Policy

Directive: compliance is mandatory

Aboriginal Employment Policy

Objective file number: 2009-0738
Policy developed by: Aboriginal Health Division (Marsha Uphill)
Approved at Portfolio Executive on: 03 April 2008
Next review due: 01 April 2012

Summary
Outlines SA Health’s policy commitment to increasing the employment of Aboriginal people at all levels across the portfolio and, the retention and development of current and future Aboriginal employees.

Keywords

Policy history
Is this a new policy? N
Does this policy amend or update an existing policy? N
Does this policy replace an existing policy? N
If so, which policies?

Applies to
All SA Health Portfolio

Staff impact
All Staff

PDS reference
D0161

Version control and change history

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ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT POLICY

Policy Statement

SA Health has a social and economic responsibility in addressing the disadvantage experienced by South Australia’s Aboriginal People\(^1\). We have a firm commitment to increasing the employment of Aboriginal people at all levels of our organisation and the retention of current and future Aboriginal employees across the Portfolio. Aboriginal participation through employment, in the design, delivery and evaluation of the culturally responsive services provided through SA Health is crucial in achieving quality service provision and equitable health outcomes. SA Health needs to keep building on the innovation and resource allocation already committed to Aboriginal employment.

Context

1. The South Australian Government applies the principles outlined in the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council (AHMAC) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce National Strategic Framework, AHMAC, May 2002.
2. South Australia’s Strategic Plan 2007 commits the SA government to:
   - T1.26 TARGET – Aboriginal unemployment: reduce the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal unemployment rates each year.
   - T2.5 TARGET – Aboriginal healthy life expectancy: lower the morbidity and mortality rates of Aboriginal South Australians.
   - T5.7 TARGET – Aboriginal leadership: increase the number of Aboriginal South Australians participating in community leadership and in community leadership development programs.
   - T6.1 TARGET – Aboriginal wellbeing: improve the overall wellbeing of Aboriginal South Australians.
   - T6.24 TARGET – Aboriginal employees: increase the participation of Aboriginal people in the South Australian public sector, spread across all classifications and agencies, to 2% by 2010 and maintain or better those levels through to 2014.
3. The Regional Health Service Agreements issued by the Department of Health commit Health regions to:
   - increase Aboriginal employees as a proportion of total public health sector workforce, appropriately distributed across the range of services and functions.
   - achieve increased Aboriginal participation in the public health sector workforce.
   - support the South Australian Aboriginal Health Partnership priority areas in relation to Health Workforce Development.

\(^1\) Please note that for the purposes of this document, the use of the term ‘Aboriginal’ is also a reference to Torres Strait Islander peoples.
Commitment

The underlying principles for promoting Aboriginal employment across the Health Portfolio include access and equity, responsiveness, cultural suitability and respect, effective service responses and accountability. Given these principles, SA Health will ensure that work practices:

- Ensure accessible employment and career advancement practices for the Aboriginal community of South Australia
- Promote equity so that judgements are based on merit and not on stereotypes or prejudiced values and morals. This requires that consideration be given to people’s skills and abilities balanced with experience and knowledge
- Aim to eliminate discrimination against Aboriginal people by being responsive to individual needs by providing resources, assistance and opportunities for considering claims of discrimination
- Promote through Aboriginal recruitment and retention, services that are culturally suitable to the Aboriginal people of South Australia
- Integrate relevant and culturally competent training and development of non-Aboriginal staff to ensure they are effective and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal individuals, families and communities in South Australia.
- Value Aboriginal employees’ skills and knowledge

Implementation

This Policy requires that:

- Each Region and Division within SA Health develops an Aboriginal Employment Strategy in collaboration with the Aboriginal Health Division Workforce Support & Development Unit to address recruitment and retention issues specific to their portfolio responsibilities. The development of strategies will be closely linked and guided by Regional Health Service Agreement processes and the SA Health Aboriginal Workforce Reform Strategy and will be central to the development of Aboriginal Health Improvement Plans;
- The development and implementation of Aboriginal Employment Strategies will be an integral element of Executive Performance Agreements
- An Aboriginal Health Impact Statement is prepared for any workforce development, reform and planning in regions and divisions

The Aboriginal Health Division will:

- Develop a set of standards for the advancement of Divisional and Regional Aboriginal Employment strategies with emphasis on:
  - Attraction / Recruitment
  - Retention
  - Community engagement and participation
  - An appropriate age and gender balance
  - Sustainable and ongoing employment across all classifications
  - Leadership positions and Leadership development
- Provide guidance in the development of these strategies.
- Provide a state-wide strategic response to Aboriginal workforce support and development issues
Monitoring & Evaluation

SA Health will develop an appropriate reporting mechanism to assess the implementation of the Aboriginal Employment Policy, through the monitoring of Divisional and Regional Aboriginal Employment Strategies, which will ensure consistency with the SA Health Strategic Plan. The monitoring of Divisional and Regional strategies will be facilitated by the Aboriginal Health Division, and will inform the annual review of this Policy.

Companion documents

SA Health

‘The First Step…’ (South Australian Aboriginal Health Partnership), 1997
Flexible Workplace Practices Policy, 2002
Office of Health Reform Project Briefs, 2004:
  • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategic Framework
  • Workforce Attraction and Retention
  • Workforce Redesign
South Australia’s Health Care Plan 2007-2016
SA Health Aboriginal Cultural Respect Framework 2007

Other Related References

AHMAC, Cultural Respect Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, 2003 - 2008
SA Aboriginal Health Worker Equal Employment Opportunity Exemption

Legislation

SA Equal Opportunity Act 1984
Public Sector Management Act 1995
SA Health Commission Act 1976