

Eastern Health 

# Aboriginal Workforce Plan 2023–2026



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## Acknowledgements



Eastern Health acknowledges the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation, the Traditional Owners of the land on which its services operate, and pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging. We also pay respect to the cultural authority of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from other areas of Australia who reside in our region. Eastern Health acknowledges the colonisation of Country and the continuing impact on all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We would also like to acknowledge staff who contributed to the development of our Aboriginal Workforce Plan 2023–2026, in particular, our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

## Recognition Statement

Eastern Health is committed to achieving equality in health status between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.

Throughout this document the term Aboriginal is used to refer to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Use of the terms Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Indigenous are retained in the names of programs and initiatives and unless otherwise noted are inclusive of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The term Aboriginal Workforce is used to refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who are members of Eastern Health's workforce, inclusive of clinical and non-clinical staff, our undergraduate and postgraduate students across medical, nursing and allied health disciplines, and volunteers.



Eastern Health strives to be an inclusive healthcare service.

Our front cover features members of Eastern Health's Aboriginal Health Team, our community-based service located in Healesville. The service adopts a holistic approach in line with cultural best practice and provides a broad range of services which are available for Aboriginal peoples across the eastern metropolitan region.

# Chief Executive Foreword

Eastern Health is committed to growing and developing a talented and versatile Aboriginal workforce.



David Plunkett

I am delighted to present Eastern Health's Aboriginal Workforce Plan 2023–2026. This Plan, together with the Reconciliation Action Plan and Cultural Safety Plan, demonstrates our commitment to Closing the Health Gap and reducing inequalities in health status and outcomes for Aboriginal peoples in the eastern metropolitan region.

The Plan, developed in consultation with our staff and members of our Aboriginal Community, will guide our actions and priorities over the next three years, and builds on the efforts and progress we have made through the implementation of previous Aboriginal workforce plans. Demonstrating our strong commitment to growing and developing a talented and versatile Aboriginal workforce, and with a strong focus on cultural safety and belonging, our Aboriginal Workforce Plan 2023–2026 articulates how we will deliver impactful attraction, recruitment, on-boarding, development and retention strategies.



**David Plunkett**  
Chief Executive Officer



# Our vision

*Aboriginal employment parity will only be achieved when Aboriginal employees are present in the workforce in the same proportion as they are in the national population at approximately 3.3 per cent.*

Australian Indigenous Employment Index 2022<sup>1</sup>

Our vision is to build true parity, and become an employer of choice for Aboriginal peoples where:

- The rich and thriving culture, knowledge and lived experience of our Aboriginal staff, patients, their families and the Aboriginal Community are valued and celebrated
- Each person has culturally safe and positive employee experiences which foster belonging and access to diverse experiences and career pathways
- Eastern Health continues to increase and strengthen our Aboriginal workforce by focusing on impactful attraction, recruitment, on-boarding, development and retention strategies
- Eastern Health continues to address the systemic issues that tarnish great opportunities and experiences for Aboriginal employees, while also building a culturally safe and supportive workplace culture for all.

# Our organisation

Eastern Health is one of Melbourne's largest metropolitan health services.

We provide a range of emergency, surgical, medical and general healthcare services, including maternity, palliative care, mental health, drug and alcohol, residential care, community health and statewide specialist services.

These services are provided to people and communities that are diverse in culture, age, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, gender identity and healthcare needs. Our mental health support network includes partnerships with Spectrum and Turning Point.

Eastern Health is located across the six municipalities of Boroondara, Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Whitehorse and Yarra Ranges, covering a geographical area of 2,816 square kilometres. We have over 60 facilities, and our main sites include:

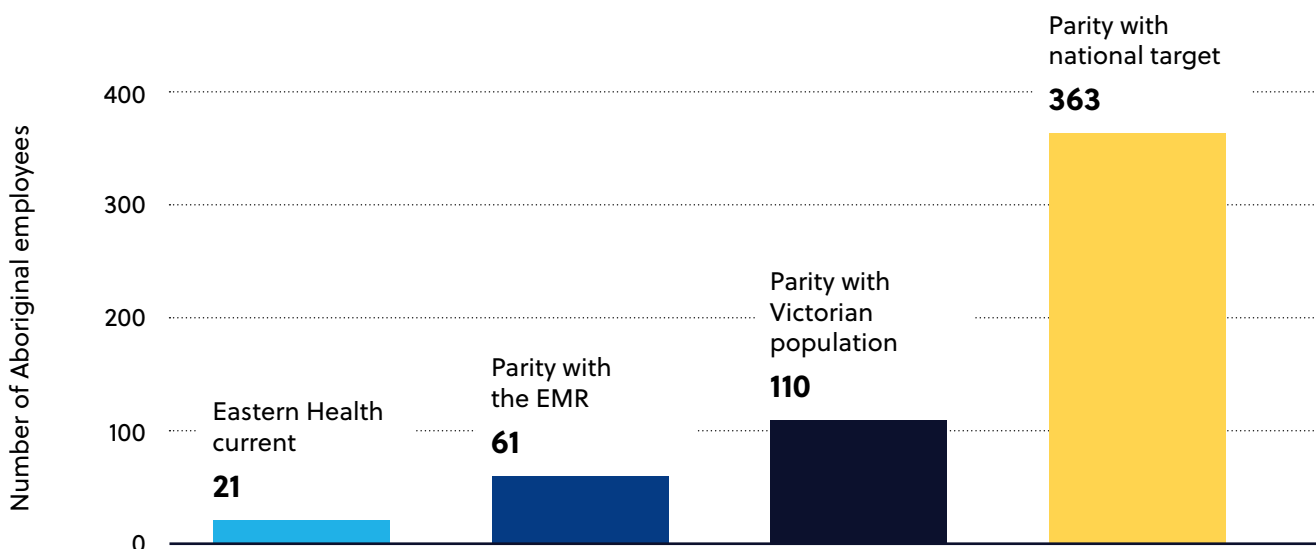
- Eastern Health Angliss
- Eastern Health Blackburn
- Eastern Health Box Hill
- Eastern Health Distribution Centre
- Eastern Health Healesville
- Eastern Health Lilydale
- Eastern Health Maroondah
- Eastern Health Peter James
- Eastern Health Richmond
- Eastern Health Wantirna
- Eastern Health Yarra Junction.

