

Aboriginal Health Care Framework 2023 – 2031



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge and respect the Traditional Custodians on whose ancestral land SA Health provides services.

We acknowledge the deep feelings of attachment and relationship of Aboriginal people to country.

ARTWORK STORY

The artwork 'With These Hands' by Elizabeth Close tells the story of our life journey.

The hands were used as the imagery for a number of reasons: the first being that hands can tell a million different stories. They are as much a tool of expression as our mouths and faces - they can speak countless languages, including sign language specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; they can draw, write, play, signal and say more things than we could ever say with speech, the hands used in this artwork seek to convey the concept of being 'bigger than speech'. It is as impossible to relegate a life stage to a single word or a picture, hence; this artwork uses hands to ask the viewer to think beyond; to what these hands can do, say, have done and will do, to further understand this stage of life.

The artist explains the symbolism of each element below, but collectively has expressed these elements in a circular collection of journey lines. This is because for Aboriginal people, life isn't linear. There is very much a cyclical understanding of our existence and journey on this earth, coming from The Dreaming and returning once your time on earth is done.



0-4

This life stage reflects from pregnancy and birth through to age 4. It seeks to reflect the ethereal concept that a young Aboriginal person has been born, and has taken their place in this world, and made their mark upon this world before they have even opened their eyes.

5-9

This life stage is represented by two hands, referencing the important role that caregivers play for this age group. In this age group, our families are a source of love, care and protection for us as we learn and grow and understand the world around us.

10-24

For this life stage, our peers and people of a similar age around us become a vitally important part of our lives as we learn to navigate the world around us. We learn from our peers more and more as we grow and become adults, and our relationships with parents and families change to acknowledge our transition to adulthood and what we have learned and achieved.

25-54

This life stage celebrates our achievements and our journey to become cultural leaders and holders of knowledge, perhaps even custodians of knowledge if we work hard enough for it. This knowledge and understanding is represented by the circular motif within the hands. The bolder and finer lines represent the masculine and feminine; which references that there are some types of cultural knowledge which are gendered. It is at this age that we are truly independent beings who understand the importance of that cultural understanding. It is in this life stage where we may become parents ourselves, thus imbued with the task of passing that knowledge, love, protection, guidance and understanding on to our children, who are themselves starting their own life journey.

55+

It is at this life stage, that we see we have come full circle. The weathered hand of the Elder who has lived through all the life stages, holds the hand of the child, or the expectant mother or father; beginning the process of passing knowledge on, sharing stories and songs.

The background of the artwork has a duality of the earth and water themes, acknowledging both the language groups of those along the coasts, and those inland. It has the blues and teals of the oceans and the waterways, the pinks of the salt lakes, the subtle greens of the bush, and the warm tones of reds, browns and ochres of inland SA regions, to represent the full spectrum of the South Australian landscape. The clusters of dots on top of the sweeping brush strokes represent the diversity of Aboriginal Language Groups in South Australia, and the dots represent in very broad terms, their own cultural knowledge which they pass down from one generation to the next.

Closing the Gap

The South Australian Aboriginal Health Care Framework closely aligns to the commitments made in the **National Agreement on Closing the Gap and South Australia's Implementation Plan for the National Agreement on Closing the Gap** to overcome the entrenched inequality faced by Aboriginal people so that their life outcomes are equal to all Australians.

The National Agreement identifies four areas of reform to change the way governments work with and for Aboriginal people:

- Formal partnerships and shared decision making
- Building the community-controlled sector
- Transforming government organisations
- Shared access to data and information at a regional level.

Three health-specific outcomes are identified for achievement in the National Agreement:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy long and healthy lives
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are born healthy and strong
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing.

South Australia's Implementation Plan for the National Agreement on Closing the Gap sets out a plan for achieving and addressing the priority reforms and socio-economic targets embedded in the Closing the Gap Agreement to ensure the lives of Aboriginal people in South Australia can improve in all cultural, social and economic aspects.



CONTENTS

Message from the Minister	5
Message from the Chief Executive	6
1. Overview of the Framework	7
2. Policy context	9
3. SA's Aboriginal health landscape	10
4. Foundations for a healthy life	11
5. Safety and quality considerations	13
6. Our strategic priorities	15
7. Applying the Framework	24
8. Glossary of terms	26
9. References	28
10. Appendix 1: Policy documents	29

The term Aboriginal is used throughout this document as inclusive of people who identify as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or both.

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER



The South Australian government is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal South Australians and ensuring that Aboriginal people have a safe and positive experience every time they engage with our public health system.

I am pleased to present the *SA Health Aboriginal Health Care Framework 2023 – 2031* which articulates the strategic priorities we will pursue across our health system to improve the quality of care we provide, contribute to building strong, healthy and capable Aboriginal communities, and importantly, reduce the gap in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal South Australians.

The Framework provides the foundation that will guide all action by SA Health to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal South Australians. It aligns with the intent of the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* and the commitments made in the *South Australian Implementation Plan for the National Agreement on Closing the Gap* to overcome the entrenched inequality faced by Aboriginal people so that their life outcomes are equal to all Australians.

Through the implementation of the Framework we will drive action in key areas through a system-wide approach, working in partnership with the Aboriginal community and our service partners to deliver high quality, safe, accessible and equitable care to meet the needs of Aboriginal people. Fundamentally our actions will seek to ensure that health care is culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal people, free from racism, and considers the complex range of factors that can influence health and wellbeing for Aboriginal people across the life course.

I would like to thank and congratulate all the people who have contributed to the development of this Framework. I am excited and inspired by the collective vision that has been established to deliver a positive future for Aboriginal South Australians through a strong and responsive health system. I look forward to continuing this essential work and seeing the positive difference we can make to the lives of Aboriginal people across our state.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'C Picton'.

The Hon Chris Picton
Minister for Health and Wellbeing

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE



The South Australian Aboriginal Health Care Framework 2023– 2031 is an evidence-based policy framework that sets the long-term strategic intent in guiding our efforts to improve the health and wellbeing of South Australian Aboriginal people over the next nine years.

It has been developed to inform a whole of system approach to driving Aboriginal health priorities, addressing health system inequity and delivering the actions required to close the gap in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal South Australians, consistent with 'Closing the Gap' commitments.

This Framework has been informed and co-designed in genuine partnership by the strong and passionate voices of key Aboriginal stakeholders including the Aboriginal Health Council, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services, community groups, SA Health entities and other health sector providers, and Aboriginal South Australians. It acknowledges a holistic view of health for Aboriginal people that incorporates physical, spiritual, mental, cultural, emotional and social wellbeing, and recognises the unique role of Aboriginal people in contributing to their own and their community's health and wellbeing.

We are committed to working in partnership with all our stakeholders to ensure that the system delivers high quality, accessible, sustainable, equitable and culturally responsive services to Aboriginal people, under the guidance of this Framework.

