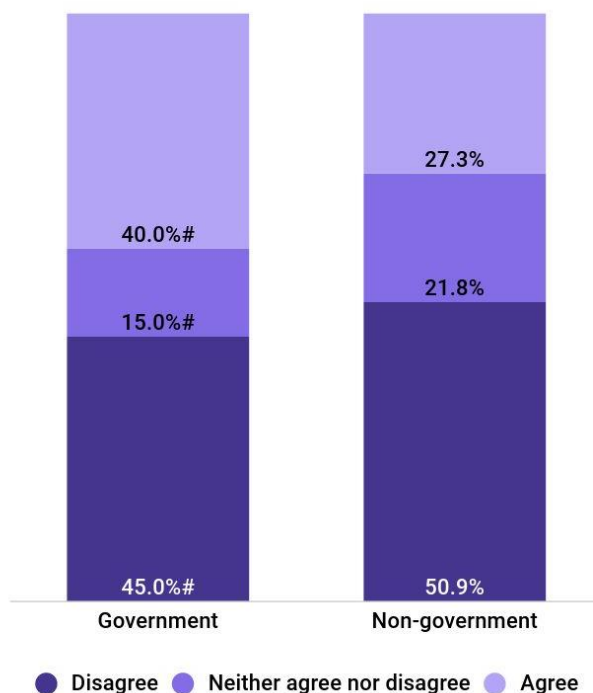
**Figure 44 Access to line, peer & cultural supervision monthly, weekly, fortnightly or more, by sector of employment**

Note: Chi-square statistic significant at \* $p \leq .05$  for comparisons of column proportion. # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).

## Employment conditions

### Employment security

Slightly more NGO (89.1%) than government (80.0%) workers held permanent contracts (this difference did not reach statistical significance). A higher proportion of government workers were employed full-time (90.0%) than NGO workers (78.2%, ns). Among NGO workers, 27.3% felt insecure about the future of the jobs compared to 40.0%# of government workers (ns) (Figure 45).



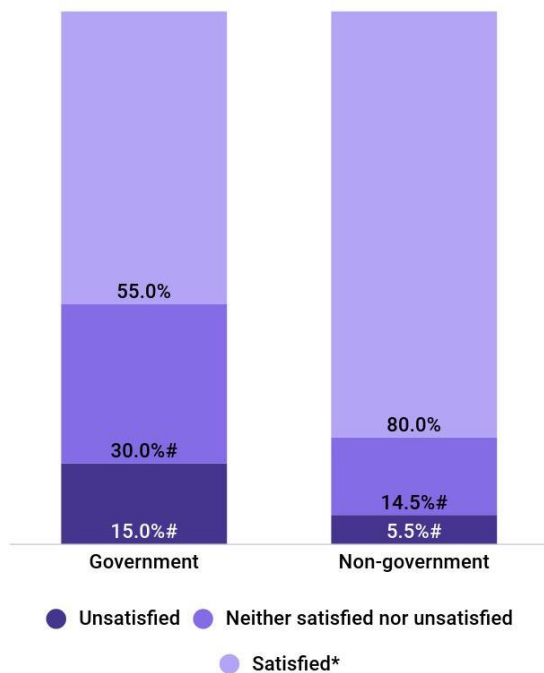
**Figure 45 'I feel insecure about the future of my job', by sector of employment**

*Note: 'Disagree' combines 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' response categories; 'Agree' combines strongly agree and agree response categories. Includes all employees. # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*

## Career development

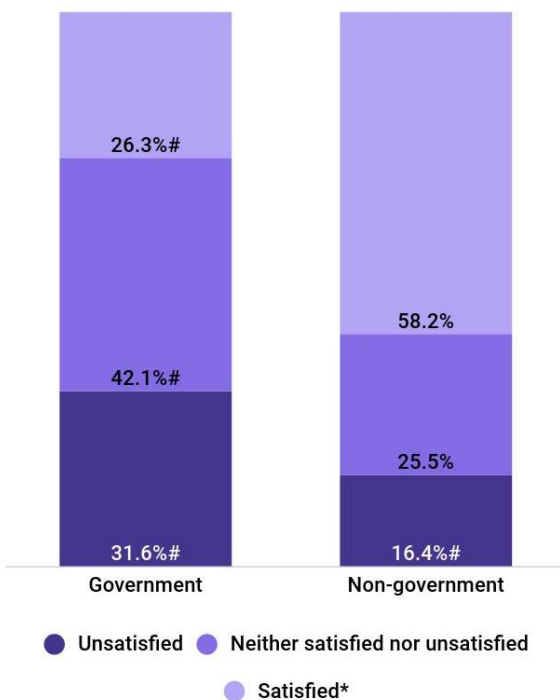
### Career opportunity and progress

NGO workers were significantly more satisfied with the progress they had made in their organisation (Figure 46) and with their chance of getting ahead in their organisation (Figure 47) than government workers.



**Figure 46** ‘How satisfied do you feel with the progress you’ve made in this organisation?’, by sector of employment

*Note: ‘Not satisfied’ combines ‘completely unsatisfied’ and ‘unsatisfied’ response categories; ‘Satisfied’ combines ‘completely satisfied’ and ‘satisfied’ response categories. Overall chi-square statistic significant at  $p < .05$  level and comparisons of column proportion significant at  $*p \leq .05$ . # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*



**Figure 47** ‘How satisfied do you feel with your chance for getting ahead in this organisation?’, by sector of employment

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*Note: 'Not satisfied' combines 'completely unsatisfied' and 'unsatisfied' response categories; 'Satisfied' combines 'completely satisfied' and 'satisfied' response categories. Overall chi-square statistic significant at  $p < .05$  level and comparisons of column proportion significant at  $*p \leq .05$ . # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*

## Workers with and without general and AOD-specific qualifications

The following section considers the workforce profile, income, employment and professional development characteristics of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers with and without general and AOD specific qualifications.