Eastern Health provides healthcare services to a population of nearly 900,000 people, nearly 5,000<sup>2</sup> of whom identify as Aboriginal.

We employ over 11,000 people in a range of clinical and non-clinical roles, less than 1% (n=25) of whom identify as Aboriginal.

There remains a significant under-representation of Aboriginal peoples at Eastern Health (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Current Aboriginal employees at Eastern Health compared with expected numbers based on the Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR) population, and the Eastern Health goal (parity with the Victorian population of 1%)





# Progress to date

Eastern Health is committed to Closing the Health Gap and reducing inequality in healthcare status and outcomes between Aboriginal peoples and non-Indigenous Australians. This commitment was solidified in August 2012 when Eastern Health signed the Close the Gap Statement of Intent with the Victorian Minister for Health and our Aboriginal Elders.

Since the implementation of our first Aboriginal Workforce Plan in 2012, Eastern Health continues to work towards creating an environment where we can attract and develop a strong Aboriginal workforce that is central to the provision of culturally responsive health services, resulting in better health outcomes for our Aboriginal Community.

While developing the Aboriginal Workforce Plan 2023–2026, we recognise the achievements we have made since 2012, and acknowledge there is more we need to do to achieve true parity.

## Eastern Health highlights to date:

- Developed an Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan to enable oversight of the delivery of culturally responsive services to Aboriginal patients, their families and the Community
- Developed a Cultural Safety Plan demonstrating our commitment to providing culturally safe environments and to delivering culturally safe care and support services for all Aboriginal peoples engaging with our health service
- Developed a strong governance structure through the establishment of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Clinical Risk Governance Committee (Aboriginal Health CRGC)
- Established an Aboriginal Health Advisory Committee to support self-determination at Eastern Health
- Established a Closing the Health Gap Committee in the Mental Health Program to develop and operationalise social and emotional wellbeing and mental health strategies
- Established a Closing the Health Gap Committee in the Women and Children Program to enable effective partnerships that promote Aboriginal women's, children's and family health



- Established an Aboriginal Workforce Committee to develop and implement an organisation-wide approach to increasing the employment and participation of Aboriginal peoples in Eastern Health's workforce
- Implemented Aboriginal Cultural Awareness training as part of new employee on-boarding. Since its release in March 2015, there have been a total of 29,114 completions and a further 8,315 completions since the updated version was released in November 2020. Eastern Health currently has a 96% employee completion rate for this course (October 2022)
- Significant progress towards improving cultural safety at all Eastern Health sites, including support for all frontline staff to Ask the Question, prominent display of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags, Acknowledgement plaques and artwork
- Recruited an Aboriginal Employment Coordinator to support the implementation of Aboriginal workforce attraction, recruitment, development and retention activities
- Supported seven Aboriginal staff to undertake Mental Health Traineeships
- Received funding for the Aboriginal cadetship program for nursing, midwifery and allied health students.

### Eastern Health opportunities for development:

- Not all employees have identified as Aboriginal within the workplace. Through focus group discussions and staff survey responses, for some this is due to never being asked, but in other instances it is due to a fear of cultural load, career limitations or lack of trust. More work is required to identify reasons why new Aboriginal employees do not identify during the recruitment and on-boarding process.
- Due to the small number of Aboriginal employees within the organisation, employees are often relied upon to 'do all the culture work' which should be shared with leaders, the organisation and non-Indigenous employees more broadly. This can add significant pressure and stress. It can also lead to a message that valued knowledge of Aboriginal staff is cultural and dilutes the importance of their skills and knowledge of healthcare.
- Strong governance, brave leadership, bold measures and meaningful action is needed to successfully implement the Plan.









**“Eastern Health has supported us to develop in our roles from day one. We hope to further our education in Aboriginal health, and one day hope to be able to mentor Aboriginal staff at Eastern Health.”**

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**Tanya Ellard**

**Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Team Leader,  
Aboriginal Health Team  
[middle]**

**Nicole McErlain and  
Stacey Gilder Moate**

**Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officers,  
Aboriginal Health Team  
[left and right]**

Nicole is a proud Palawa woman, born and raised on Wurundjeri and Taungurung Country. Tanya is a proud Bangerang woman, and Stacey is a proud Taungurung woman.

As part of the Aboriginal Health Team, Tanya, Nicole and Stacey support Aboriginal patients and their families as they engage with our health service.