The Framework sets the direction for SA Health's investment in Aboriginal health by outlining four strategic priorities, namely 1 – Healthier Aboriginal communities, 2 – Strengthen Aboriginal workforce, 3 – Improve health service access and delivery, and 4 – Partner for better outcomes.

Implementation plans will be developed by Local Health Networks (LHNs) in partnership with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) and other service providers, that detail the actions required to drive change at the local level under the Framework. This will be complemented by an overarching Evaluation Plan that sets out the monitoring, evaluation and reporting arrangements underpinning the implementation of the Framework. A governance structure will be established to oversee system-wide implementation of the Framework.

I would like to extend my thanks to everyone who has contributed to the development of this Framework. I look forward to working together to improve Aboriginal health services and outcomes in South Australia.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robyn'.

Dr Robyn Lawrence
Chief Executive
Department for Health and Wellbeing

1. OVERVIEW OF THE FRAMEWORK

1.1 VISION

Aboriginal people living long and healthy lives as equals in society, grounded in culture, with access to equitable and culturally responsive services

1.2 PRINCIPLES

The Aboriginal Health Care Framework is underpinned by the following well established principles that are reflected in a number of longstanding national and state Aboriginal planning and policy documents:

Cultural Respect	The design and delivery of health services must recognise and incorporate Aboriginal people's cultural values, views and expectations and be delivered by a culturally safe workforce.
Holistic Approach	The health system must embed a holistic view of health for Aboriginal people that incorporates physical, spiritual, mental, cultural, emotional and social wellbeing, and recognises the unique role of Aboriginal people in contributing to their own and their community's health and wellbeing.
Local Planning	Aboriginal people must be central to the planning, development, and implementation of strategies for better health and wellbeing, with planning occurring at the local level to address the needs and priorities determined by the local Aboriginal population.
Partnerships	A partnership approach combining the efforts of government, non- government and community controlled sectors in working with communities is essential to improving health and wellbeing outcomes.
Recognition of Diversity	The diversity within and between Aboriginal communities must be acknowledged in the development of programs and services, and inform differing approaches, for example, according to region, age and gender.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this Framework is to:

- Provide a platform to guide policy development that drives improvement in the health and wellbeing of South Australian Aboriginal people, consistent with Closing the Gap commitments
- Embed SA Health's commitment to providing high quality, responsive health and wellbeing services and improving outcomes for Aboriginal people across the health system
- Articulate the roles and responsibilities for improving Aboriginal health outcomes through a partnership approach
- Guide local service responses to improving Aboriginal health services and outcomes
- Inform key performance indicators for Local Health Network (LHN) Service Level Agreements in relation to Aboriginal health
- Guide investments in Aboriginal health and wellbeing to achieve a stronger and more responsive health system that supports the specific needs of Aboriginal people.

1.4 TARGET AUDIENCE

The Framework targets key stakeholders and parties who will partner in implementing the Framework including:

- Department for Health and Wellbeing (DHW)
- LHNs
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHSs)
- Health care providers and organisations
- Aboriginal people.

1.5 DEVELOPING THE FRAMEWORK

The Framework has been developed through an extensive process involving:

- Review of the previous SA Aboriginal Health Care Plan 2010-2016 and its associated activities and learnings
- Review and analysis of the current policy and strategic context for Aboriginal health and wellbeing at the national and jurisdictional levels
- Extensive consultation and co-design with a range of key Aboriginal stakeholders including the Aboriginal Health Council, ACCHSs, community groups, health sector providers including LHNs and non-government organisations and Aboriginal South Australians.

1.6 REVIEW PERIOD

Progress against the Framework will be evaluated through a two stage review process:

Mid-cycle progress review (2026)

An independent mid-cycle review will occur to evaluate progress towards achieving the Framework outcomes. This will inform any shifts in implementation activity that may be needed to account for emerging trends and changing priorities. The review will seek to capture the lived experiences of Aboriginal people throughout the Framework's implementation. A mid-cycle progress report will be developed in mid-2026.

End-of-cycle review (2030)

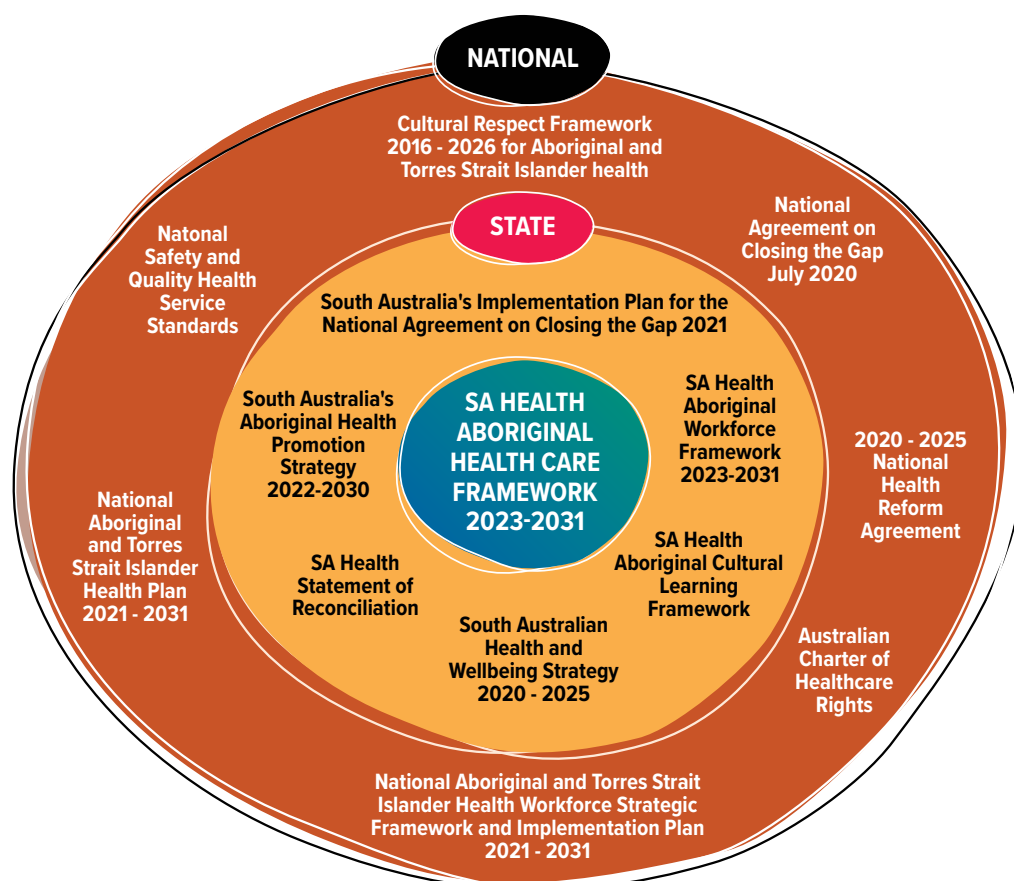
An independent end-of-cycle review will be undertaken to evaluate progress over the duration of the Framework and identify future priorities and planning for Aboriginal health. The review will capture the lived experiences of Aboriginal people and will be completed in 2030.