A total of 84 respondents provided general degree qualification data and 85 provided AOD-specific qualification data. One-third (33.3%) of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers held at least a tertiary degree qualification and over a half (52.9%) had completed AOD-specific qualifications (tertiary or vocational) (Table 39).

**Table 39 Level of qualification of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander survey respondents**

Frequency	General degree <sup>1</sup>		AOD-specific <sup>2</sup>	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
n	28	56	45	40
%	33.3	66.7	52.9	47.1

Note: <sup>1</sup>Tertiary. <sup>2</sup>Vocational or tertiary.

## Workforce profile

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers with a degree qualification were more likely to work in metropolitan locations; those without a degree were more likely to work in rural locations (ns) (Table 40). Workers with AOD-specific qualifications were more likely to work in rural locations and those without AOD qualifications in metropolitan locations (ns).

**Table 40 Location of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers by general and AOD-specific qualification status**

Location	General degree <sup>1</sup>		AOD-specific <sup>2</sup>	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Metropolitan	46.4	34.0	31.0	45.5
Rural	39.3	44.7	52.4	33.3
Remote	14.3#	21.3	16.7#	21.2#

Note: <sup>1</sup>Tertiary. <sup>2</sup>Vocational or tertiary. # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).

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## AOD Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers' salaries and professional development needs

Table 41 shows, significantly ( $p \leq .05$ ) more Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers with AOD-specific qualifications worked in the NGO sector (81.0%) than those without AOD-specific qualifications (60.6%).

**Table 41 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers' sector of employment by general and AOD-specific qualification status**

Sector	General degree <sup>1</sup>		AOD-specific <sup>2</sup>	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Government	32.1#	25.5	<b>19.0#*</b>	<b>39.4*</b>
Non-government	67.9	74.5	<b>81.0*</b>	<b>60.6*</b>

Note: The response option 'private' was not selected by any Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander respondents. <sup>1</sup>Tertiary. <sup>2</sup>Vocational or tertiary. Overall chi-square statistic significant at  $p < .05$  level and comparisons of column proportion significant at  $*p \leq .05$ . # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).

### Personal and social demographics

#### Age

Workers' age profile did not vary by level or type of qualification (Table 42).

**Table 42 Age profile of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers by general and AOD-specific qualification status**

Age	General degree <sup>1</sup>		AOD-specific <sup>2</sup>	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
49 years and under	53.6	51.8	46.7	60.0
50 years and over	46.4	48.2	53.3	40.0

Note: <sup>1</sup>Tertiary. <sup>2</sup>Vocational or tertiary.

#### Gender

When the gender profile of those with and without AOD-specific qualifications were compared, there was a significantly higher proportion of men in the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workforce that possessed AOD-specific qualifications (44.4%) than in the group without this qualification (22.5%#,  $p \leq .05$ ) (Table 43).

**Table 43 Gender profile of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers by general and AOD-specific qualification status**

Gender	General degree <sup>1</sup>		AOD-specific <sup>2</sup>	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Women	75.0	62.5	<b>55.6*</b>	<b>77.5*</b>
Men	25.0#	37.5	<b>44.4*</b>	<b>22.5#*</b>

Note: <sup>1</sup>Tertiary. <sup>2</sup>Vocational or tertiary. Overall chi-square statistic significant at  $p < .05$  level and comparisons of column proportion significant at  $*p \leq .05$ . # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).

#### Caring responsibilities

Although those with a degree or AOD-specific qualification were less likely to have caring responsibilities than their counterparts, the differences were not statistically significant (

Table 44).

**Table 44 Caring responsibilities of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers by general and AOD-specific qualification status**

Caring responsibilities	General degree <sup>1</sup>		AOD-specific <sup>2</sup>	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Yes	46.4	51.8	48.9	52.5
No	53.6	48.2	51.1	47.5

Note: <sup>1</sup>Tertiary. <sup>2</sup>Vocational or tertiary.

### Lived experience

Higher proportions of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers with lived experience did not hold a general degree (89.1%) than their counterparts with a degree qualification (70.4%,  $p \leq .05$ ) (Table 45). Comparable proportions of workers with (84.1%) and without (84.6%) AOD-specific qualifications had lived experience.

**Table 45 Lived experience of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers by general and AOD-specific qualification status**

Lived experience	General degree <sup>1</sup>		AOD-specific <sup>2</sup>	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Yes	<b>70.4*</b>	<b>89.1*</b>	84.1	84.6
No	<b>29.6#*</b>	<b>10.9#*</b>	15.9#	15.4#

Note: <sup>1</sup>Tertiary. <sup>2</sup>Vocational or tertiary. Overall chi-square statistic significant at  $p < .05$  level and comparisons of column proportion significant at **\* $p \leq .05$** . # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).

## Employment demographics

### Work roles

As Table 46 shows, approximately three-quarters of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees worked in direct client services roles within each qualification group.

