



# Aboriginal Employment Plan 2016-2019

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## Useful Links & Resources

Austin Health Aboriginal Employment Plan 2012-15 available on the Austin Health Careers website

Reserving Employment Positions for Aboriginal People under the Equal Opportunity Act 2010

Victorian Government Aboriginal Health Workforce

Karreeta Yiramboi –  
Aboriginal Public Sector Careers



## Introduction

The Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2012-15 saw the introduction of Aboriginal\* Employment as a key Human Resources initiative at Austin Health for the first time as part of the Victorian Governments Karreeta Yirramboi initiative to increase public sector workforce employment and career development outcomes for Aboriginal people.

A large amount of ground work was required to build structures and systems to progress and promote this program with the ultimate goal of embedding the Aboriginal Employment program as a component of business as usual. While the employment target of 1% of staff (80 people) being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent has not yet been achieved, many of the foundations have been put in place to support Austin Health's progress towards this figure. To date the number of staff identifying as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent is 25. Austin Health has progressed from Aboriginal staff members identifying status anonymously via the staff engagement survey, to identifying individuals, their roles and departments.

The purpose of the 2016-19 plan is to further consolidate the foundations established during the 2012-15 program, and focus on ensuring that a sustainable employment program is established and maintained across what is predicted to be a challenging financial period in the health sector.

\*Note the term Aboriginal will be used throughout this document to refer to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples



## Key achievements 2012-15

**A range of foundations have been established during this journey including:**

### **Project Planning & Governance**

- Establishment of a dedicated multidisciplinary Aboriginal Employment Working party with Executive sponsorship and attendance
- Recruitment of a part time Aboriginal Employment Project officer for a 2 year period
- Enhancement of the payroll system functionality to capture cultural background data so that new and existing staff can choose to identify their indigenous status
- Modification of the online recruitment system to flag Aboriginal applicants as a priority to Human Resources

### **Identification and Creation of Opportunities**

- Departments with desired culture and resources identified and Aboriginal trainees successfully placed in 3 departments
- Additional designated Aboriginal Health Liaison roles successfully created and filled
- Aboriginal work experience students given priority placement
- Partnership made with local learning networks to support Aboriginal student placement
- Relationships established with registered training organisations, Group Training Organisations and Traineeship centres
- Relationships established with local Employment Service Agencies with specialist Indigenous employment arms
- Placement of one nursing graduate and two medical intern Aboriginal employees in the 2016 graduate intake



## Attraction and recruitment

- Job advertisement and position description templates have been modified to specifically state that applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants are welcomed
- Upgrading of the Austin Health careers page to include a specific section on Aboriginal employment and encourage applications
- Direct contact made with all Aboriginal job applicants to ensure the employment plan is explained, any necessary support is offered and whenever possible the applicant is progressed to interview
- Culturally sensitive interview and recruitment processes employed
- Upgrading of the staff intranet to include information dedicated to Aboriginal employment
- Development of a Managers Guide to Working with Aboriginal People
- Welcome to Austin Health Guide developed for new Aboriginal employees
- Links to Aboriginal Health program made much more prominent on the website

## Building Cultural Awareness

- Multidisciplinary champions identified to support Aboriginal recruitment and placement in key areas across the workforce
- Rollout of Cultural Awareness training to key areas where Aboriginal trainees are placed and across wards with high Aboriginal patient demographic
- Development of online Cultural Awareness training package for upload to new learning management system which will permit wider organisational rollout of training
- Development of leader led responsiveness and inclusiveness training to support the wider message of workplace diversity.
- Attendance of two managers at Certificate IV in Workplace Assessment and Training course to act as a resource to support trainees and other managers in the workplace
- Acknowledgement plaques installed at every main entrance across three hospital sites
- NAIDOC week smoking ceremony established
- Aboriginal artist commissioned to create a series of artworks for Austin Health for use in Aboriginal employment initiatives
- Videos of staff uploaded to intranet and web to raise awareness of Aboriginal health and employment issues



## **Mentoring and Ongoing Support**

- All new Aboriginal employees welcomed by email from the Aboriginal Health Liaison Team leader, and offer to connect extended
- Staff willing to act as mentors listed on Aboriginal Employment intranet page
- Mentoring from external agencies utilised to support trainees and new graduates
- Modifications made to leave Management Guidelines to formally include Ceremonial Leave
- NAIDOC week ceremony used as networking opportunity for Aboriginal employees

## **Partnerships and Alliances**

- Rebuilding of connections with the local Aboriginal community post a significant restructure of the Aboriginal Health Liaison office
- Attendance of the Executive Director of Human Resources and the Aboriginal Employment Officer at community events such as Northern Indigenous Employment Awards, local NAIDOC events and job launch events
- Further links with Box Hill TAFE to encourage placement of PSA students
- Contact with Austin Health feeder universities such as Latrobe, Deakin and Australian Catholic University
- Contact established with local Koori liaison officers at local high schools
- Strong affiliation with WISE employment, MEGT and VTEC to select, support and mentor trainees



# Employment Strategy 2016-2019

## Approach

This Aboriginal Employment Plan is designed to provide ongoing practical steps to work towards increasing Aboriginal participation in Austin Health's workforce. The plan outlines the key initiatives to be undertaken to consolidate successful attraction, integration and retention of Aboriginal employees at Austin Health.