2. POLICY CONTEXT

The South Australian government is committed to working in partnership to improve the lives of South Australian Aboriginal people. As part of this, SA Health is working to address the health inequities faced by Aboriginal people and reduce the gap in health outcomes between South Australia's Aboriginal people and the rest of the state's population.

The Framework recognises the diverse needs of Aboriginal people and communities across South Australia and acknowledges the leading role Aboriginal people must play in determining priorities and actions for improved health. It will be applied through a partnership approach between DHW, LHNs, ACCHSs and Aboriginal people and communities.

This Framework does not exist in isolation. It builds on the previous South Australian Aboriginal Health Care Plan 2010-2016 and aligns with national and South Australian agreements, frameworks and plans that set the direction for and enable improved health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal people, including those illustrated below.



Details of these agreements, frameworks and plans are provided in Appendix 1.

3. SA'S ABORIGINAL HEALTH LANDSCAPE

42,300

Aboriginal people live in SA

Aboriginal people make up

2.5%

of the SA population

49%

live in remote or very remote areas

51%

live in metropolitan

Average age of Aboriginal people

25 years

Average age of non-Aboriginal people

41 years

96% compared to 95%

nationally SA has higher rate of immunisation for Aboriginal infants under age of 5

DEMOGRAPHICS

HEALTH PROFILE



14.5%

of Aboriginal South Australians reported a mental health condition in the 2021 census



24%

of deaths of Aboriginal South Australians were caused by cardiovascular disease



Cancer is the second highest cause of death of Aboriginal South Australians

22%



Rate of hospitalisation for chronic kidney disease, excluding dialysis for Aboriginal Australians (age standardised) compared to non Aboriginal Australians

3 x higher



4.5

per 1,000 live births

Mortality rate for Aboriginal infants in SA compared to

2.8

per 1,000 live births for non-Aboriginal infants

Sources:

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2020. *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework 2020 key health indicators – South Australia*.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *South Australia 2021 Census Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People QuickStats*.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework, data tables and resources*.

4. FOUNDATIONS FOR A HEALTHY LIFE

All actions that arise from the Framework's strategic priorities should consider and recognise the following foundations for a healthy life identified in the [National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2021–2031](#) (National Plan). Further detail about these foundations can be found in the National Plan.

4.1 HOLISTIC HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The Australian health system must recognise and embed holistic health and wellbeing. This means supporting Aboriginal people's close connections and interactions with the mental, physical, cultural, environmental and spiritual health of their communities, and with society more broadly.

The meaning of Aboriginal health

'Aboriginal health means not just the physical wellbeing of an individual but refers to the social, emotional and cultural wellbeing of the whole community in which each individual is able to achieve their full potential as a human being thereby bringing about the total wellbeing of their community. It is a whole of life view and includes the cyclical concept of life-death-life.'

National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation

This holistic view of health must be understood and applied within the health system to support Aboriginal people to achieve what they believe to be good health.

4.2 THE CULTURAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Cultural determinants are the ways of knowing, being and doing that encompass a holistic Aboriginal understanding of health and wellbeing.

The cultural determinants of health are the protective factors that enhance resilience, strengthen identity and support good health and wellbeing. These include, but are not limited to, connection to Country; family, kinship and community; beliefs and knowledge; cultural expression and continuity; language; self-determination and leadership.

Applying a cultural determinants approach recognises that cultural factors can positively impact the lives of Aboriginal people and provides an effective way to improve the social determinants of health, wellbeing and safety.

4.3 THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Where we are born and how we live, grow, work and age, impacts our health. These factors are known as the social determinants of health, and they interact in complex ways that can impact other social determinants.

Social determinants all contribute to the ability to live a long and healthy life. Addressing the social determinants of health is key to achieving health equity for Aboriginal people. The responsibility and ability to address these determinants does not, however, sit with any one sector or agency, and requires a partnership approach across government, the non-government sector and communities.

Social determinants approach to health

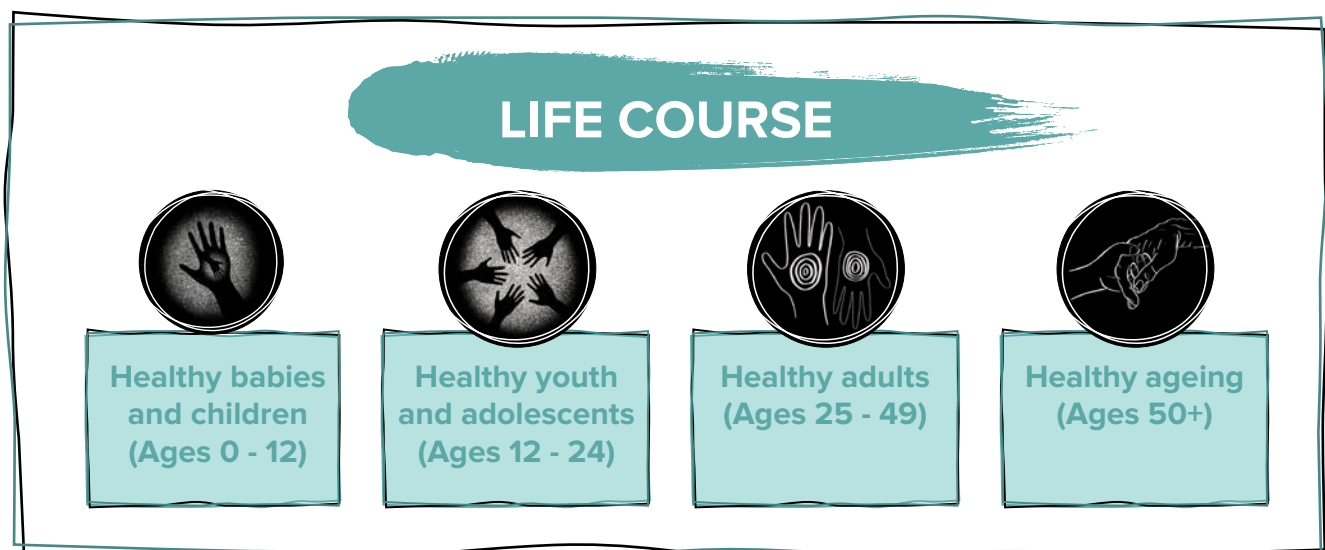
A social determinants approach to health requires shared action across maternal health and early childhood development, community and family safety, education and youth, employment and income, racism, housing, environment and infrastructure, interactions with government systems and services, law and justice, poverty, welfare dependency, food security and access to nutritious food, and experiences with alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

4.4 A LIFE COURSE APPROACH

Aboriginal people view health and wellbeing as involving the whole community throughout the entire life course. Applying a whole-of-life perspective focuses attention on health and wellbeing factors during transition points at different life stages.