**Table 46 Direct client services role of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers by general and AOD-specific qualification status**

Direct client services role	General degree <sup>1</sup>		AOD-specific <sup>2</sup>	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Yes	75.0	73.2	75.6	72.5
No	25.0#	26.8	24.4	27.5

Note: <sup>1</sup>Tertiary. <sup>2</sup>Vocational or tertiary. # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).

### AOD experience

There was no statistically significant difference in years of AOD experience by general degree qualification status, although those with a degree did have more years' AOD experience (4+ years: 80.8%, 65.9% of those without a degree) (Table 47). Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders without AOD-specific qualifications were more likely to be less experienced (3 years or less: 44.8%, 15.4%# of

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workers with AOD-specific qualifications,  $p \leq .01$ ). Those with AOD-specific qualifications were more likely to have 10+ years' experience than those without these qualification (53.8%, 17.2% of workers without AOD-specific qualifications,  $p \leq .01$ ).

**Table 47 Years' experience in the AOD sector of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers by general and AOD-specific qualification status**

Years' experience	General degree <sup>1</sup>		AOD-specific <sup>2</sup>	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
3 years or less	19.2#	34.1	<b>15.4##</b>	<b>44.8**</b>
4-9 years	42.3	29.3	30.8	37.9
10+ years	38.5	36.6	<b>53.8**</b>	<b>17.2**</b>

Note: <sup>1</sup>Tertiary. <sup>2</sup>Vocational or tertiary. Overall chi-square statistic significant at  $p < .05$  level and comparisons of column proportion significant at **\*\* $p \leq .01$** . # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).

### Organisational size

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers without AOD-specific qualifications were more likely to work in larger organisations (54.8%) than those with AOD-specific qualifications (21.1%,  $p \leq .01$ ) (Table 48).

**Table 48 Organisation size in which Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers are employed by general and AOD-specific qualification status**

Organisation size	General degree <sup>1</sup>		AOD-specific <sup>2</sup>	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Small (1-19 employees)	20.0#	18.2#	34.2	0
Medium (20-99 employees)	32.0#	50.0	44.7	45.2
Large (100+ employees)	48.0	31.8	<b>21.1**</b>	<b>54.8**</b>

Note: <sup>1</sup>Tertiary. <sup>2</sup>Vocational or tertiary. Overall chi-square statistic significant at  $p < .05$  level and comparisons of column proportion significant at **\*\* $p \leq .01$** . # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).

### Income

Over half of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers with a general degree qualification earned a salary above the national average (57.7%) which was significantly more than workers without a degree (18.9%,  $p \leq .001$ ) (Table 49).

**Table 49 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers' salaries compared to the Australian national average income by general and AOD-specific qualification status**

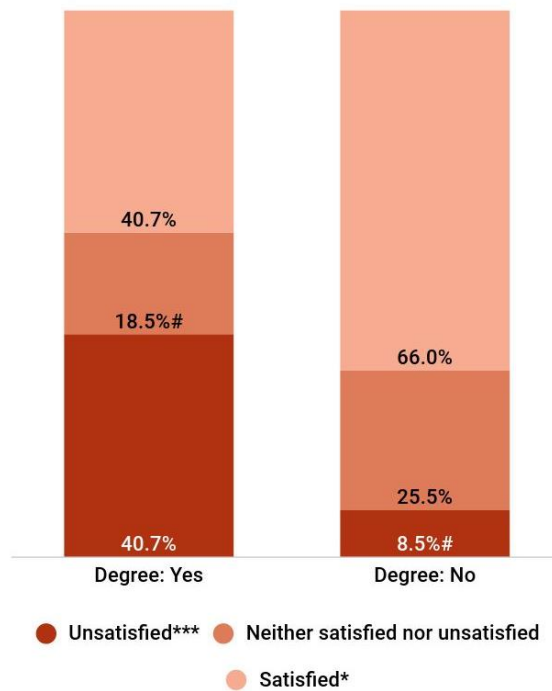
Income	General degree <sup>1</sup>		AOD-specific <sup>2</sup>	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Below	23.1#	45.3	31.8	44.4
Average	19.2#	35.8	34.1	27.8
Above	<b>57.7***</b>	<b>18.9***</b>	34.1	27.8

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Note: <sup>1</sup>Tertiary. <sup>2</sup>Vocational or tertiary. Overall chi-square statistic significant at  $p < .05$  level and comparisons of column proportion significant at **\*\*\* $p \leq .001$** . # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).

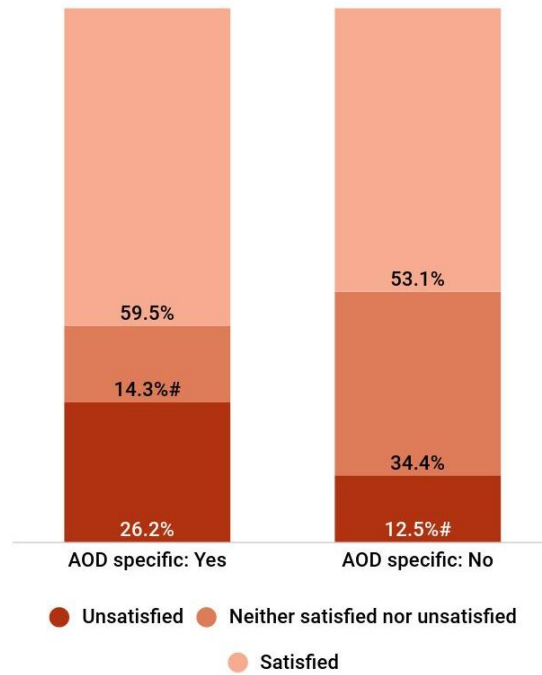
Although workers with a general degree were more likely to earn above the average income, they were also more likely to be dissatisfied with their pay (40.7%) than workers without a degree (8.5%#,  $p \leq .001$ ). Workers without a degree were more likely to be satisfied with their pay (66.0%) than those with a degree (40.7%,  $p \leq .05$ ) (Figure 48).