# A spotlight on the health sector

*A strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce is a powerful driver of change and evidence clearly shows that an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce delivers better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.<sup>3</sup>*

Aboriginal peoples are over-represented as patients in our healthcare system, and face significant inequities in health status. Evidence shows the provision of culturally safe care is essential to meet the healthcare needs of Aboriginal peoples, and a strong Aboriginal workforce will deliver better health outcomes for Aboriginal peoples.<sup>4</sup>

Aboriginal peoples are, however, seriously under-represented in the healthcare workforce, contributing to reduced access to healthcare services for Aboriginal peoples, and although the healthcare and social services sector employs the greatest number of Aboriginal peoples, they represent only 1.8% of Australia's health workforce, 0.7% of Victoria's health workforce,<sup>5</sup> and in 2022 only 0.2% of Eastern Health's workforce, despite being 3.4% of the Australian population<sup>6</sup>.

## Strategic alignment

In 2020, all Australian governments worked in partnership to develop the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* (the National Agreement) that committed to increasing the proportion of Aboriginal peoples in employment, education and training.<sup>7</sup>

Focusing on achieving equality of health status and life expectancy between Aboriginal peoples and non-Indigenous Australians by 2031, the current Commonwealth Government Aboriginal health plan recommends development of the Aboriginal health workforce as a strategy to achieve this goal.<sup>8</sup> This strategy will be achieved through the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan 2021–2031*, that sets a target for Aboriginal peoples to be fully represented in the health workforce by 2031.<sup>9</sup>

Victoria's Department of Health and Department of Families, Fairness and Housing's *Aboriginal Workforce Strategy 2021–2026*<sup>10</sup> seeks to achieve an increase in the Aboriginal health workforce to 3% through improvements to employee experience, culturally responsive recruitment, selection and on-boarding, and expanded career development and leadership opportunities.

More broadly, our own Strategic Plan<sup>11</sup> supports the delivery of high-quality healthcare to the diverse population of Victoria's eastern metropolitan region, and is committed to being a high-performing organisation that includes a diverse and secure workforce that meets the health needs of its diverse population, including Aboriginal peoples.

## Aboriginal health workforce challenges

The National Health Workforce Dataset shows the total Aboriginal health workforce population in 2021 was approximately 1.4% of the Australian health workforce population, and approximately 0.7% of the Victorian health workforce population.<sup>12</sup>

A wealth of research shows Aboriginal healthcare workers experience many challenges when entering mainstream healthcare services, and build on the challenges experienced in engaging with education and training pathways prior to employment. Work environments, heavy workloads, poorly documented and understood roles and responsibilities, low salaries and perceptions of salary disparity, are all important factors affecting the retention of Aboriginal healthcare workers.<sup>13</sup> Systemic racism, bullying, lateral violence and having their Indigenous identity questioned or belittled are also detractors for Aboriginal healthcare workers.<sup>14,15</sup>



# Developing our Plan

Built on a foundation of self-determination, the Aboriginal Workforce Plan 2023–2026 has been developed in consultation with a diverse range of stakeholders, including Eastern Health’s Aboriginal workforce, and our Aboriginal Community.

The Eastern Health Strategic Workforce Plan Framework was used to inform the key actions undertaken to inform the co-design and development of the Plan.

The following governance groups supported development of this Plan:

- Aboriginal Health CRGC
- Aboriginal Workforce Sub-Committee.

In order to build a plan that is holistic and based on cultural and social underpinnings of health and wellbeing, we incorporated the voices and understandings from staff at Eastern Health and the Aboriginal Community.

The engagement process sought input from our:

- Aboriginal Community members
- Aboriginal employees
- Peers of Aboriginal employees
- Managers of Aboriginal employees
- Talent Acquisition Team
- Aboriginal Health Team.

In addition to gathering voices to inform our Plan, we also conducted a detailed review of progress made to date within Eastern Health, and reviewed current State, Federal and other Victorian health service employment plans.

These processes guided the formulation of five key focus areas, which inform the Aboriginal Workforce Plan 2023–2026.

# Key focus areas

## Focus area one

Create great attraction, recruitment and selection experiences for our prospective Aboriginal workforce.

### What the research tells us

- Build meaningful and sustainable employment opportunities across all directorates<sup>16</sup>
- Make recruitment processes culturally safe, offer supports and ensure hiring teams are culturally competent<sup>17</sup>
- Provide effective engagement with Aboriginal communities and organisations in support of the attraction and recruitment of Aboriginal talent<sup>18</sup>

## Focus area two

Ensure a culturally safe, inclusive and impactful on-boarding experience.

### What the research tells us

- Critical to delivering a great employee experience is ensuring a welcoming, inclusive and culturally safe on-boarding process<sup>19</sup>
- Supervisors, managers and peers need to play a significant role in ensuring a positive on-boarding experience. It is critical that these groups demonstrate cultural competence<sup>20</sup>
- Opportunities to identify and connect with other Aboriginal employees helps to foster connection, good support networks and wellbeing<sup>21</sup>

## Focus area three

Focus on retention. Provide great development opportunities. Build supportive and meaningful career pathways.

