



An individual assessment tool | DELIVERING EQUITY

THE BUSINESS CASE | JULY 2019

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The case for Discovery

People without work experience or training, or who are unable to document their history, or with English as a second language, are often overlooked by traditional assessment and selection processes.

Discovery recognises that all people have abilities and skills relevant for training and employment opportunities. Discovery is a one-to-one, activity-based individual assessment and recruitment tool. It gathers information and life experiences relevant to work and training in an inclusive, participatory and welcoming way. It is language and culture fair. It works with all ages, from young people to adults, in any industry or sector, for profit and non-profit.

Samuel Bidingal, a recent Discovery participant is now a trainee with Rio Tinto. A resident of Gapuwiyak, in Arnhem Land, Samuel had not been able to gain work beyond his community. Discovery allowed him to demonstrate his strengths such as motivation, precision, and task focus. He said he was able to “connect all the dots”. Now in work and training, he says he has made his “family smile”.

Discovery is a stand-alone and contained assessment tool for organisations to implement themselves. Once taught through a Workshop or one-on-one training, Discovery then becomes added to the organisation’s other assessment and development tools. It helps organisations to find and use the specific skills of individuals for work, for training and career progression opportunities.



Watch [Discovery | Delivering equity](#) with participants

Discovery benefits

For organisations, Discovery delivers immediate and long-term benefits:

- an alternative cost-effective fully contained assessment and recruitment tool
- improved matching of training and employment opportunities
- effective and practical staff development
- greater diversity and inclusivity in the workplace
- a robust and tested methodology to engage with the local community, potential trainees and employees and their families
- a mechanism to foster positive social change

For participants, Discovery also delivers many benefits:

- a respectful and inclusive process recognising and recording a person’s skills and interests
- a positive and productive assessment or recruitment experience
- the ability to learn more about the organisation and the opportunities available
- enabling the participant to share insights into their culture and experiences
- growing the participant’s confidence and pride



Watch how Gumatj Corporation used Discovery to recruit their first intake of 20 trainees for their own mining operation [Bringing Forward Young Leaders](#) and hear from trainees about their experiences [Australia’s first Indigenous bauxite mine opens in NT](#) by Rio Tinto.

“Discovery is a well-regarded process by Traditional Owners and within our communities. We have undertaken training in Discovery to do all future intakes”. Klaus Helms, CEO, Gumatj Corporation

“Discovery offered a first for us to start a training program with such a cohesive group and for us to know so much about them individually”. Barbara Cram, Charles Darwin University

“Discovery helps organisations deliver meaningful training and employment opportunities, it values community experience and translates this in terms that are understood in the world of work”. Banambi Wunungmurra, Traditional Owner, Councillor, East Arnhem Regional Council

How Discovery works

Aptitude indicating ability

Discovery works by testing an individual's aptitude as a way to help determine ability. Testing aptitudes to estimate ability is a long-standing and internationally accepted methodology that evolved as advances in behavioural studies and theories developed throughout the 20th century. It reliably assesses potential where their performance can be evaluated.

The target audience for Discovery is people who have had little or no formal workplace experience and therefore little or no ability to demonstrate their performance in a workplace. Using aptitudes to assess potential is a logical approach. It gives a summary of the likely ability of the individual based on common competencies relevant to most workplaces and for training. It guides an organisation or provider about the type of roles or work where the applicant is most likely to succeed and how to best support them for their ongoing development.

"Discovery helped us build a picture of each applicant, their strengths, current knowledge and aspirations". Jeremy Kee, CEO, Miwatj Employment and Participation

Assessment methodology

The results achieved with Discovery are reliable and robust without the need for lengthy statistical analysis or external parties to evaluate. In behavioural assessments there is often some subjectivity. To minimise this, Discovery uses well regarded behavioural science methodologies including the Likert and Bipolar scales and nationally recognised standardised tests.

There have been 1,045 Discovery assessments completed. Six hundred and eighty-five of the assessments have been documented by joint-creator of Discovery, Dr Cecil Pearson. The results have been analysed and published in a variety of academic papers.

"I commend the design, methodology and the underlying critical assumptions of this new pathway".
Emeritus Professor Samir Ranjan Chatterjee, Curtin Business School, Curtin University

Who should use Discovery?