There was no difference in workers' pay satisfaction by AOD-specific qualification level (Figure 49).



**Figure 48 'Considering your work skills and effort, how satisfied are you with your pay'? by level of general qualification**

Note: 'Not satisfied' combines 'completely unsatisfied' and 'unsatisfied' response categories; 'Satisfied' combines 'completely satisfied' and 'satisfied' response categories. Overall chi-square statistic significant at  $p < .05$  level and comparisons of column proportion significant at either **\* $p \leq .05$**  or **\*\*\* $p \leq .001$** . # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).



**Figure 49 ‘Considering your work skills and effort, how satisfied are you with your pay?’ by level of AOD-specific qualification**

*Note: ‘Not satisfied’ combines ‘completely unsatisfied’ and ‘unsatisfied’ response categories; ‘Satisfied’ combines ‘completely satisfied’ and ‘satisfied’ response categories. # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*

### Qualifications

Approximately half of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers with and without a general degree held AOD-specific qualifications (Table 50). Around one-third of workers with and without AOD-specific qualifications held a general degree qualification (Table 51).

**Table 50 AOD-specific qualification status of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers by degree qualification status**

AOD-specific qualification	Degree: Yes <sup>1</sup>	Degree: No
Yes (vocational or tertiary)	50.0	53.7
No	50.0	46.3

*Note: <sup>1</sup>Tertiary.*

**Table 51 Degree qualification status of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers by AOD-specific qualification status**

General Degree qualification	AOD-specific: <sup>1</sup> Yes	AOD-specific: No
Yes	32.6	35.9
No	67.4	64.1

*Note: <sup>1</sup>Vocational or tertiary.*

### Professional development and supervision

Slightly more Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers with a degree or higher qualification had attended professional development in the past three years (85.7%) than workers without a degree qualification (75.9%), although this difference was not statistically significant. Significantly more Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers with AOD-specific qualifications had attended professional development (90.9%) than without an AOD-specific qualification (70.0%,  $p \leq .05$ ).

### Barriers to accessing professional development

As shown in Table 52, approximately one-quarter to one-third of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers reported difficulties accessing professional development. Differences between qualification groups did not reach statistical significance.

**Table 52 Experienced difficulty in accessing professional development for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers by general and AOD-specific qualification status**

Difficult to access	General degree <sup>1</sup>		AOD-specific <sup>2</sup>	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Agree	35.7	27.3	31.8	30.0
Disagree	64.3	72.7	68.2	70.0

Note: <sup>1</sup>Tertiary. <sup>2</sup>Vocational or tertiary.

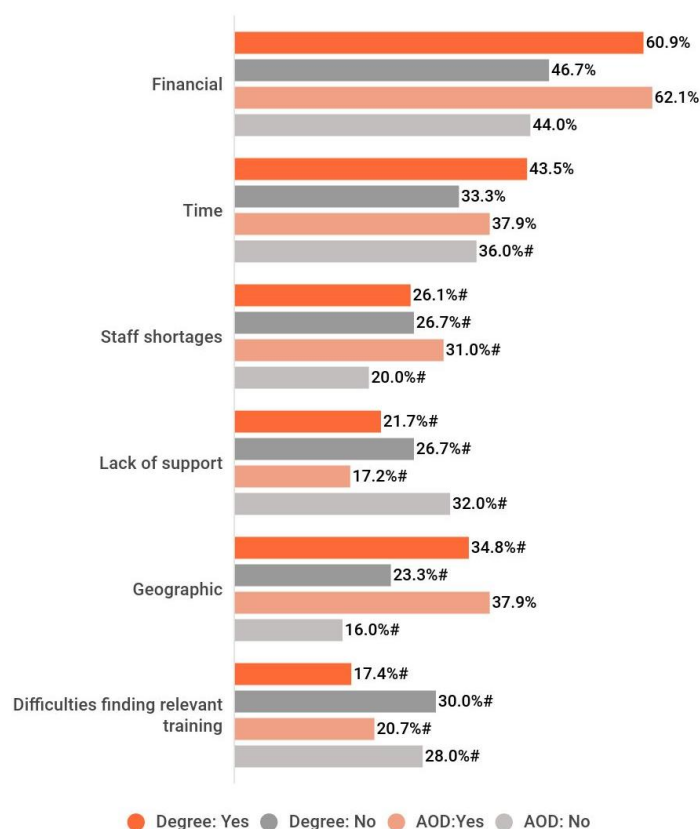
Across qualification groups, the two most common barriers for accessing professional development were financial and time constraints. For workers with AOD-specific qualifications, geography was also a common barrier (second highest for this group) (Figure 50).

### Training gaps

Clients with dual diagnoses/co-occurring mental health issues was identified as a client-related training gap by 92.9% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers without AOD-specific qualifications. This was significantly higher than that reported by workers with AOD-specific qualifications (68.6%,  $p \leq .05$ ) (Table 53). Training in relation to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients was also in high demand by workers without AOD-specific qualifications (85.7%, 42.9% of workers with AOD-specific qualifications,  $p \leq .001$ ).