### What the research tells us

- Important factors affecting the retention of Aboriginal employees include heavy workloads, perceived lack of support and/or career development opportunities and the influence of community as a strong personal motivator and source of stress when work/life boundaries cannot be maintained<sup>22</sup>
- The retention of staff is strongly linked to how safe and valued Aboriginal employees feel in the workplace<sup>23</sup>



## The outcomes we will achieve

- 1 A targeted and impactful employee value proposition (EVP) which connects with Community
- 2 Recruitment and selection experiences are culturally safe and set candidates up for success
- 3 Targeted recruitment campaigns that attract prospective employees and provide visible and clear career pathways through the channels that work
- 4 Build and maintain strong partnerships with Community, education bodies and Aboriginal employment and recruitment agencies

## Our success measures

- Increase our Aboriginal workforce to at least 110 people by 2026
- All Aboriginal identified positions include Aboriginal representation in the recruitment and selection process
- Improved Aboriginal employee experience during recruitment and selection processes
- All hiring managers are trained to support new Aboriginal employees to self-identify
- Increase in the number of Aboriginal candidates applying for both Aboriginal identified and non-identified positions, across all health disciplines, roles and functions

## The outcomes we will achieve

- 1 All new Aboriginal employees are connected to the Aboriginal Staff Network and are provided with opportunities to connect with Community and feel welcomed from day one
- 2 Aboriginal employees are connected to a culturally appropriate buddy and can learn more about Eastern Health and our value proposition from week one
- 3 Buddy relationships promote two-way learning
- 4 The right tools, processes and resources are in place to create great experiences and rectify challenges quickly

## Our success measures

- 100% of Aboriginal employees are linked within the Aboriginal Staff Network upon commencing in a new role
- Proportion of Aboriginal employees connected with a culturally appropriate buddy increases
- Aboriginal employees report higher levels of belonging, connection, intent to stay and wellbeing during the on-boarding period
- Non-Indigenous employees develop greater understanding of Aboriginal perspectives to embed in their work

## The outcomes we will achieve

- 1 Strong focus on flexible development opportunities and equitable access
- 2 Diverse career pathways developed, offered and accessed
- 3 All managers can have quality development and career planning conversations with Aboriginal employees – focusing on the moments that matter most
- 4 Career development is prioritised and supported by Eastern Health
- 5 All Aboriginal employees feel safe, well and engaged at work

## Our success measures

- Increase in number of Aboriginal employees enrolled in internal and external development programs
- Number of Aboriginal employees supported to engage in cultural development initiatives
- 100% of Aboriginal staff and their line managers discuss and agree on an individual learning plan to build their skills and capability for current and future roles
- Number of Memorandums of Understanding or Partnership Agreements between Eastern Health and training providers
- Increased engagement and intent to stay metrics recorded

## Focus area four

Cultivate Aboriginal leadership at all levels.

### What the research tells us

- One of the biggest challenges facing Aboriginal leaders is finding the difficult balance between "looking after" and being directly accountable to their own families and "own mob", at the same time as fulfilling their wider responsibilities of working for their nations, communities and organisations, and with governments and other stakeholders<sup>24</sup>
- Individual strengths, knowing one's worth, building a profile, diversifying skill sets and developing formal and informal relationships are factors that enable career progression into leadership roles. Operational constraints (e.g. staffing caps, budgetary constraints), the undesirable nature of higher-level positions, poor management practices, and preconceptions, biases, prejudice and pigeon-holing result in fewer opportunities for movement to senior appointments<sup>25</sup>

## Focus area five

Focus on inclusion, culture, safety and belonging – where every Aboriginal employee can practise their cultural identity without fear of discrimination.

### What the research tells us

- Inclusion in the workplace is achieved when people feel their whole self is understood, respected for who they are, included at work, and are not just seen as a one-dimensional stereotype<sup>26</sup>





## The outcomes we will achieve

- 1 Aboriginal employees are provided with opportunities to develop and progress into leadership roles at all levels
- 2 A larger Aboriginal management workforce is built and maintained
- 3 Develop a Buddy program that transitions into a formal mentor program for new staff commencing six months following appointment

## Our success measures

- Increased number of Aboriginal employees participating in leadership development programs
- Increase in number of Aboriginal employees acting in higher duties
- Increase in number of Aboriginal employees in leadership roles

## The outcomes we will achieve

- 1 All employees and managers take responsibility for cultural safety, inclusion and belonging
- 2 Policies and practices are fair and remove any bias and/or barriers to employment and retention
- 3 Eastern Health celebrates cultural identity often, and makes it visible everywhere, every day
- 4 Strong connections between Eastern Health, Aboriginal employees and Community are created and maintained

## Our success measures

- 100% of employees complete cultural awareness training as part of on-boarding and then participate in biennial refresher training
- Managers and leaders complete a tailored cultural safety package that includes immersive experiences, to support transition from cultural awareness to cultural competence
- Employees are encouraged to create a cultural safety development goal in their Performance and Development plans, and this is reflected in relevant frameworks and guidelines
- Number of Aboriginal events held in partnership with Eastern Health and Aboriginal Community or organisation
- 100% of Eastern Health sites are welcoming, where all Aboriginal employees can find themselves represented and reflected

# Leadership, governance and reporting

Executive leadership, accountability and monitoring underpin the delivery of outcomes and measures designed to improve the Aboriginal employee experience.

Our governance arrangements will ensure our Board, Executive and leaders play an active role in monitoring activity and accountability.

Programs and Directorates, such as People and Culture and Learning and Teaching, and the Professions – Medicine, Nursing and Midwifery, and Allied Health – will have responsibility for policy, standards and guidelines for many of the actions generated in this Plan, and will also play an active role in decision making, advocacy and support.

The Aboriginal Workforce Sub-Committee, with representation across all disciplines, will play an active role in advocacy and support across all Programs, Directorates and Professions.