Discovery is relevant for companies, organisations and institutions, associations and government agencies engaged with or providing training and/or employment for people on a short-term or long-term basis, for work experience or as suppliers. Discovery is also relevant to philanthropic and grant-making or donor organisations keen to encourage and facilitate education, enterprise development and sustainable economic growth. Discovery works for all industry sectors and in all location settings: urban, regional, rural, remote.

"We have had good success with Discovery as a recruitment process for our Indigenous corporate training program". Gary Barnes, Senior Advisor, Rio Tinto

Implementing Discovery

During group or individual training, participants from the organisation/s learn and implement all aspects of Discovery including assessing applicants for a training or employment opportunity. Organisations then receive a Discovery Toolkit to implement Discovery in their organisation independently and on an on-going basis. The cost for training is negotiated based on requirements directly with the organisation.

"The workshop was well put together and the East Arnhem Regional Council will be implementing Discovery". Kylie Owens, Learning and Development, East Arnhem Regional Council

Further information:

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Appendix 1 | About Turnstone Projects

Rebecca Iliffe established Turnstone Projects in 2003 to work with companies, organisations and communities where shared interests exist. Turnstone Projects works in three related areas: Grantlines, partnering people and projects for good; asset-based community investment attraction; and project development and management. Turnstone Projects works collaboratively to help establish pathways, programs and services to collaboratively achieve appropriate investment, social enterprise, strategic giving and employment. www.turnstoneprojects.com



Rebecca Iliffe has two decades of experience working with companies, government and the philanthropic sector to deepen engagement with the communities where they have connections or seek to support. She is also an Associate Consultant with Philanthropy Australia. Rebecca complements her work with pro bono services to people and projects particularly in education within the local community where her business is based. In addition, Rebecca and her family are actively involved in philanthropy and give through their small family trust, the Bethesda Trust, which combines grant-making and digital storytelling to advocate, educate and inspire. www.bethesdatrust.net.au

Partners in Discovery

Turnstone Projects has formed a collaboration with Dr Cecil Pearson and Ms Sandra Daff to develop and implement Discovery.



Dr Cecil Pearson (PhD, UWA) was a senior research fellow at the School of Management at Curtin University in Perth with over 10 years spent in research and practice in Human Resources Management including as editor of *Research and Practice in Human Resource Management Journal* (2003 – 2014) and in the study of behavioural sciences. He joined Curtin University following his time as a senior academic at Murdoch University. Originally an engineer, he taught in secondary schools for seven years and then moved to the State Railways as District Engineer responsible for the management of up to 400 people to maintain the assets for the safe operation of the rail network. With a doctorate in measurement and organisational development, Dr Pearson determined the parameters and assessment methodologies for the Discovery process. He is widely published in academic journals in the disciplines of education, management and Indigenous employment.



Ms Sandra Daff has extensive experience in community relations with specialist skills in Indigenous community development, mining, government and education, particularly in remote locations having lived and worked on the Gove Peninsula for 15 years. She was the Indigenous Affairs Specialist and Project Manager for ALERT (Arnhem Learning Education Regional Training) for Rio Tinto Alcan. She implemented the now well regarded and recognised ALERT Indigenous educational vocational program in 2007 and working with Dr Pearson, the recruitment process of Discovery. Sandra managed ALERT for eight years and during this time, developed and introduced the vocational education and training programs of Ralpa and Goyurr as feeder programs to ALERT.

Sandra and Rebecca have been working together since 2005 in Arnhem Land with the ALERT program and now through Turnstone Projects where they created Discovery as a stand-alone tool to rethink recruitment and assessment, implemented the Gulkula Regional Training Centre recruitment and developed and managed the HEART Program for Miwatj Employment and Participation.

Appendix 2 | Discovery evolution and experience

Discovery as a stand-alone tool was launched in mid 2016. The key elements of Discovery have been successfully used since 2007 and in late 2015 a decision was made to develop Discovery as a tool available to interested organisations to implement themselves. Informing this decision was the repeated success in bringing forward people who previously had felt unable to apply for or request training due to confidence and/or a lack of workplace experience and the success in transferring the skills to new practitioners and the willingness to rethink selection and recruitment for the benefit of all.

Discovery was adopted by Gumatj Corporation in the Northern Territory (NT) to support its first intake of participants for their year-long training and employment program at the Gulkula Regional Training Centre (GRTC) in Arnhem Land. There were 89 applicants for 20 places with the final selection determined by nominated Traditional Owners.