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers without a general degree qualification were significantly more likely to desire training in relation to clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds than workers with a general degree (68.4%, 41.7% of workers with a general degree,  $p \leq .05$ ).

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**Figure 50 Barriers to access professional development by general and AOD-specific qualification status**

Note: Proportions do not sum to 100% due to multiple response option. # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).

**Table 53 Training gaps: Client group, by general and AOD-specific qualification status**

Client group	General degree <sup>1</sup>		AOD-specific <sup>2</sup>	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Clients with experiences of trauma	87.5	78.9	80.0	82.1
Clients with dual diagnoses/co-occurring mental health issues	83.3	73.7	<b>68.6*</b>	<b>92.9*</b>
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients	58.3	65.8	<b>42.9***</b>	<b>85.7***</b>
Children and families	54.2	65.8	57.1	71.4
Clients with current/past experience of family violence	54.2	63.2	57.1	64.3
Forensic AOD clients	54.2	60.5	54.3	67.9
Clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds	<b>41.7*</b>	<b>68.4*</b>	54.3	64.3
Acquired brain injury clients	66.7	50.0	60.0	57.1
Clients with gambling problems	54.2	55.3	51.4	60.7
Lesbian/gay/bisexual/trans/intersex/queer clients	37.5#	57.9	45.7	60.7
Older clients	45.8	42.1	42.9	46.4

Note: Proportions do not sum to 100% due to multiple response option. <sup>1</sup>Tertiary. <sup>2</sup>Vocational or tertiary. Chi-square statistic significant at \* $p \leq .05$  or \*\*\* $p \leq .001$  for comparisons of column proportion.

Those without a general degree were more likely to identify professional skill training gaps regarding clinical skills for counselling, treatment or therapy (71.8%, 44.0% of workers with a degree,  $p \leq .05$ ); skills or knowledge to support evidence-based practice (71.8%, 44.0% of workers with a degree,  $p \leq .05$ ); training on alcohol or other drugs (69.2%, 40.0% of workers with a degree,  $p \leq .05$ ); and working with multi-disciplinary teams (69.2%, 32.0%# of workers with a degree,  $p \leq .01$ ) (Table 54). Professional skills training gaps did not vary by AOD-specific qualifications.

**Table 54 Training gaps: Professional skills, by general and AOD-specific qualification status**

Professional skills	General degree <sup>1</sup>		AOD-specific <sup>2</sup>	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Responding to multiple and complex needs	72.0	69.2	70.3	75.0
Leadership and management skills	52.0	71.8	62.2	64.3
Clinical skills for counselling, treatment or therapy	<b>44.0*</b>	<b>71.8*</b>	64.9	57.1
Skills or knowledge to support evidence-based practice	<b>44.0*</b>	<b>71.8*</b>	64.9	60.7
Training on alcohol or other drugs	<b>40.0*</b>	<b>69.2*</b>	56.8	64.3
Managing risky behaviours	52.0	61.5	51.4	67.9
Providing clinical supervision to others	52.0	56.4	59.5	53.6
Working with multi-disciplinary teams	<b>32.0#**</b>	<b>69.2**</b>	62.2	50.0
Service delivery/administration skills	44.0	59.0	56.8	50.0
Specific interventions or therapies	40.0	51.3	45.9	46.4

Note: Proportions do not sum to 100% due to multiple response option. <sup>1</sup>Tertiary. <sup>2</sup>Vocational or tertiary. Chi-square statistic significant at \* $p \leq .05$  or \*\* $p \leq .01$  for comparisons of column proportion.

### Clinical supervision

Direct client service workers without AOD-specific qualifications were less likely to receive clinical supervision/practice support ( $p \leq .05$ ), but were more likely to receive external group clinical supervision/practice support (20.7%#, 2.9%# of workers with AOD-specific qualifications,  $p \leq .05$ ) (Table 55).

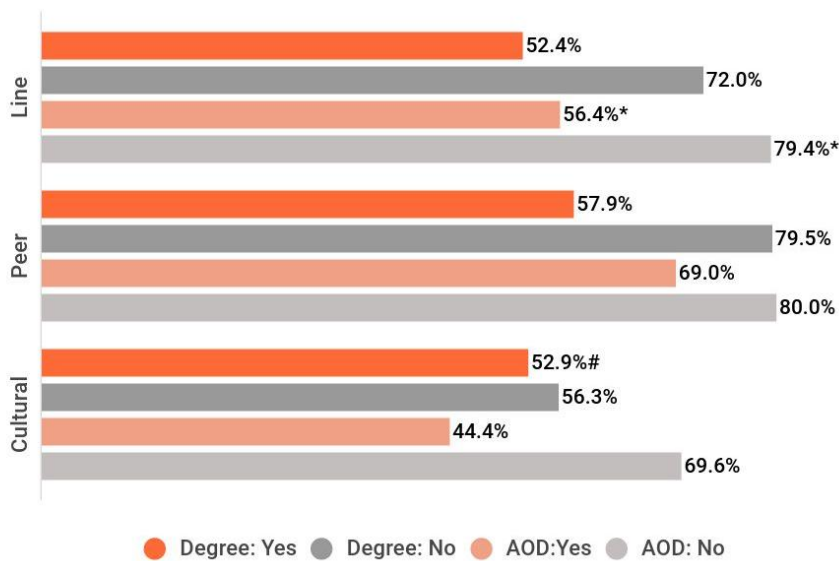
**Table 55 Access to clinical supervision/practice support (direct client service roles only), by general and AOD-specific qualification status**