The Aboriginal Employment Coordinator will play a critical role in supporting the delivery of all actions outlined in the Aboriginal Workforce Plan 2023–2026.

Regular progress updates will be provided by the Aboriginal Workforce Sub-Committee to the Aboriginal Health CRGC.

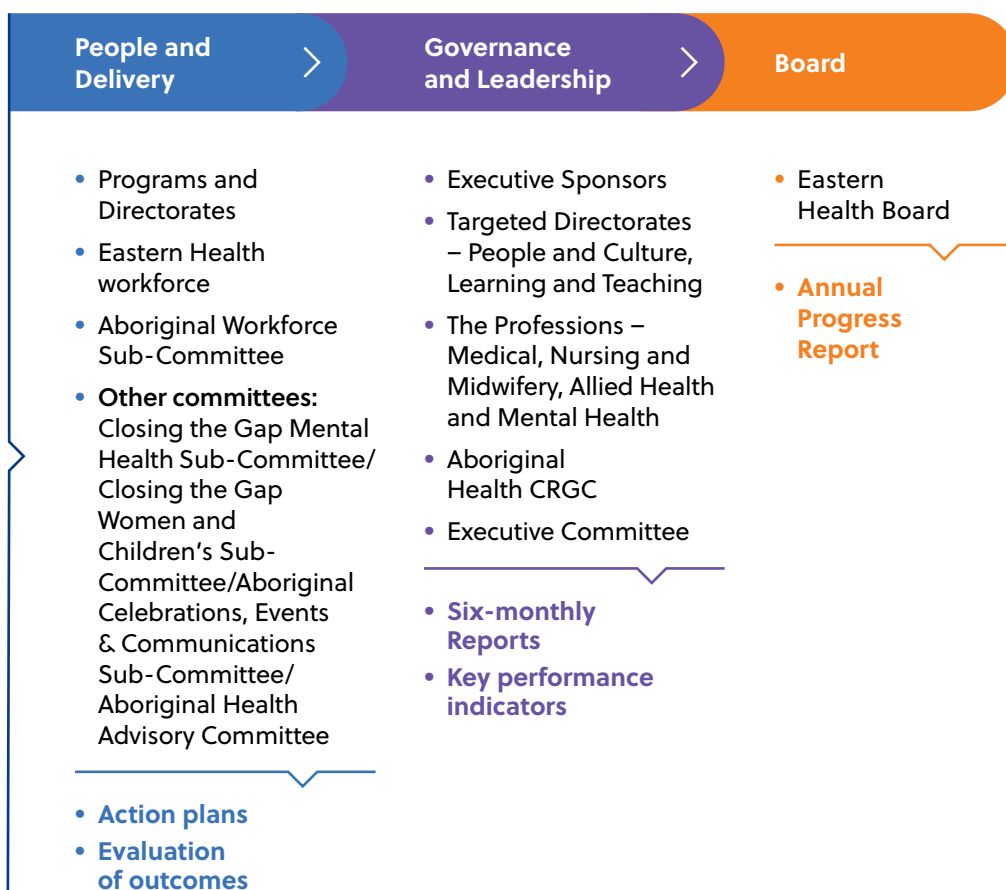
Eastern Health’s Aboriginal Health CRGC will:

- Ensure our key outcomes are core Eastern Health business
- Monitor and regularly reflect on progress against key targets and indicators
- Provide strategic advice on implementation of this Plan
- Identify ways in which outcomes can be included in existing performance accountability frameworks of relevant staff.

A review of progress against the Aboriginal Workforce Plan 2023–2026 will be reported to the Aboriginal Health CRGC and the Executive Committee every six months. A review of progress will be reported to the Eastern Health Board annually.

Figure 2:  
How we will do this

## Eastern Health Aboriginal Workforce Plan 2023–2026





**“Completing a degree in mental health through the Traineeship Program allows me to work full-time, study and connect with and help my people.”**

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**Daniel Howell**

**Mental Health Trainee, Social and Emotional Wellbeing Team**

Daniel is a proud Biripi man. He grew up on Darkinjung Country on the New South Wales Central Coast.

Daniel has been working at Eastern Health within the mental health service since 2021, ensuring Aboriginal clients receive culturally appropriate care, while completing a degree in mental health.

“After I complete my degree I hope to continue working with Aboriginal peoples in mental health, and I would like to see more mob working alongside me.”



# Partnerships and collaboration

The success of this Plan relies heavily on the strength of key partnerships to support the identification and implementation of employment and training initiatives that meet the needs and career aspirations of Aboriginal peoples.

Already, through a number of Eastern Health committees, partnerships have been developed with Aboriginal Community organisations including Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place. These relationships have helped refine Eastern Health's approach through advice and guidance on how best to work with Aboriginal peoples in the development and delivery of identified initiatives.

We are committed to continuing to strengthen these relationships in the pursuit of realising meaningful benefits for Community.

We are also committed to developing stronger partnerships with TAFE colleges, tertiary education institutions and employment institutions to establish clear training and employment pathways for students.

Eastern Health will look to partner with like-minded organisations who are committed to the vision of creating true parity and ensuring each person has culturally safe and positive employee experiences which foster belonging and access to diverse experiences and career pathways.