The practice of Discovery can be confidently transferred. Over 40 people, of various ages, ethnicity, and gender, have been trained as facilitators. The scores for 29 of these individuals to successfully deliver and assess Discovery have been evaluated using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) provided by Curtin University with a result of 97 per cent reliability. In June 2017 a three-day intensive Discovery Workshop was held with five NT based organisations (Charles Darwin University, East Arnhem Regional Council, Laynhapuy Aboriginal Homeland Association, Miwatj Employment and Participation and Gumatj Corporation) to learn and use Discovery in their own business practices for selection and recruitment. The Workshop was rated with a 91.4 per cent satisfaction.

Prior to its launch as a stand-alone tool, Discovery was one part of an integrated employment and training program operating in north east Arnhem Land. Discovery was developed by Dr Pearson and Sandra Daff for the ALERT program with Alcan and then Rio Tinto Alcan. Since then, Discovery has been adapted and improved. Dr Pearson, Sandra Daff and Rebecca Iliffe refined the process for a pilot employment program for remote Indigenous communities in north east Arnhem Land with the Australian Government's Miwatj Employment and Participation.

There have been approximately 1,045 Discovery assessments completed. Six hundred and eighty-five of the assessments have been documented by Dr Pearson. These 685 assessments were done with men and women across all ages. The results have been analysed and included in a variety of academic papers published in Australia and internationally. Rio Tinto in Gove, NT, uses the Discovery process for its corporate Indigenous training program, Ralpa and have completed over 420 assessments.

Discovery sessions recorded and assessed by Dr Cecil Pearson (mid 2007- 2017)

Programs using Discovery for recruitment	Discovery sessions	Selection	Workplace training	Full time work & placement
ALERT May 2007 - Jul 2012	456	248	175	80
Rio Tinto Feb 2012 - Feb 2014	133	97	78	78
HEART May – Oct 2015	33	31	20	20
Gumatj Corp Jun - Dec 2017	63	30	20	10
Totals	685	406	293	188

Reasons for the reduced numbers from the Discovery sessions held to selection include: literacy; accommodation; medical; custodial; disinterest; and, dismissals. In addition, all selected applicants attended a two or three-day recruitment workshop following Discovery for further assessment prior to undertaking workplace training.

Appendix 3 | Discovery testimonials

Traditional Owner support

In Arnhem Land, Discovery is a trusted first step in recruitment for training and employment. Senior Traditional Owners value the respectful approach of Discovery and the time spent with their family, clan and community. They can participate in the discussion and because of the very mobile approach; they can be present and lend their support.

Mr Banambi Wunungmurra, Traditional Owner, former Councillor and Mayor of the East Arnhem Regional Council has been a long-term supporter of Discovery and sees it “as a useful way to engage with, understand and value community experience and translate this to terms that are understood in the world of work”. The engagement by the senior men and women in Arnhem Land over many years has been instrumental in ensuring the applicants and trainees are supported and when required, elders will step in to ensure attendance and participation.

Mr Wunungmurra’s son, Marriwuy Wunungmurra was assessed using Discovery and selected to participate on the Miwatj Employment and Participation’s HEART Program in 2015, a pilot employment program. Following HEART, Marriwuy moved into his first choice for work placement with Deltareef, a local private housing construction and maintenance company in Yirrkala.



Klaus Helms, CEO, Gumatj Corporation:

“We are committed to local employment and Discovery supports this. It helps us develop business opportunities and projects based on the people and skills available. We have employed many people who have completed Discovery. It is a well-regarded process among Traditional Owners and within our communities and one we support. We have used Discovery for the selection of our first 20 participants at the Gulkula Regional Training Centre. We have also undertaken training in Discovery ourselves along with four other local organisations enabling us to do all future intakes. We were really pleased with the result for the GRTC and the Traditional Owners were well equipped to make the final selection.”



Watch [Bringing Forward Young Leaders](#) Gumatj Corporation and Discovery.

Barbara Cram, Charles Darwin University, Regional Training Organisation for the Gulkula Regional Training Centre:

“We have been really delighted with the calibre of the participants, how they interact with each other, how thoughtful and focussed they are. It is a first for us to start a training program with such a cohesive group and for us to know so much about them individually”.

Gary Barnes, Senior Advisor, ALERT - Gove Operations, Aluminium, Rio Tinto:

“We continue to have good success with Discovery as a recruitment process for our Indigenous corporate training programs called Ralpa. We are now up to Ralpa 11 and have done over 420 Discovery sessions. Ralpa 10 had some very good employment outcomes with seven of the ten trainees securing employment: three with Rio Tinto mine traineeships; one with YBE; one with Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation; one with the Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Art Centre; and, one with Gumatj Corporation.”