It addresses the following areas:

- Project Planning & Governance
- Workforce Opportunities
- Attraction and Recruitment Strategy
- Building Cultural Awareness
- Support Systems
- Program Sustainability

The documented focus and strategies of the plan are spread over the period 2016 to 2019, however, this plan is dynamic and flexible. Any suitable additional opportunities and initiatives may be undertaken as they arise with the proviso that they support the overall goal of building Aboriginal workforce participation and cultural safety at Austin Health. While an employment target of 1% exists, Austin Health will continue to strive to achieve and subsequently exceed this target if possible.

## Employment Plan Framework

### Project Planning & Governance

Focus Area	Actions	Strategies	Time Line
Project planning & governance	Executive oversight	Retain Executive sponsorship of program and retention of executive director HR as Chair of the Aboriginal Employment Working party (AEP)	Ongoing
	Committee oversight	Maintenance of multidisciplinary AEP working party membership including Aboriginal staff members and representatives from key clinical and non clinical areas.	Ongoing
		AEP will report to Executive, Consumer Engagement and Systems of Care Committees bi annually or as requested.	Ongoing
	Community Consultation and oversight of plan	Consultation with existing Aboriginal staff	July 2016
		Feedback and input from Aboriginal members of Consumer Advisory committee	Aug 2016
		Feedback and input from Aboriginal members of Systems of Care working group	Aug 2016
		Input and advice from local employment service agencies with Indigenous employment arm	Aug 2016
		Input and advice from education partners, in particular those who have Koori Liaison Officers (learning network, universities, TAFE, schools)	Aug 2016
		Input and advice from VACCHO workforce unit	Aug 2016
		NIE partnerships consultation	Aug 2016



## Workforce Opportunities

Focus Area	Actions	Strategies	Time Line
Workforce opportunities	Work experience programs	Engage health educators to develop an immersive and comprehensive work experience program (Careers in Health program) to give high school students a taste of the wide variety of opportunities available in the health industry. Some funding is required to support program development and liaison with stakeholders	April 2016
		Prioritisation of Aboriginal students into work experience programs	April 2016
		Focus on supporting VCAL and VET students to achieve qualification	Sept 2016 onwards
	Traineeships	Placement of Aboriginal trainees into areas with sufficient resources to support a trainee through either the GTO or state traineeship model	Ongoing
		Links with RTO and JSA maintained to ensure ongoing support mentoring of trainees during placement or study period	Ongoing
	Cadetship programs	Determine areas suitable for placement of Aboriginal nursing or allied health cadets	Dec 2016
		Develop relevant position descriptions and support mechanisms to maximise success of Aboriginal cadets	Sept 2016
	General recruitment	Further refining of online recruitment system to more accurately flag Aboriginal applicants as a priority to Human Resources.	Ongoing
		Integration of automated email messaging to line managers to encourage proactive management of applications with Human Resources support, and ensure culturally sensitive interviewing is always employed.	Ongoing
		Refining of online reporting tools to accurately collate data on numbers of Aboriginal applicants, types or employment applied for and successful interview and placement rates.	Ongoing



### Attraction & Recruitment Strategy

Focus Area	Actions	Strategies	Time Line
Attraction & recruitment Strategy	Work experience	Promotion of comprehensive work experience program to encourage students to pursue a health career	Sept 2016
		Use of new Austin Health Aboriginal banners and dedicated flyers at careers Expos	Ongoing
	Universities	Visits to feeder universities to meet with Koori liaison officers and students to promote student placement and graduate year applications	Sept 2016 and Ongoing
	TAFE	Liaison with feeder TAFEs to promote placement of PSA, HANs and Allied Health Assistants on student placement	Nov 2016 and Ongoing
	Interview process	Early contacting of Aboriginal applicants and recruiting manager in a timely manner to offer any necessary support in getting the applicant to interview stage	Ongoing
		Tailored interview process for Aboriginal applicants	Ongoing
		Revamp the websites for graduate nurse and intern recruitment process to actively promote Aboriginal applicants	May 2016
		Adjust process to ensure Aboriginal candidates are not eliminated through computer rules, and are instead considered on their merit.	Ongoing

### Building Cultural Awareness

Focus Area	Actions	Strategies	Time Line
Building Cultural Awareness	Training	Continued rollout of face to face leader lead inclusiveness and responsiveness training	Ongoing
		Upload of online training to learning management system and organisation wide roll out	August 2016 onwards
		Inclusion of Aboriginal Health program in induction program	May 2016

## Support Systems

Focus Area	Actions	Strategies	Time Line
Support Systems	Mentoring	Austin Health retains its membership on the Aboriginal Nursing and Midwifery support network for nursing graduates or cadets	Ongoing
		Promotion of the Hand in Hand mentoring program for junior doctors at commencement	Ongoing
	Peer support	Introduction of a peer support program for junior doctors	May 2016
	Networking	Specific invitation from Director of Human Resources to networking opportunity such as NAIDOC event or Grand Round on Aboriginal Health	Ongoing
		NIE Partnership events	Ongoing

## Program Sustainability

Focus Area	Actions	Strategies	Time Line
Program Sustainability	Program Sustainability	Creation of clear employment pipeline from work experience programs, student placements to graduate intake or regular recruitment which can be managed within existing HR and education structures	Sept 2019
	Community partnerships	Strengthen partnerships with Aboriginal community organisations and providers such as Employment Service agencies (WISE and MatchWorks), Koori Education offices in Universities and Schools, local learning networks and the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI), NIE (Northern Indigenous Employment network	Ongoing



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