

# MEDIA RELEASE

**Embargoed until 26 March 2018**

## **Backing greater career opportunities for African Australians**

NAB and Jesuit Social Services have today announced they will extend their award-winning African Australian Inclusion Program (AAIP) to Sydney branches for the first time.

Jesuit Social Services has also formed partnerships with two other major organisations including John Holland to deliver similar corporate diversity programs.

The AAIP has been running at NAB for nine years and provides six months paid corporate experience to skilled African Australians struggling to gain employment due to a lack of local experience. So far 340 participants have participated in the program, with many then gaining permanent roles at NAB.

NAB traditionally offered AAIP places in its head offices, but last October a pilot began with five roles at Victorian branches. In expanding opportunities to the branch network, NAB demonstrated that right to the 'front line', NAB wants its people to reflect the diverse customers and communities that NAB serves.

Positive feedback has led to an extension in this branch pilot, with three AAIP participants to start in NAB branches in Sydney in April. There will be a further three new participants in customer-facing branch roles in Victoria. They will form part of a cohort of 41 new AAIP participants across the business.

Jesuit Social Services CEO Julie Edwards said the African Australian inclusion program was proof that diversity is an asset.

"Participants in this program, as well as our staff and the staff at NAB, have grown and flourished through involvement with the AAIP. It is exciting to now see the program expand into retail branches where the community will also get a chance to experience the richness of passion and skill that participants bring to their work," she said.

The program's achievements have led to other major Australian organisations setting up similar programs.

"Further proof of the success of this model is the recent government funding Jesuit Social Services has received to expand and partner with others to support more marginalised workers into skilled jobs," said Ms Edwards.

NAB CEO Andrew Thorburn said the pilot in Sydney branches further highlighted the value of the program, “The program has changed lives and, in the process, changed the bank in making it a more people-oriented organisation,” he said.

“This has been done by people taking a risk, having courage and making things happen. It is such a great story of what we are and what we need to be.”

A graduation ceremony will be held at NAB in Melbourne on 26 March for the latest round of AAIP participants based in Victoria.

For further information:

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