Clinical supervision/practice support	General degree <sup>1</sup>		AOD-specific <sup>2</sup>	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Internal individual	57.1	68.3	64.7	62.1
Internal group	23.8#	19.5#	14.7#	34.5
External individual	33.3#	24.4	23.5#	34.5
External group	14.3#	9.8#	<b>2.9#*</b>	<b>20.7#*</b>
No access	23.8#	19.5#	<b>8.8#*</b>	<b>31.0#*</b>

Note: Proportions do not sum to 100% due to multiple response option. <sup>1</sup>Tertiary. <sup>2</sup>Vocational or tertiary. Chi-square statistic significant at \* $p \leq .05$  for comparisons of column proportion. # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).

### Line, peer and cultural supervision

Overall, those without AOD-specific or general degree qualifications were more likely to receive more frequent line, peer and cultural supervision. However, this difference only reached statistical significance regarding line supervision provided to workers without AOD-specific qualifications (79.4%, 56.4% of workers with AOD-specific qualifications,  $p \leq .05$ ) (Figure 51).



**Figure 51 Access to line, peer & cultural supervision monthly, weekly, fortnightly or more, by general and AOD-specific qualification status**

Note: Chi-square statistic significant at \* $p \leq .05$  for comparisons of column proportion. # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).

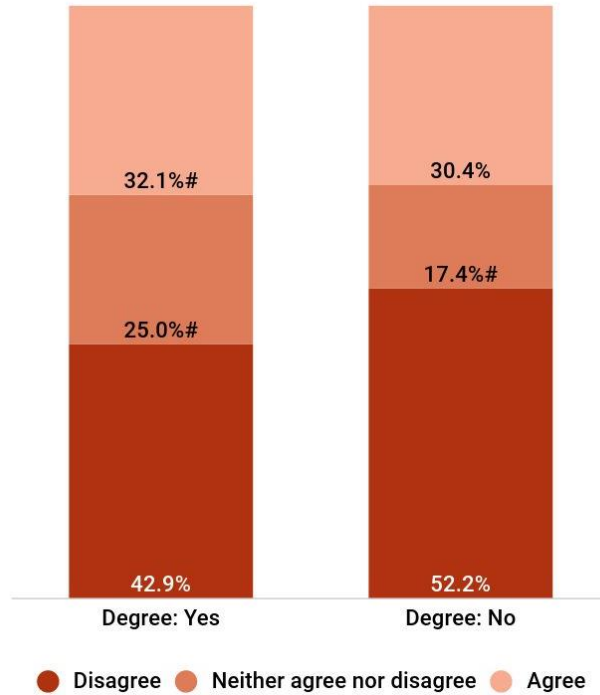
### Employment conditions

*Last year our organization lost a number of very capable staff due to funding cuts. I am also underemployed now I have completed my studies. After finishing a university degree I am now unable to secure full time employment which is why I now have to look elsewhere.*  
Aboriginal worker

The majority of workers had permanent contracts: 85.7% of degree qualified workers, 87.3% of those without a degree; 86.7% of those with an AOD-specific qualification, 87.2% of those without AOD-specific qualifications.

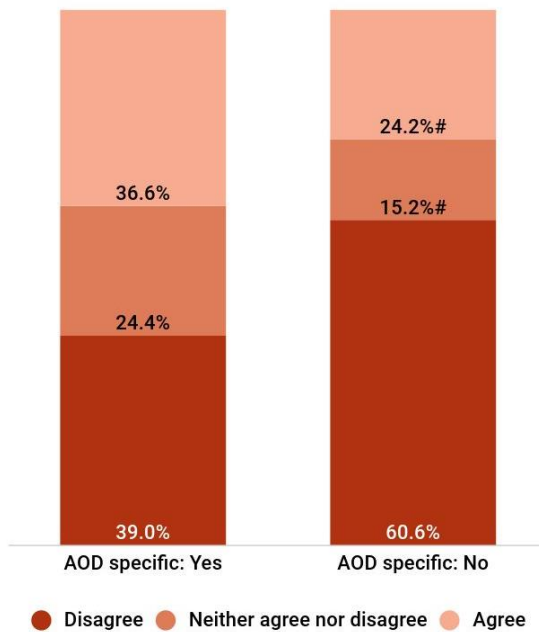
### Employment security

Qualification status was not related to perceived job security (Figure 52 and Figure 53).



**Figure 52 'I feel insecure about the future of my job', by level of general qualification**

*Note: 'Disagree' combines 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' response categories; 'Agree' combines strongly agree and agree response categories. Includes all employees. # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*