A life course approach recognises the way certain factors influence health at different stages in life. While this means understanding the impact of distinct life stages, it also means considering a whole person in the context of their family and community.

This Framework focuses on the life course across 4 key stages:



A life course approach for Aboriginal people also includes cyclical views of life and death. This Framework recognises that death and dying are critical components of cultural and social wellbeing. Dying on and returning to Country, ceremony, sorry business, sad news, and people and communities' unique cultural practices must be considered under a life course approach. This includes recognising that culture is a key element for kin and family to be able to deal with and recover from death.

Many Aboriginal people carry deep and lasting experiences of personal and intergenerational trauma as an ongoing legacy of colonisation. The health system needs to recognise and build understanding of the trauma experienced by many Aboriginal people, and the impact it can have on their health and wellbeing. Health policies, programs and services must take strengths-based and healing-informed approaches to be culturally responsive to this.

5. SAFETY AND QUALITY CONSIDERATIONS

A health system's performance is measured against a number of different quality dimensions including safety, accessibility, appropriateness, continuity, effectiveness and efficiency. Under these quality dimensions, there are key and unique considerations for Aboriginal health care in order to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal people.

5.1 SAFETY

A safe health system minimises harm, or the risk of harm to patients. The level of safety the health system provides is significantly influenced by the way the health system is managed, and the environment in which health care is delivered.

Aboriginal people need to feel confident and safe in accessing health care, and the health system must be able to respond to meet their needs in a safe, flexible and timely manner. A key element of safety for Aboriginal people, is cultural safety. Achieving cultural safety in the health system means creating environments that are safe and welcoming for Aboriginal people, where cultural differences are acknowledged, respected and supported. This includes ensuring the health system is free from racism, discrimination and unconscious bias.

It is critical that every person who works in the health system, across all roles and levels, understands what cultural safety is and recognises the role they play in delivering safe, equitable and responsive care to Aboriginal people.

5.2 APPROPRIATENESS

Appropriate health care minimises harm, or the risk of harm, to patients and ensures that services are person centred and culturally appropriate. These are both fundamental elements of Aboriginal health care.

Providing culturally respectful and responsive services is an essential part of ensuring the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people. Culturally responsive care promotes and facilitates cultural safety, which improves outcomes, access to services and successful engagement in care for Aboriginal people. The health system must be respectful of culture, responsive to the needs of Aboriginal people and understand the important role a culturally-responsive health system plays in the way Aboriginal people engage with and participate in the health system and their own health and wellbeing.

5.3 EFFECTIVENESS

Health care is broadly regarded as effective when it achieves the desired outcomes for patients, clinicians and the community. Applying a strengths-based approach is an essential element of providing effective care to Aboriginal people. It focuses on the unique strengths, capabilities and resources of people, places and communities, and looks for opportunities to build upon, complement and support existing strengths. Strengths-based approaches work in opposition to deficit-based discourse and approaches, which focus on areas of problem or concern, and can perpetuate negative stereotyping.

The application of a strengths-based approach to working with Aboriginal people, that responds to all aspects of a person's life and focuses on the factors that can support their health and wellbeing, is a key enabler to improving Aboriginal health outcomes.

An important component of care for many Aboriginal people is traditional healing. Traditional healing is essential for Aboriginal people's physical, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural health and wellbeing. It is recognised as being complementary to the mainstream treatment and management of a person's health and care. Enabling access to traditional healing is an important part of ensuring the health system is culturally responsive and respectful.

5.4 CONTINUITY OF CARE

Continuity of care occurs when uninterrupted care is provided across programs and levels over time. This means a person can access the range of care and services that meet their needs and preferences in a coordinated and connected way. Patients who receive continuity of care are more likely to have better health outcomes, positive experiences and higher levels of engagement in their ongoing care. It is essential that continuity of care is prioritised for Aboriginal people to ensure it is easy for them to access the care they need, and to maximise opportunities for them to have positive connections and satisfying experiences with the health system.

This requires the health system to have well planned and coordinated services and systems that enable the sharing of patient information between services and care providers. It also requires good communication and a focus on building trust between Aboriginal people and their health care teams over time.

5.5 ACCESSIBILITY, EFFICIENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Accessible and efficient health care means that it is available at the right place and time and is delivered at minimum cost. A sustainable health system maintains, renews and innovates resources to continually improve efficiency and respond to emerging needs. Part of the challenge of ensuring Aboriginal people have equitable access to health services relates to the distance they must travel to access those services. Many South Australian Aboriginal people live in rural and remote areas, which can negatively impact their ability to access the services they need, when they need and in settings that meet their needs.

To address the needs of Aboriginal people, the health system must embrace innovation and leverage technology to enable new models of care, expand access and deliver care as close to home and the community as possible. The COVID-19 pandemic provides an excellent example of the health sector transforming itself to enable the ongoing delivery of services to those who need them, through the adoption of new models and modes of delivery, while prioritising patient and staff safety.

5.6 NATIONAL SAFETY AND QUALITY HEALTH SERVICE STANDARDS

Within the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, the following actions focus on meeting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, to ensure their unique and diverse cultures and context is taken into account.