Emeritus Professor Samir Ranjan Chatterjee, Curtin Business School, Curtin University:

“Having been associated with the ALERT Program in Northern Territory some years ago and publishing a number of scholarly papers based on it, I am thrilled with this exciting initiative. I wish more people would become aware of the potential of this innovative developmental and enrichment program for Australia. I commend the design, methodology and the underlying critical assumptions of this new pathway.”

Jeremy Kee, CEO, Miwatj Employment and Participation:

“Discovery provided a strong foundation for us to deliver MEP’s HEART Program in 2015. HEART was testing a new approach to employment training in Arnhem Land and because of this we needed to be collaborative every step of the way. Discovery supported this. It was inclusive and encouraged engagement, everyone was involved. The Traditional Owners were really supportive. Discovery helped us build a picture of each applicant, their strengths, current knowledge and aspirations. We used this information in our selection process and it also informed how the training, projects and work placement including during the prestigious Garma Festival were developed and delivered. The HEART crew had a big presence at Garma in 2015 during their work placement especially by the Yothu Yindi Foundation and Sodexo.”

During the HEART Program, many of the participants wanted to share their story about their experiences and hopes.



Watch [HEART A New Approach to Employment Training in Arnhem Land](#)

Angela Bourke, Jawun Indigenous Partnerships and Director, Strategy and External Affairs, Australian Energy Regulator:

“I was fortunate to have the opportunity to learn about, and undertake, Discovery whilst working in a remote community in north east Arnhem Land. As part of a six-week Jawun secondment, I helped to deliver the HEART (Homeland Employment Activity and Regional Training) program. This culturally-informed pilot program recruited 20 Yolngu men and women from the Homelands, all of whom completed Certificate 1 training and work placement.

A critical part of HEART’s success was Discovery. Discovery was an incredibly useful tool - not only to recruit and identify suitable program participants but in developing and building rapport. The face-to-face, open conversation that Discovery encourages, as well as its hands-on and engaging activities, allow the participant and practitioner to have a shared and fun experience. Practitioners can develop an understanding of a participant’s capabilities and aptitudes without them feeling like they are in a formal test environment. It highlighted where participants would benefit from additional support throughout the training and enabled deeper relationships to develop.

Some of the practical benefits of Discovery are that it can be done anywhere and by a range of practitioners with relatively limited training and some initial guidance/support. After my induction as a practitioner, I felt confident to deliver Discovery sessions, could readily undertake the assessments and use the information provided through the sessions to achieve improved outcomes for the project.”

Appendix 4 | About the Discovery Workshop

The Discovery Workshop equips an organisation's nominated facilitators with the theoretical and practical understanding of Discovery. They can then implement Discovery for their organisation using the Discovery Toolkit and Workbook completely independently as one tool within the staff recruitment and development practices.

Workshop participants are taught how to manage all aspects of the process:

Activity	Name of activity	Assessment focus	Assessment time
Workplace Literacy	Icebreaker Interview	Communication and literacy	10 minutes
1	Frog Hop	Motivation Coordination Knowledge building	3 minutes
2	Origami Rabbit	Precision Conformity Attentiveness	3 minutes
3	Peg Task	Information processing Memory Task focus	3 minutes
4	Tangram 1	Thinking Memory Spatial awareness	3 minutes
5	Tangram 2	Creativity Thinking Perceptual expression	3 minutes
6	Cube and Balls	Persistence Reasoning Dexterity	3 minutes
Workplace Literacy and Numeracy	Literacy recognition Basic numeracy	Workplace sight words, flash cards, make a word, addition, subtraction, multiplication, sequencing and relativity	10 – 15 minutes
Literacy	Burt or Torch	Reading competency Reading comprehension	10 – 30 minutes

The most effective way to teach Discovery is through a Workshop or individual training on-site and where there are current applicants seeking training or employment with the organisation (or with partner organisations).