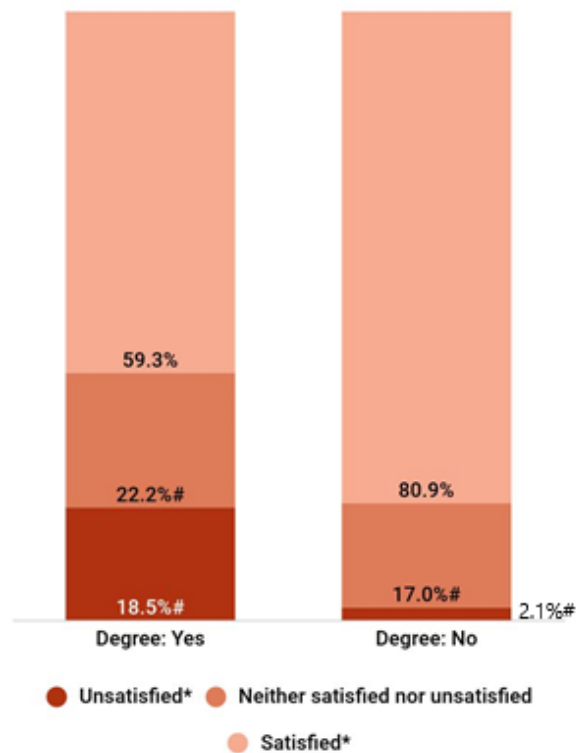
**Figure 53 'I feel insecure about the future of my job', by level of AOD-specific qualification**

*Note: 'Disagree' combines 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' response categories; 'Agree' combines strongly agree and agree response categories. Includes all employees. # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*

## Career development

### Career opportunity and progress

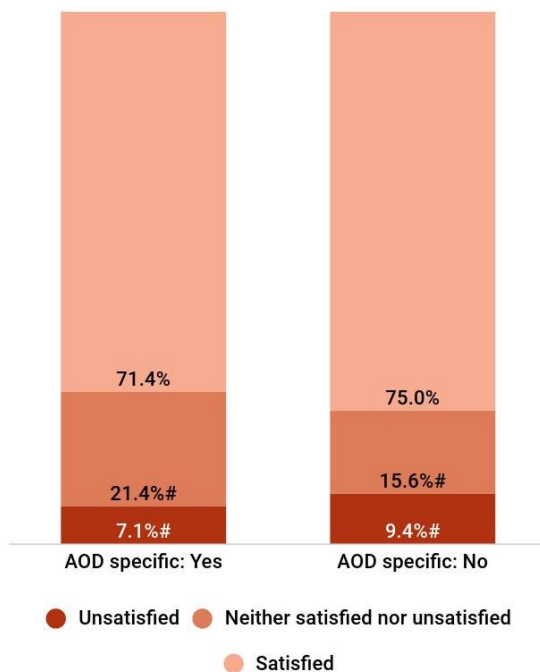
As shown in Figure 54, workers without a degree qualification were more likely to be satisfied with the progress they had made in their organisation (80.9%) than those workers with a degree (59.3%,  $p \leq .05$ ); and conversely less likely to be unsatisfied (2.1%#, 18.5# of workers with degree qualifications,  $p \leq .05$ ). Satisfaction with progress within the organisation did not vary by AOD-specific qualification status (Figure 55).



**Figure 54 'How satisfied do you feel with the progress you've made in this organisation?', by level of general qualification**

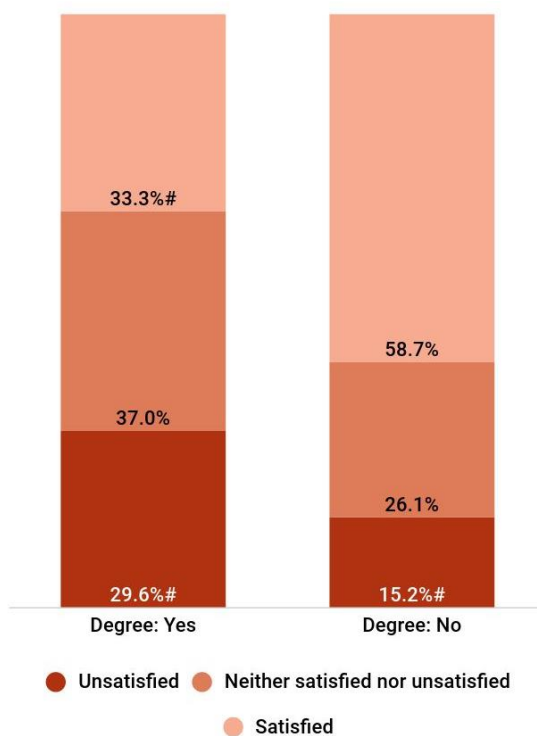
*Note: 'Not satisfied' combines 'completely unsatisfied' and 'unsatisfied' response categories; 'Satisfied' combines 'completely satisfied' and 'satisfied' response categories. \* $p \leq .05$ . # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).*

There were no statistically significant differences in workers' satisfaction with future opportunities within their organisation by qualification group (Figure 56 and Figure 57).



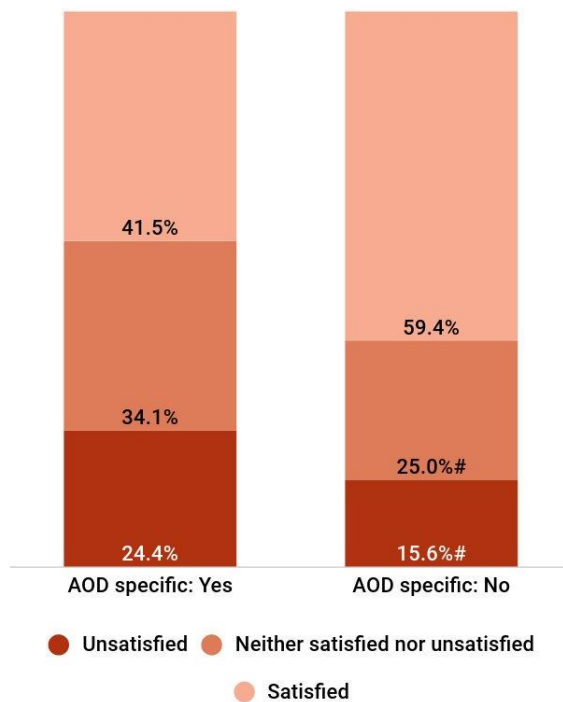
**Figure 55 'How satisfied do you feel with the progress you've made in this organisation?', by level of AOD-specific qualification**

Note: 'Not satisfied' combines 'completely unsatisfied' and 'unsatisfied' response categories; 'Satisfied' combines 'completely satisfied' and 'satisfied' response categories. # Estimate should be interpreted with caution (<10 cases).