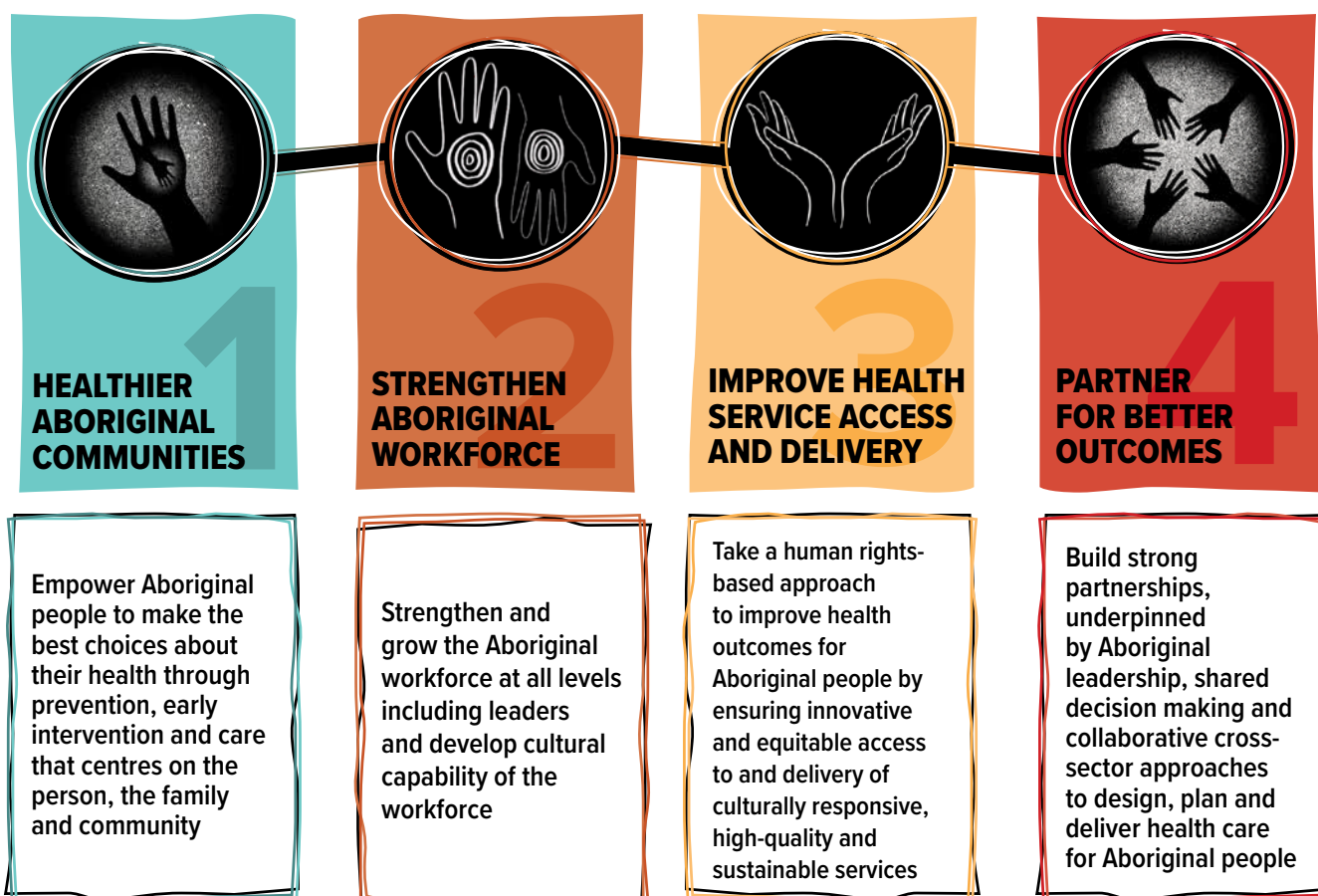
- **Partnering with community (Action 2.13)** The health service organisation works in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to meet their healthcare needs.
- **Governance and identifying priorities (Action 1.2)** The governing body ensures that the organisation's safety and quality priorities address the specific health needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- **Implementation and monitoring (Action 1.4)** The health service organisation implements and monitors strategies to meet the organisation's safety and quality priorities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- **Cultural awareness and cultural competency (Action 1.21)** The health service organisation has strategies to improve the cultural awareness and cultural competency of the workforce to meet the needs of its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients.
- **Welcoming environment (Action 1.33)** The health service organisation demonstrates a welcoming environment that recognises the importance of cultural beliefs and practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- **Identification (Action 5.8)** The health service organisation has processes to routinely ask patients if they identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin, and to record this information in administrative and clinical information systems.

The [NSQHS User Guide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health](#) is a valuable resource for health services to ensure they are providing the safest and highest quality care for Aboriginal people consistent with the standards.

6. OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

This Framework outlines how SA Health will deliver better health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal South Australians through a whole of sector partnership approach. Implementation of the Framework will be led by LHNs in collaboration with their local service partners to ensure local needs are met.

To guide this approach four strategic priorities have been identified in the following areas of focus that, when pursued together, will drive change across the system, and improve health outcomes for Aboriginal people. Specific actions to drive change under each strategic priority area are detailed in this section, along with helpful measures that can be used as an indicator of what success looks like.





HEALTHIER ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

EMPOWER ABORIGINAL PEOPLE TO MAKE THE BEST CHOICES ABOUT THEIR HEALTH THROUGH PREVENTION, EARLY INTERVENTION AND CARE THAT CENTRES ON THE PERSON, THE FAMILY AND COMMUNITY



ACTIONS TO DRIVE CHANGE

1.1 Improve prevention and management of chronic conditions

Enhance access to culturally safe and responsive early interventions to identify risk factors across the life course and proactively manage chronic disease.

1.2 Improve health literacy to support Aboriginal people in making decisions about their health and wellbeing

Strengthen health literacy amongst Aboriginal people by ensuring resources and programs are culturally appropriate and responsive, contemporary and tailored across the life course, in language to enable self-management and informed decision-making by Aboriginal people and communities.

1.3 Promote healthy lifestyles for Aboriginal people

Deliver holistic and culturally responsive health promotion activities that apply a strengths-based approach to support and empower Aboriginal people to build knowledge and skills to choose healthy lifestyles and be in control of their health.

1.4 Co-design and produce culturally responsive holistic approaches and models of care for Aboriginal people

Co-design and produce culturally responsive models of care with community that recognise the social, emotional, spiritual and cultural determinants of Aboriginal health and address the needs of Aboriginal people across each stage of the life course.

1.5 Ensure Aboriginal people are aware of their health care rights

Ensure Aboriginal health consumers, carers and families are provided with information about their health care rights in appropriate languages and formats.

1.6 Integrate healing and recovery within Aboriginal models of care

Build the knowledge and capability of health services in healing and recovery to inform more culturally responsive service delivery, by embedding strengths-based and healing-informed approaches into practice and providing Aboriginal people with access to traditional healers to complement mainstream care.

1.7 Address environmental health risks to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal people

Identify and develop solutions to address environmental health factors (such as water and air quality, food safety and nutrition, health hygiene, pest and disease control) that have potential to undermine the success of health and wellbeing initiatives and contribute to adverse health outcomes.

SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- ▶ Aboriginal people engage with programs and services at transition points across the life course to support ongoing health and wellbeing.
- ▶ Aboriginal people are provided with opportunities to engage with evidence-based and culturally responsive prevention and early intervention initiatives.
- ▶ The prevalence of chronic conditions amongst Aboriginal people decreases.
- ▶ Aboriginal people have the knowledge and skills to choose healthy lifestyles to support good health and wellbeing.
- ▶ Aboriginal people can access easy to understand and culturally responsive information about health and wellbeing.
- ▶ Aboriginal consumers and communities are genuinely and meaningfully engaged in the co-design and delivery of culturally responsive holistic placed-based approaches and models of care.
- ▶ The full range of determinants of the health of Aboriginal people are recognised and addressed in health services, programs, and policies.
- ▶ Health services, programs and policies for Aboriginal people address the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal people as well as physical needs.
- ▶ Mainstream health care provision embeds traditional healing practices.
- ▶ Environmental health risks are effectively managed.



STRENGTHEN ABORIGINAL WORKFORCE

STRENGTHEN AND GROW THE ABORIGINAL WORKFORCE AT ALL LEVELS INCLUDING LEADERS AND DEVELOP CULTURAL CAPABILITY OF THE WORKFORCE

2

ACTIONS TO DRIVE CHANGE

2.1 Grow and develop the Aboriginal workforce across a variety of professions through representation, skill development and improved sustainability of employment

Increase representation of Aboriginal people in the health workforce through:

- creating targeted employment opportunities for Aboriginal people within SA Health
- promoting health careers to Aboriginal people
- investing in retaining Aboriginal employees across SA Health
- applying a strategic approach to Aboriginal workforce recruitment.