Participants involved in the Arnhem Land Discovery Workshop June 2017 reported the best aspects of the training were:

- “the incorporation of real-life assessments and exposure to issues faced was of great benefit”: *Rob Buttery, Charles Darwin University, Darwin;*
- “well planned, fun and engaging. The facilitators worked so well together”: *Barbara Cram, Charles Darwin University, Darwin*
- “the workshop was a well put together program and the Council will be implementing this approach”: *Kylie Owens, East Arnhem Regional Council, Nhulunbuy*
- “to see Discovery made available to more Yolngu and local corporations and organisations”: *Thomas Amagula, Gumatj Corporation, Gunyangara*

Options for Discovery training:

- The Workshop can be delivered as a group training program of up to 15 facilitators. This is often the most cost-efficient option and, the most beneficial for an organisation as the greatest number of facilitators are trained and more applicants are assessed for a current work or training opportunity during the Workshop. For example, at the end of a three-day Workshop, there are 15 newly trained Discovery facilitators with the skills and resources to implement Discovery on behalf of their organisation and up to 15 applicants have been assessed. Up to five or six local organisations might take part in the one larger group training program. This collaborative approach has many benefits for the organisations involved and the potential applicants.
- Discovery can also be delivered as an intensive program tailored to an organisation with two or more facilitators. If required, Discovery trainers can remain on site and help undertake assessments collaboratively with the new Discovery facilitators.

Services of the Discovery Workshop

The Discovery Workshop includes all of the following services:

1. research and familiarisation of client requirements and region for the Workshop delivery;
2. preparation and distribution of a pre-workshop electronic survey for facilitators;
3. a welcome email to facilitators with the survey link and video introductions;
4. compilation and review of the survey results in preparation for the Workshop;
5. on-site individual facilitator meetings with each person participating in the training before the workshop and feedback to client (up to one day);
6. workshop delivery (two or three days) by two Discovery trainers;
7. provision of Discovery equipment for the workshop, training resources and videos;
8. preparation assistance while on-site for the applicant assessments (office-like and out-of-office settings);
9. assistance with mentoring and feedback on the individual Discovery sessions with actual applicants (up to 15 people); and
10. provision of the comprehensive Discovery Toolkit (two kits for large groups, one for smaller groups).

Contents of the Discovery Toolkit

As part of the Workshop, the commissioning organisation receives a Discovery Toolkit, allowing organisations to implement Discovery independently on an on-going basis.

In the Discovery Toolkit is:

1. the Discovery Workbook with the Discovery procedures, activities, worksheets and assessments (a Discovery USB containing the individual worksheets and assessment sheets);
2. Frog Hop board and six frogs;
3. Origami Rabbit, one made origami rabbit, 200 mm x 200 mm square 80 gsm paper (200 sheets);
4. Peg task, triangular plate and 15 pegs;
5. Tangram 1, 2 mm laser cut plastic;
6. Tangram 2, 2 mm laser cut plastic;
7. Cube and Balls, one cube and ball activity;