**Figure 56 'How satisfied do you feel with your chance for getting ahead in this organisation?', by level of general qualification**

Note: 'Not satisfied' combines 'completely unsatisfied' and 'unsatisfied' response categories; 'Satisfied' combines 'completely satisfied' and 'satisfied' response categories.



**Figure 57 'How satisfied do you feel with your chance for getting ahead in this organisation?', by level of AOD-specific qualification**

*Note: 'Not satisfied' combines 'completely unsatisfied' and 'unsatisfied' response categories; 'Satisfied' combines 'completely satisfied' and 'satisfied' response categories.*

## Conclusion

This report describes key aspects of the workforce profile, salaries, employment arrangements and professional development needs of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander AOD workforce. Due to the sample being one of convenience, the study findings should be interpreted with caution. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander AOD workers comprised 6.5% of respondents recruited, which is twice the representation than in the general population (3.3%). The Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander AOD workforce predominately comprise women, workers aged under 50 years, who provide direct client services work, are located in non-metropolitan locations, are employed in the NGO sector, possess AOD-specific vocational or tertiary qualifications and have lived AOD experience (self, family member or other).

There is a high level of job security for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers; the majority have permanent contracts and work full-time. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers based in rural/remote locations were also more likely to have permanent and full-time contracts than metropolitan-based workers.

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers were less likely than non-Indigenous workers to have general tertiary qualifications, less likely to earn above the national average salary and (slightly) less likely to have participated in professional development activities in the past three years. These gaps in pay and qualifications need to be addressed to enhance the capacity and future stability of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander AOD workforce. Providing tangible support and assistance for enrolment and completion of a degree qualification will have many benefits, including increasing the likelihood of higher incomes; 57.7% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers with a degree earned above the national average, compared to 18.9% of workers without a degree ( $p \leq .001$ ).

The most common training gaps were in relation to working with clients with experiences of trauma, clients with dual diagnosis/co-occurring mental health issues, and professional skills for responding to multiple and complex needs. There were 13 development areas in which Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers were significantly more likely to report a training need than non-Indigenous workers. In particular, there is a clear need for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers to receive training on:

## AOD Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers' salaries and professional development needs

- Providing clinical supervision to others and clinical skills for counselling, treatment or therapy, especially for NGO workers
- Managing risky behaviours, especially for rural/remote workers
- Working with clients with dual diagnoses/co-occurring mental health issues.

Furthermore, workers without a general degree qualification identified a range of training gaps, including working with clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, clinical skills for counselling, treatment or therapy and skills knowledge to support evidence-based practice, training on alcohol or other drug and working with multi-disciplinary teams. These areas require urgent redress to support and build the capacity of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workforce.

## Appendix A: Free text survey responses

Survey respondents were invited to provide additional free text responses at the end of the survey. Relevant comments provided by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander survey respondents are listed below.

Aboriginal worker: *"Need more Workers in the AOD workforce within the Aboriginal Community."*

Aboriginal worker: *"It also needs to be recognised that Indigenous staff are more likely to have complex health needs, either themselves and/or their family, so closing the gap provisions needs to be extended to supporting Indigenous staff in the workforce to ensure health needs (i.e. appointments) aren't avoided for fear of taking too much leave and it being discouraged in order to meet the organisational needs to the detriment of the worker and their family."*

Aboriginal worker: *"More local opportunities for workforce development in consultation with workers prior to date/time/location releases as some workers are only P/T and miss out if there is anything even offered. As courses are never presented to workers by management, workers must: find the appropriate course; see if it is available when you are; ask for approval; wait for approval; send interest then enrol. a massive task for someone who is overloaded at work. managers should present opportunities to staff so they know what is being offered."*

Aboriginal worker: *"As a whole the workforce is underskilled to meet the needs of the clients and the organisations needs to achieve outcome evidence. Very difficult to find staff that cover both. Impossible to operate without smashing skilled workers that meet the shortfall of other staff. The nature of AOD is high in lived experience workers without good administration/literacy and facilitation skills. Training has become watered down and qualifications are not meeting the needs of the clients or services. Underskilled staff with less abilities do not stay and train up as they get overwhelmed. Skilled staff do not stay as they get headhunted for new programs and take an easier choice of workload. E.g., Community work not residential."*

Aboriginal worker: *"Connectivity with other AOD workers, both in-house and in other organisations, would be beneficial."*

Aboriginal worker: *"Companies needs to look after the ATSI staff to keep them with a lot more cultural safety. And understand about lateral violence within our communities and in everything including workplace's."*

## References

- [1] Skinner N, McEntee A, Roche A. Australia's alcohol and other drug workforce: National survey results 2019-2020. Adelaide: National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction, Flinders University, 2020.
- [2] Australian Bureau of Statistics. 6302.0 Average Weekly Earnings, Australia. Canberra, 2020.