2.2 Ensure the Aboriginal workforce has the necessary skills, capacity, and leadership opportunities to fulfill roles across all professions and services in the health system

Support and develop the SA Health Aboriginal workforce through:

- facilitating opportunities for Aboriginal people to transition into health sector employment through health education and training programs, and developing workplace education programs that target the needs of Aboriginal employees
- building the capacity of Aboriginal employees to hold leadership roles across SA Health
- investing in professional development to support Aboriginal employees to build their knowledge, skill and capability and supporting opportunities for Aboriginal employees to explore different careers within SA Health
- recognising and promoting the outstanding efforts and achievements of Aboriginal employees
- supporting Aboriginal health workers and practitioners to work to their full scope of practice.

2.3 Develop cultural capability and responsiveness to ensure the workplace is free of racism and designed with cultural understanding and respect

Implement workplace practices to build cultural responsiveness including:

- continuing to build a culturally responsive SA Health workforce
- embedding cultural considerations within SA Health employment practices
- supporting employee participation in Aboriginal workforce networks and programs
- promoting opportunities for Aboriginal employees to provide feedback on their perspectives of cultural safety.

2.4 Partner with the Aboriginal workforce and agencies within health and other sectors to lead and drive solutions to strengthen the Aboriginal health workforce

Embed shared leadership and decision making to strengthen the Aboriginal health workforce including:

- co-designing and producing SA Health employment systems and tools with Aboriginal people
- collaborating across SA Health and other sectors to co-design and produce strategic approaches to strengthen the Aboriginal health workforce
- facilitating a joint approach to Aboriginal health workforce planning across SA Health
- establishing system-wide Aboriginal workforce data sharing and reporting capability across SA Health.

SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- ▶ Aboriginal employees sustain ongoing employment in the health system at the same rate as non-Aboriginal employees.
- ▶ Aboriginal people represent 3% of the SA Health workforce, consistent with Closing the Gap commitments.
- ▶ Aboriginal health students have successful transitions into the workforce and access clear career pathway options.
- ▶ Aboriginal employees have access to and participate in a leadership and careers pathway program.
- ▶ Aboriginal employees are represented in clinical and non-clinical roles across the breadth of the health system.
- ▶ Workplace and cultural support programs are in operation across all regions.
- ▶ Aboriginal employees report improved job satisfaction and feelings of cultural connection.
- ▶ Aboriginal employees actively participate in planning decision making processes about Aboriginal workforce priorities, issues and systems.
- ▶ Increased information sharing and knowledge exchange occurs between Aboriginal health workforce stakeholders on workforce issues.



IMPROVE HEALTH SERVICE ACCESS AND DELIVERY

TAKE A HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO IMPROVE HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR ABORIGINAL PEOPLE BY ENSURING INNOVATIVE AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO AND DELIVERY OF CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE, HIGH-QUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE SERVICES

3

ACTIONS TO DRIVE CHANGE

- 3.1 Support Aboriginal people to access health services closer to home enabled by innovation and digital health**
Improve support systems, place-based approaches and new models of care through innovation and digital health to enable the delivery of services closer to home and community.
- 3.2 Improve access to health services for hard-to-reach Aboriginal people and groups in the community**
Implement targeted strategies to improve access for hard-to-reach groups in the community through provision of transport and accommodation assistance and cultural support.
- 3.3 Deliver culturally responsive health services for Aboriginal people in a connected and coordinated way**
Develop and implement strategies to build and strengthen cultural responsiveness and delivery of care across health services in a connected and coordinated way, consistent with the *National Cultural Respect Framework 2016-2026*.
- 3.4 Improve communication with Aboriginal people within health services**
Improve the safety and effectiveness of communication with Aboriginal people within health services by collaborating in the design and delivery of health information and providing access to accredited interpreters and language services to ensure Aboriginal people can make informed decisions and provide informed consent for treatment.
- 3.5 Implement targeted strategies and strength-based approaches to address key health issues for Aboriginal people**
Support the development and implementation of targeted strategies and strength-based approaches to address key health issues affecting Aboriginal people including:
 - improving oral health, particularly for children
 - targeting early interventions to support cessation of tobacco, alcohol and drug use
 - enhancing the delivery of sexual health screening activities at the community level, particularly for adolescents and young adults
 - improving cancer screening rates and care pathways for treatment
 - targeting risk factors for cardiovascular disease and chronic kidney disease
 - strengthening mental health and suicide prevention programs
 - improving access to high quality end of life care.
- 3.6 Encourage feedback to improve service quality for Aboriginal people**
Increase opportunities for Aboriginal people to provide feedback and ensure there are systems that actively seek feedback on, and review and respond to, complaints about the cultural safety of health services.
- 3.7 Prioritise Aboriginal health and equity in health service policy and planning**
Ensure that all relevant SA Health policies, programs, services and plans consider Aboriginal people as a priority population, reflect the needs of Aboriginal communities, and promote health equity.

SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- ▶ The health system delivers culturally responsive services to all Aboriginal people.
- ▶ The health system is free of racism and discrimination.
- ▶ Aboriginal people can easily understand the information they are given about their health care.
- ▶ Increased levels of satisfaction are reported among Aboriginal patients, carers, and families accessing health services.
- ▶ Aboriginal people have increased options to access safe and high-quality health services at, or closer to, home.
- ▶ Aboriginal people can navigate the health system to access the services, care and information they need.



PARTNER FOR BETTER OUTCOMES

BUILD STRONG PARTNERSHIPS, UNDERPINNED BY ABORIGINAL LEADERSHIP, SHARED DECISION MAKING AND COLLABORATIVE CROSS-SECTOR APPROACHES TO DESIGN, PLAN AND DELIVER HEALTH CARE FOR ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

4

ACTIONS TO DRIVE CHANGE

4.1 Facilitate shared leadership and decision making for Aboriginal health across the health system

Strengthen partnerships with the ACCHS sector, other Aboriginal organisations, Aboriginal consumers and communities, government and non-government organisations (NGOs) to plan and deliver streamlined, coordinated and accessible health services that meet the needs of Aboriginal people.

4.2 Participate in whole of government and cross-sector partnerships and forums that impact Aboriginal health

Identify linkages and collaborate on whole of government and cross-sector initiatives that address social and cultural and other critical determinants of health for Aboriginal people and influence Aboriginal health and wellbeing outcomes.

4.3 Strengthen partnerships with Aboriginal people to drive improvements

Promote, encourage and increase opportunities for Aboriginal people to participate in the co-design, production, delivery and evaluation of policies, services and programs to ensure Aboriginal values and knowledge are incorporated.

4.4 Strengthen Aboriginal voices as part of system level decision making

Create opportunities for Aboriginal people to participate in health leadership and governance roles to ensure that Aboriginal needs and priorities are reflected and to create a clear line of accountability to Aboriginal people and communities.