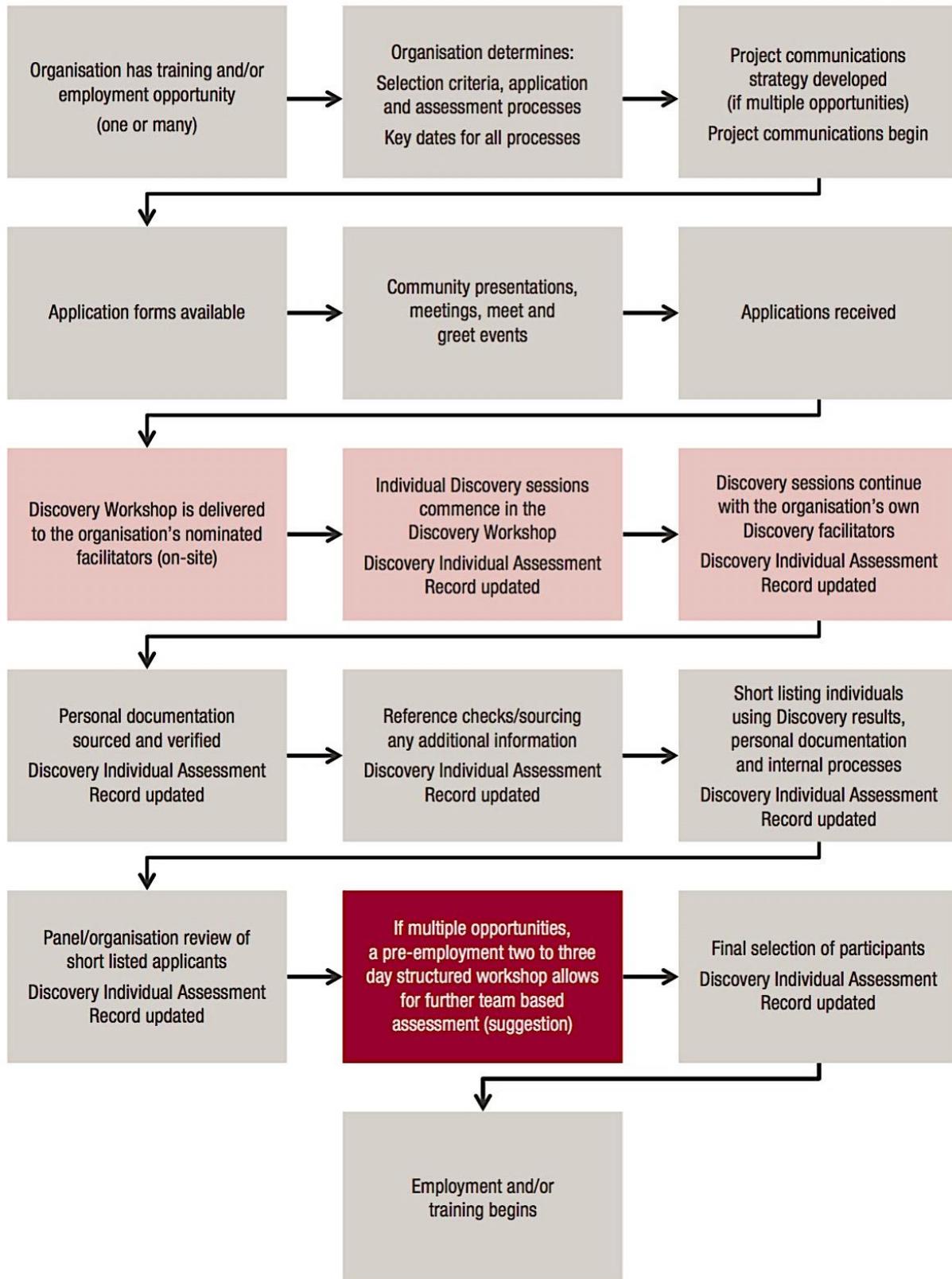
8. Workplace literacy and numeracy: two common sign flash cards, laminated; 12 specific word flash cards, laminated; days of the week, laminated; months of the year, laminated; nine specific letters of the alphabet; tape measure; six specific laminated numbers;
9. basic stop watch and spare battery;
10. basic calculator;
11. Discovery Individual Record Excel spreadsheet (provided on the Discovery USB); and
12. video presentations including all six hands-on activities and workplace literacy and numeracy.

The following table outlines the services and aspects to the Discovery Workshop for a large group (15 people) and a smaller group for intensive training.