# Plan on a page

## Where we will focus:

- 1 Create great attraction, recruitment and selection experiences
- 2 Ensure a culturally safe, inclusive and impactful on-boarding experience
- 3 Focus on retention. Provide great development opportunities and meaningful career pathways
- 4 Cultivate Aboriginal leadership
- 5 Focus on Inclusion, Culture, Safety and Belonging

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
	<b>Foundation Setting.</b> <b>Skill Building.</b> <b>Support.</b>	<b>Adapt.</b> <b>Learn.</b> <b>Grow.</b>	<b>Evolve.</b> <b>Improve.</b> <b>Innovate.</b>
	By Dec 2023	By Dec 2024	By Dec 2025
Attraction target (number)	40	70	110
Retention target (%)	80%	85%	90%

### Our Aboriginal workforce will...

- Be empowered to learn, develop and grow
- Have access to diverse, flexible career pathways
- Practise their cultural identify without fear of discrimination or bias
- Feel a strong sense of belonging and cultural safety
- Have the flexibility to manage work, life and community needs

### Our non-Indigenous workforce will...

- Demonstrate cultural competence
- Build culturally safe environments within their immediate and broader teams
- Have access to ongoing development and experiences regarding our history, cultural awareness and cultural competence

# Implementation Plan

## Focus area one

Create great attraction, recruitment and selection experiences for our prospective Aboriginal workforce.

Outcome	Actions	Responsible	Timeframes	Success Measures
<b>A targeted and impactful employee value proposition (EVP) which connects with Community.</b>	Design and embed a targeted EVP for the Aboriginal workforce.	Employee Experience	By June 2023	
	Aligned with our Strategic Workforce Plan, develop a targeted recruitment campaign for Aboriginal peoples to enter priority workforce roles including Nursing and Midwifery, Allied Health, Mental Health and Medical.	Employee Experience	By December 2023 (Nursing and Midwifery)	40 staff by December 2023
		Talent Acquisition	By December 2024 (Mental Health/ Allied Health)	70 staff by December 2024
			By December 2025 (Medical)	110 staff by December 2025
<b>Recruitment and selection experiences are culturally safe and set candidates up for success.</b>	Ensure an Aboriginal person sits on the interview panel for every candidate who identifies as Aboriginal.	Talent Acquisition	By June 2023 (Ongoing)	Improved selection experience for all candidates 90% compliance target
	Ensure all applicants for vacancies who identify as Aboriginal and who meet the selection criteria for the role are invited for interview.	Talent Acquisition	By June 2023 (Ongoing)	All applicants that meet selection criteria are invited for interview 100% compliance target
	Develop a suite of education materials (e.g. Hiring Manager Toolkit) to build capability of non-Indigenous managers to manage the recruitment and selection process in a culturally safe way, including supporting staff to self-identify.	Employee Experience Talent Acquisition	By June 2024	All hiring managers trained to manage selection processes in a culturally safe way All hiring managers trained to support Aboriginal candidates to self-identify
	Develop a Job Application Pack for Aboriginal candidates. This includes access to resources and supports on offer to ensure each candidate is set up for success during recruitment.	Employee Experience Talent Acquisition	By June 2024	Increase in number of applications received from Aboriginal candidates



Outcome	Actions	Responsible	Timeframes	Success Measures
<b>Targeted recruitment campaigns that attract prospective employees, and promote career pathways through the channels that work.</b>	Ensure all Eastern Health job advertisements include a statement encouraging Aboriginal peoples to apply.	Talent Acquisition	By June 2023	Increase in number of applications received from Aboriginal candidates
	Promote Eastern Health's commitment to Aboriginal peoples in all position advertisements and position descriptions.	Talent Acquisition	By June 2023	Increase in number of applications received from Aboriginal candidates
	Develop an Aboriginal Careers webpage and promote job opportunities, flexible career pathways, learning experiences, scholarships and support.	Employee Experience Talent Acquisition	By December 2024	Increase in number of applications received from Aboriginal candidates
	Promotion of Commonwealth, State and Local Scholarship, Traineeship and Cadetship Programs.	Employee Experience Learning and Teaching (Pre-registration and Transition to Practice Programs) Eastern Health Clinical School	By June 2023 (Ongoing)	Increase in number of applications received from Aboriginal candidates Increase in the number of Aboriginal students undertaking placements
<b>Build and maintain strong partnerships with Community, education bodies and Aboriginal employment and recruitment agencies.</b>	Develop and deliver an annual roadshow to Community groups and relevant education bodies to promote Eastern Health's value proposition, career pathways, employment opportunities and supports.	Employee Experience Communications	By December 2024	Increase in number of applications received from Aboriginal candidates
	Establish and market work experience opportunities in Nursing and Midwifery, Allied Health, Mental Health and Medical workforces for Aboriginal students.	Employee Experience Talent Acquisition Communications	By December 2023	Five Aboriginal secondary students per year undertaking work experience placements

**Focus area**  
**two**

Ensure a culturally safe, inclusive and impactful on-boarding experience.