4.5 Facilitate partnerships with education providers to support Aboriginal health

Strengthen links with schools, universities and Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) to support partnering opportunities including:

- facilitating Aboriginal health promotion and community engagement
- establishing Aboriginal health career pathways
- developing training and education in areas of Aboriginal health specific to local needs
- research into Aboriginal health.

4.6 Seek opportunities to improve Aboriginal health through innovation and new technologies

Explore opportunities to partner in trialling new and innovative approaches and technologies to increase engagement, address access and service gaps, and improve Aboriginal health outcomes.

4.7 Identify Aboriginal health research partnership opportunities

Identify opportunities to participate in research collaborations with the ACCHS sector, NGOs and universities to support an evidence-based approach in the planning, delivery and evaluation of Aboriginal health services.

SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- ▶ Health services deliver locally relevant and culturally responsive approaches and solutions to Aboriginal health issues.
- ▶ Shared decision making, partnerships, and collaborative cross-sector approaches operate across all levels of health planning and services delivery.
- ▶ Aboriginal people actively participate in planning and decision-making processes about Aboriginal health services and priorities.
- ▶ Increased information sharing and knowledge exchange between Aboriginal health stakeholders on Aboriginal health issues.
- ▶ LHNs meet regularly with local ACCHSs to share information and collaborate to improve local Aboriginal health service delivery.
- ▶ Aboriginal health services and programs continuously improve through the application of new evidence-based and innovative approaches, and learnings about what works well across the health system.

7. APPLYING THE FRAMEWORK

A whole of health system approach is required to implement the strategic priorities and actions set out in this Framework.

As system leader, DHW has set this overarching Framework based on national and state policy frameworks and will monitor and report against performance measures in partnership with LHNs.

Implementation of the Framework will be managed at the local level by each LHN. Each LHN will develop their own implementation plans in partnership with ACCHSs and other key service providers to plan and deliver the strategic priorities and actions. This will enable LHNs to work with their partners to tailor approaches to meet local needs.

7.1 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The table below provides a high-level summary of the roles and responsibilities between DHW and LHNs in the implementation of the Framework.

Partner	Role	Responsibilities
Department for Health and Wellbeing	System Lead for the Aboriginal Health Care Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Set the overarching policy framework for improving Aboriginal health and wellbeing, through the development of the Framework. ▶ Build awareness of the Framework across the SA health sector. ▶ Establish governance and accountability for the Framework across SA Health. ▶ Support LHNs and their partners to identify measures of success and establish systems to support gathering of measures. ▶ Support LHNs and their partners to implement the Framework through the provision of implementation advice. ▶ Establish the Aboriginal Health Care Framework Evaluation Plan. ▶ Monitor, evaluate and report against performance targets and measures of the Aboriginal Health Care Framework. ▶ Facilitate the mid and end of cycle review processes to evaluate the Framework. ▶ Revise the Aboriginal Health Care Framework as required, to align with review outcomes and any broader changes occurring in the sector. ▶ Ensure commissioning considers and reflects Aboriginal population needs.

Partner	Role	Responsibilities
Local Health Networks	Implementation of the Aboriginal Health Care Framework at the local level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Build awareness of the Framework at the local level. ▶ Ensure alignment and compliance with the intent of the Framework in LHN service planning and service delivery. ▶ Develop an implementation plan with ACCHSs and other local service providers to detail how the strategic priorities and actions will be delivered at the local level by the LHN to meet agreed performance targets. ▶ Report to DHW on LHN implementation activities and outcomes. ▶ Participate in Framework review and evaluation activities. ▶ Provide insights into the needs of Aboriginal people and communities within the LHN, and lessons learnt in health service planning and delivery.

7.2 MONITORING AND REPORTING

A governance structure will be established to provide oversight for the Framework's implementation across the system. This will facilitate regular monitoring and reporting on the progress of the Framework's implementation, and evaluation of the Framework's outcomes.

An Evaluation Plan will be established by DHW in consideration of this Framework's measures to detail the:

- performance targets against the measures of success for the Aboriginal Health Care Framework
- process to be applied for monitoring implementation and evaluation of the Framework
- governance arrangements for reporting on the implementation of the Framework.

The Evaluation Plan will consider measurement of the outcomes of the Framework at the individual LHN level, as well as providing a whole of system perspective. In the first instance, it is anticipated that DHW will work closely with LHNs in the identification of success measures and targets that can be captured and measured over time.

8. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

This Framework applies the terms and definitions contained the [National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2021–2031](#) (unless otherwise specified).

Aboriginal

The term Aboriginal is used throughout this document as inclusive of people who identify as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or both.

Aboriginal community control

A process which allows the local Aboriginal community to be involved in its affairs in accordance with whatever protocols or procedures are determined by the Community.

(Source: National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation)

Aboriginal Community- Controlled Health Service (ACCHS)

ACCHS are non-government, not-for-profit organisations run by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The terms Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (ACCHO) and Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS) are often used interchangeably with ACCHS.

Cross-sectoral

Cross-sectoral collaboration describes the process where various community organisations and/or government departments come together to collectively focus their expertise and resources on a complex issue of importance to a community they serve. For example, improving the health of your community requires the public health department, health care institutions, and other community stakeholders providing health and health-related services work collaboratively.

Cultural determinants of health

The cultural determinants of health are the protective factors that enhance resilience, strengthen identity and support good health and wellbeing. These include, but are not limited to, connection to Country; family, kinship and community; Indigenous beliefs and knowledge; cultural expression and continuity; Indigenous language; self-determination; and leadership.

Cultural responsiveness

Refers to health care services that are respectful of, and relevant to, the health beliefs, health practices, cultures and linguistic needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumer/patient populations and communities.

(Source: National Cultural Respect Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health)

Environmental health

Refers to the ways that the physical, chemical and biological environments that we live in can affect our health and wellbeing. Certain factors contribute to good environmental health, such as food security; access to and availability of clean water and sanitation; health hygiene and healthy living infrastructure; effective pest and disease control; safe and nutritious food; and safe, secure and culturally responsive housing.

Health literacy

The ability, or level of ability, to read and understand healthcare information, and to translate this information into practice.

Health promotion

Health promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health. (Source: World Health Organisation)

Intergenerational trauma

Exposure of an earlier generation to a traumatic event that continues to affect subsequent generations.

Life course

The period from birth through to death.

Social and emotional wellbeing

A term used to describe the social, emotional, spiritual, and cultural wellbeing of a person. In an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander context, it recognises the significance of connection to land, culture, spirituality, family, and community to health and wellbeing. It also recognises the influences of policies and past events.

Social determinants of health

The conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. These circumstances are shaped by the distribution of money, power, and resources at global, national, and local levels.

Strengths-based approach

A strengths-based approach focuses on the unique strengths, capabilities and resources of people, places, and communities, and looks for opportunities to capitalise on, complement and support existing strengths. Strengths-based approaches work in opposition to deficit-based discourse and approaches, which focus on areas of problem or concern, and can perpetuate negative stereotyping.