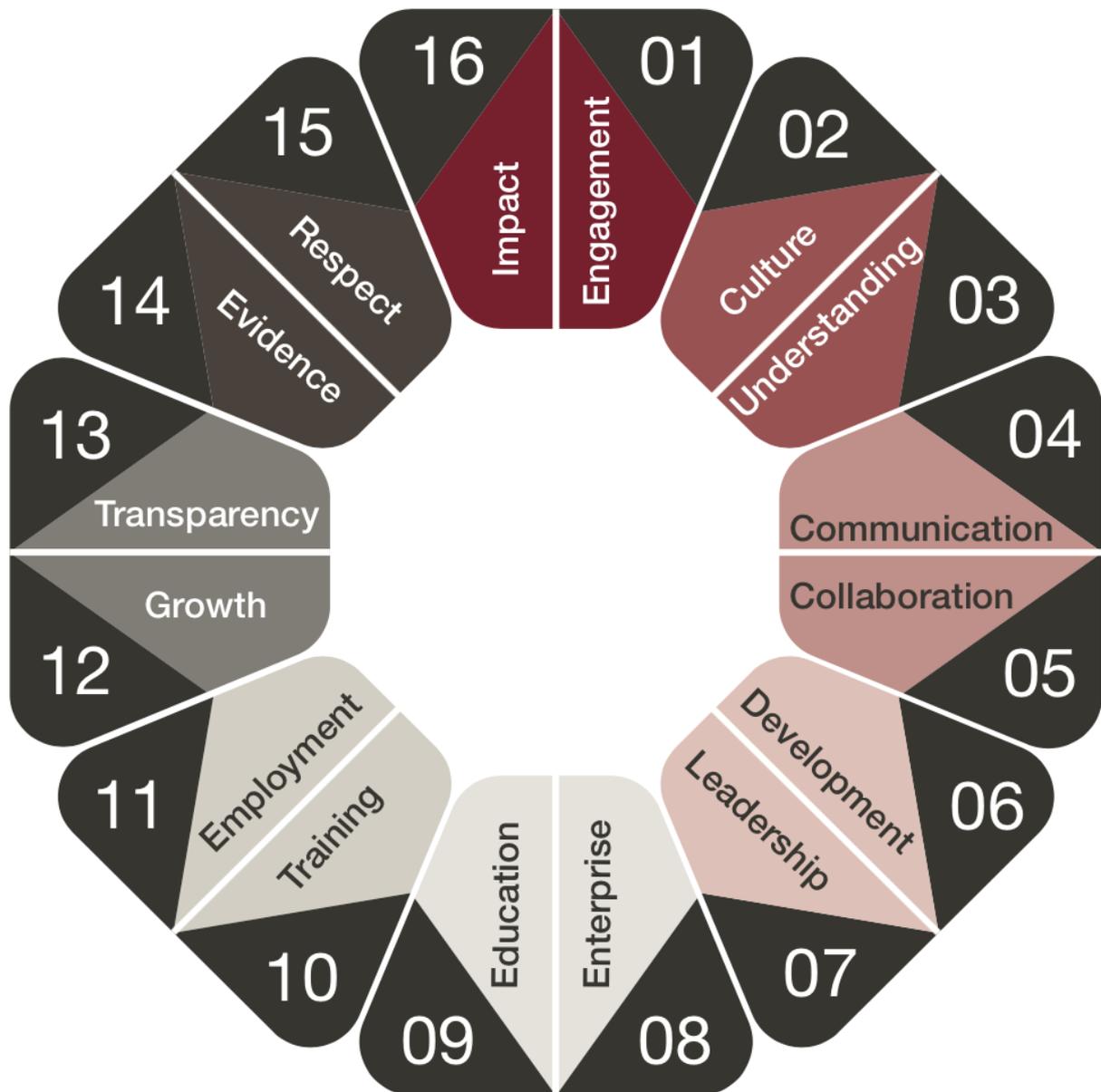
Implementing Discovery	Group training	Intensive training
Client liaison and preparatory electronic survey with nominated participants	✓	✓
Training content <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. an introduction of Discovery as a recruitment and individual assessment tool 2. an understanding of the importance of the facilitator's role and responsibilities 3. the knowledge of the six hands-on activities, an understanding of the aptitudes being tested and the assessment methodologies and requirements 4. information on and experience in the Icebreaker Interview and Workplace Literacy and Numeracy exercises 5. a detailed understanding of the Torch and Burt literacy assessments 6. strategies and practice for effective community and stakeholder engagement 7. familiarity of the Discovery Individual Assessment Record 8. practical experience in completing all aspects of Discovery as the lead facilitator and observer 	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Assessment of actual applicants (if 15 facilitators, 15 applicants, if less facilitators or if training is shorter, fewer assessments)	✓	Time dependent
Trainers	✓ (Two)	✓ (One)
Duration on-site	Four days	Three days
Supply of Discovery Toolkit	✓ (Two)	✓ (One)

The cost of a Workshop is tailored specifically to the organisation (or organisations) and depends on the need which is discussed and jointly agreed. The focus is to share this methodology and all efforts are made to enable this to happen.

The following chart shows how Discovery blends into an organisation's assessment or recruitment process:



In Summary | The benefits of Discovery for organisations and individuals



"I am thrilled with this exciting initiative. I commend the design, methodology and the underlying critical assumptions of this new pathway".

Emeritus Professor Samir Ranjan Chatterjee, Curtin Business School, Curtin University

"Discovery is fantastic, it made me see what my strengths are. If this was done for my mob, I would get a better idea of their strengths".

Sally Davison, Arrange artist, Sayme2.com, Anmatyerr woman, Central Desert

Appendix 5 | Discovery references

For further evidence about Discovery, a range of references has been provided:

Daff, S., Iliffe, R., Helms, K. & Pearson, C.A.L. (2018). Extending customary cultural ideals of Indigenous people in remote communities when engaging labour market forces of the Australian mining industry, *Journal of Australian Indigenous Issues* (pending publication)

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