Outcome	Actions	Responsible	Timeframes	Success Measures
<b>All new Aboriginal employees are connected to the Aboriginal Staff Network and are provided with opportunities to connect with Community and feel welcomed from day one.</b>	Establish and promote an Eastern Health Aboriginal Staff Network and make available to every identified Aboriginal employee on day one.	Employee Experience	By June 2023	100% Aboriginal employees linked with Aboriginal Staff Network
	Develop a welcome and on-boarding pack for all new Aboriginal recruits.	Employee Experience Talent Acquisition	By June 2023 (Ongoing)	All new Aboriginal recruits report culturally safe on-boarding experiences
<b>Aboriginal employees are connected to a buddy and can learn more about Eastern Health and our value proposition from week one.</b>	Assign a culturally appropriate buddy to each new employee. Develop a Buddy Support Pack with relevant resources and information to support the new employee.	All Eastern Health Leaders/Managers	By June 2024 (Ongoing)	All Aboriginal employees reporting higher levels of belonging, connection, intent to stay and wellbeing
<b>The right tools, processes and resources are in place to create great experiences and rectify challenges quickly.</b>	Develop a Manager Toolkit to support a culturally safe and welcoming on-boarding experience.	Employee Experience Talent Acquisition	By December 2023 (Ongoing)	All new Aboriginal recruits report culturally safe on-boarding experience



**“I was given the great opportunity of early acceptance into the graduate program through the Indigenous Program four years ago. I was able to attend the CATSINaM Conference through Eastern Health, which was a once in a lifetime experience.”**

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**Ebony Keenan**  
Registered Nurse

Ebony is a proud Palawa woman. She is a registered nurse working at Eastern Health’s inpatient psychiatric unit.

Ebony hopes to complete postgraduate studies in the near future.



## Focus area three

Focus on retention. Provide great development opportunities. Build supportive and meaningful career pathways.

Outcome	Actions	Responsible	Timeframes	Success Measures
<b>Strong focus on flexible development opportunities and equitable access.</b>	Work with Eastern Health Foundation to create a dedicated Education Fund. Ensure all Aboriginal employees and managers are aware of the Fund and know how to access it.	Employee Experience Eastern Health Foundation	By June 2024	Four existing Aboriginal staff enrolled in formal education programs
	Establish an Aboriginal Staff Network Seminar Series and deliver. Topics of focus will include development, wellbeing, promoting Aboriginal staff and their work.	Employee Experience	By June 2023	Three seminars per year Positive session feedback
<b>Diverse career pathways developed, offered and accessed.</b>	Map out flexible career paths for key professions (e.g. Nursing and Midwifery, Allied Health, Medical, Support Services) and promote through the Aboriginal Staff Network, the Aboriginal Careers webpage, manager training and on the intranet.	Employee Experience	By December 2023 (Nursing and Midwifery)	Increase in staff awareness of available career pathways
		Learning and Teaching (Pre-registration and Transition to Practice Programs)	By June 2024 (Mental Health/ Allied Health)	
		Postgraduate Medical Education Unit	By December 2024 (Medical) By June 2025 (Other disciplines)	
<b>All managers can have quality development and career planning conversations with Aboriginal employees – focusing on the moments that matter most.</b>	Build a repository of culturally appropriate questions and tools to measure cultural load, burnout, engagement and belonging during Achieve conversations and check-ins.	Employee Experience	By June 2024	Managers understanding of cultural load increases
	Create a culturally appropriate stay interview template which can be used by managers and Aboriginal employees to reflect and prepare for performance and development conversations.	Employee Experience	By June 2024	Increase in number of development objectives set High-quality employee–manager performance conversations

Outcome	Actions	Responsible	Timeframes	Success Measures
<b>Career development is prioritised and supported by Eastern Health.</b>	Promote and encourage employees to apply for internal and external career development opportunities.	Talent Acquisition	By June 2023	Professional Development Guideline developed Increase in staff participating in career development opportunities
	Create Eastern Health scholarships specifically for Aboriginal employees (prospective and current), aligned to strategic attraction, growth and retention strategies.	Employee Experience Eastern Health Foundation	By June 2025	Increase in staff participating in formal education programs
<b>All Aboriginal employees feel safe, well and engaged at work.</b>	Ensure Eastern Health has a culturally appropriate Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which is available to individuals and their family. This includes reviewing the current EAP and providing a recommendation regarding suitability and any additional actions required.	OHS and Emergency Management	By December 2023	Staff can access culturally appropriate EAP support
	Ensure stories are regularly communicated to all staff regarding flexible career paths, development and opportunities. In addition, promote available resources to Aboriginal employees to support individuals feeling safe, well and engaged at work.	Employee Experience Communications	By June 2023	All staff aware of supports available to them

**Focus area**  
**four**

Cultivate leadership at all levels.

Outcome	Actions	Responsible	Timeframes	Success Measures
<b>Aboriginal employees are provided with opportunities to develop and progress into senior leadership roles.</b>	Identify and promote opportunities for employees to attend external Aboriginal leadership development programs.	Employee Experience	By June 2023 (Ongoing)	Two Aboriginal employees participating in a leadership program in 2023
	Provide opportunities for Aboriginal staff to participate in leadership experiences such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shadow senior leaders on the job</li> <li>• day in the life events</li> <li>• afternoon tea with a leader of choice.</li> </ul>	Employee Experience	By June 2023 (Ongoing)	Four Aboriginal employees participating in a leadership program in 2024 Six Aboriginal employees participating in a leadership program in 2025
<b>Access to mentors – both within and external to Eastern Health – who can help guide, support and problem solve with each Aboriginal employee.</b>	Develop and implement a formal mentoring program for all Aboriginal staff who are in a leadership role, or aspire to be a leader in the future.	Employee Experience	By June 2025	Up to 12 employees assigned a mentor by 2026





**“I may not have completed my course without the support of the staff at Eastern Health. I’m now thinking about postgraduate studies.”**

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### **Mena Love**

**Mental Health Clinician, Social and Emotional Wellbeing Team**

Mena is a proud Arrernte woman who has just completed a Bachelor of Health Science (Mental Health).