Systemic racism

In the context of health care, systemic racism is the failure of the health system to provide appropriate, professional, safe, and responsive services to people because of their cultural or racial background. This is often a result of broader historical and ongoing race-based policies, discrimination and social exclusion.

9. REFERENCES

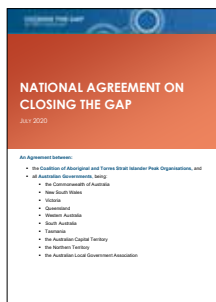
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10. APPENDIX 1: POLICY DOCUMENTS

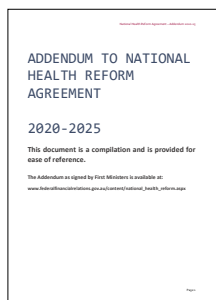
NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

Documents that direct Aboriginal health care policy



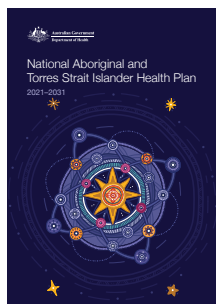
National Agreement on Closing the Gap 2020

Sets out the agreement reached between Australian governments and the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and governments to work together to overcome the inequality experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and achieve life outcomes equal to all Australians. The National Agreement is built around four Priority Reforms determined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. These reforms alter how governments work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.



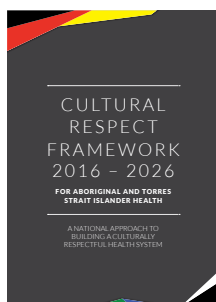
2020–25 National Health Reform Agreement

An agreement between the Australian Government and all state and territory governments which commits to improving health outcomes for Australians, by providing better coordinated and joined up care in the community and ensuring the future sustainability of Australia's health system. It is the key mechanism for the transparency, governance and financing of Australia's public hospital system. The agreement includes reforms that support Closing the Gap in disadvantage for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



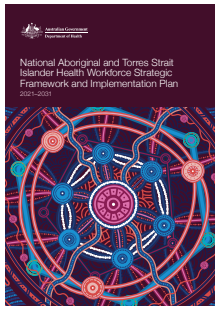
National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2021-2031

The national policy document to guide all action to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait. The Plan aligns with the priority reforms within the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and includes a strong focus on identifying opportunities to strengthen and prioritise the community controlled health sector and outlining the necessary mechanisms for mainstream health services to provide culturally safe and responsive care. Governments at all levels are jointly accountable for implementing the Plan and making sure it achieves progress on its priorities and objectives.



Cultural Respect Framework 2016 – 2026 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health

Commits the Commonwealth Government and all states and territories to embedding cultural respect principles into their health systems; from developing policy and legislation, to how organisations are run, through to the planning and delivery of services. The Framework guides and underpins the delivery of quality, culturally safe, responsive health care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and contributes to progress made towards achieving the Closing the Gap targets agreed by COAG.



National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan 2021–2031

Supports the ongoing development of the size, capability and capacity of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce. The Plan commits all governments across multiple portfolios to work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to grow and strengthen the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce and ensure a culturally safe and responsive health system.

Documents that support and enable Aboriginal health care policy



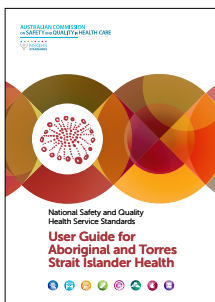
Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights (second edition)

Describes what consumers, or someone they care for, can expect when receiving health care. These rights apply to all people in all places where health care is provided in Australia and include the rights to access, safety, respect, partnership, information, and privacy.



National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards (second edition)

A set of eight standards which provide a nationally consistent statement about the level of care consumers can expect from health services. The primary aims of the Standards are to protect the public from harm and to improve the quality of health service provision. Implementation is mandated in all hospitals, day procedure services and public dental services across Australia.

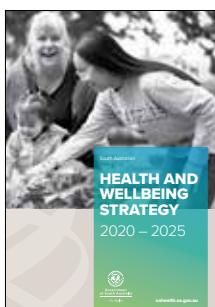


National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards: User Guide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health

Within the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards, six actions have been defined that specifically meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The actions are designed to help orientate the health system to provide all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with the health care they need.

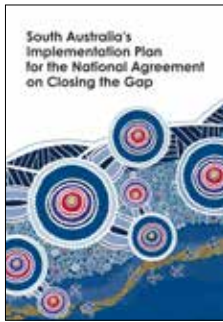
SOUTH AUSTRALIAN POLICY CONTEXT

Documents that direct Aboriginal health care policy



South Australian Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020 –2025

Outlines the key focus areas for development of the South Australian health system to ensure its ongoing relevance for South Australians. The Strategy acknowledges the differences in health status and health outcomes for some population groups such as Aboriginal people, and the need for targeted and tailored actions to address this.



South Australia's Implementation Plan for the National Agreement on Closing the Gap

Sets out South Australia's plan for achieving and addressing the priority reforms and socio-economic targets embedded in the Closing the Gap Agreement to ensure the lives of Aboriginal people in South Australia can improve in all cultural, social and economic aspects. Includes a series of actions to deliver improvements in health outcomes for Aboriginal people.

Documents that support and enable Aboriginal health care policy



SA Health Statement of Reconciliation

Provides formal recognition by the Minister for Health and Wellbeing and SA Health Chief Executive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first Australians and a commitment to engage Aboriginal people in decision making processes for matters that affect their lived experiences in the community and through the health system.



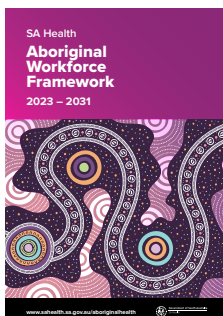
SA Health Aboriginal Cultural Learning Framework

Outlines a consistent approach to the improvement of the cultural competency within SA Health to meet the needs of its Aboriginal consumers. The Framework was developed as part of the South Australian government's commitment to Closing the Gap.



South Australia's Aboriginal Health Promotion Strategy 2022-2030

Articulates an agreed framework of the cultural determinants of health for Aboriginal South Australians and provides guidance to prioritise the actions of Wellbeing SA to strengthen and promote the cultural determinants of health. It informs the development and implementation of culturally appropriate policy and practice to support good health and wellbeing for Aboriginal people, including program design and partnerships between Wellbeing SA, other organisations and the Aboriginal community.



SA Health Aboriginal Workforce Framework 2023-31

Outlines a strategic approach to building the representation of Aboriginal people in the health workforce across South Australia. The Framework identifies strategic priority areas to grow and retain a strong and representative Aboriginal health workforce, and the actions required to deliver against these priorities.

For more information

System Leadership and Design - Aboriginal Health
Department for Health and Wellbeing
11 Hindmarsh Square
Adelaide 5000
health.aboriginalhealthenquiries@sa.gov.au
www.sahealth.sa.gov.au



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