“I started my journey at Eastern Health as a Peer Support Worker and Family Carer Advisor. Eastern Health supported me to complete a VET course that enabled me to transition into an undergraduate degree in Mental Health. I’ve completed this course, and am now a fully qualified Mental Health Clinician.”

Mena completed the Mental Health Traineeship Program at Eastern Health.

“The Traineeship Program was such a great opportunity for me, and provided me with a strong foundation for my career.”

**Focus area**  
**five**

Focus on inclusion, culture, safety and belonging – where every Aboriginal employee can practise their cultural identity without fear or discrimination.

Outcome	Actions	Responsible	Timeframes	Success Measures
<b>All employees and managers to take responsibility for cultural safety, inclusion and belonging.</b>	All employees to complete cultural awareness training during their on-boarding by week 4 and biennial refresher training.	Learning and Teaching (Design and Systems)	By June 2023 (Ongoing)	100% staff complete Cultural Awareness training by week four
	Design and deliver cultural competency training to leaders/managers.	People and Culture (Organisational Development) Learning and Teaching (Pre-registration and Transition to Practice Programs; Design and Systems)	By June 2025	Cultural Competency training developed. Increase in number of leaders and managers achieving cultural competency status
	<i>In line with actions from the Cultural Safety Plan – Promote cultural awareness experiences for Eastern Health staff. This could include heritage walks, face-to-face sessions on Country etc.</i>	QPI Corporate Services, Accreditation and Assurance	By December 2023	Increase in number of staff having cultural immersion experiences Increase in Aboriginal staff reporting high level of cultural safety
	<i>In line with actions from the Cultural Safety Plan – Identify Aboriginal Cultural Champions in each clinical and non-clinical area that can work with the Aboriginal Health CRGC to ensure culturally safe and welcoming environments are maintained.</i>	QPI Corporate Services, Accreditation and Assurance	By June 2025	Cultural Champion identified in each clinical and non-clinical stream

Outcome	Actions	Responsible	Timeframes	Success Measures
<b>Policies and practices are fair and remove any bias and/or barriers to employment and retention.</b>	<i>In line with actions from the Cultural Safety Plan –</i> Review employment and retention policies and practices. Ensure alignment with strategy and principles.	QPI Corporate Services, Accreditation and Assurance	By June 2023	All policies and practices reviewed
	<i>In line with actions from the Cultural Safety Plan –</i> Introduce Cultural Leave Policy for all Aboriginal staff.	Remuneration and Human Resources Systems	By December 2023	Cultural Leave Policy developed and circulated to all Aboriginal employees
<b>Eastern Health celebrates cultural identify often, and makes it visible everywhere, every day.</b>	Develop and promote a calendar of Aboriginal cultural events across Eastern Health.	Executive Director, People and Culture (Employee Experience) Director, Communications	By June 2023	All staff have increased awareness of Aboriginal cultural events
	Annually celebrate and highlight recognition of service within the Aboriginal Staff Network.	Employee Experience	By June 2024	50% increase in number of A2i nominations
	<i>In line with actions from the Cultural Safety Plan –</i> Build an online repository of relevant internal and external resources (including art) that Aboriginal and non-Indigenous employees can access.	QPI Corporate Services, Accreditation and Assurance Learning and Teaching (Design and Systems)	By June 2024	Online repository accessed by Aboriginal and non-Indigenous staff
<b>Strong connections between Eastern Health, Aboriginal employees and Community created and maintained.</b>	Establish a Yarning Circle to provide opportunities for Aboriginal employees to connect with other staff and with Community.	Mental Health Program	By June 2023	Six yarning events per year delivered



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Story behind the artwork:

***Kaberring Yirramboi – Beyond Tomorrow***  
**by Simone Thomson**

The artwork featured in our Plan uses a section from *Kaberring Yirramboi – Beyond Tomorrow*, designed by local Woiwurrung and Yorta Yorta artist Simone Thomson, and has been adapted with the artist's permission.

*Bunjil* the Creator Spirit proudly perches on a branch overlooking Country. His majestic presence reflects Eastern Health's organisational values – Kindness, Respect, Excellence, Agility and Humility. The breadth of his powerful wingspan signifies Eastern Health's far-reaching presence in the community. His eyes capture the vast and diverse landscape of the mountainous ranges, bushland, sacred waterways and the districts in Eastern Health's range.

The sturdy branch he sits atop represents the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community, and the earth deep strength and resilience of our people. Like the branch that is firmly embedded into the earth, so too are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities connected to Country like the roots of ancient trees. *Bunjil* firmly grips this branch as a representation of Eastern Health's continued commitment of connection to Community with the respectful reflection of their vision to provide 'great care, everywhere, every time'.

The sky is the window to the past; it is the acknowledgement of ancestral pain of both land and blood. These reminders ripple through from every corner of the sky to the land and the waters; that is where our spirit is. Eastern Health's recognition of these wrongs is signified by every point *Bunjil* is touched by our Ancestors' Sky Dreaming.

The *Birrarrung* is a sacred healing river. It flows with spiritual freedom touching the soil of the past, moving forwards in tides of journey and trust beyond tomorrow – '*Kaberring Yirramboi*'.



Eastern Health acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which its services operate, and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging. Eastern Health is committed to achieving equality in health status between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.



Eastern Health strives to be an inclusive healthcare service.