SA Health Aboriginal Workforce Framework 2017-2022
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.
A message from the Chief Executive, SA Health

Although South Australia has high-quality health services, there is a significant difference in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal South Australians, contributing to poorer education and employment outcomes for Aboriginal people.

Efforts need to be made to change this picture. We need to work together in a focused way to eliminate the differences in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and deliver sustainable and lasting improvements in Aboriginal people’s lives and wellbeing.

A significant enabler to reducing the disparity in health outcomes is building the capacity and capability of our workforce to deliver quality care to Aboriginal people. We know that having skilled Aboriginal staff makes a difference to Aboriginal patients and families, and that higher rates of employment help not only individuals but also families and communities. We know too that cultural safety and clinical safety are both essential for delivery of high quality care.

More work is needed across SA Health to ensure that Aboriginal people are better represented in our organisations, in all occupations and at all salary levels. We also have much to do to ensure that environments across SA Health are spiritually, socially, emotionally and physically safe for Aboriginal people.

The SA Health Aboriginal Workforce Framework 2017-2022 provides the roadmap for SA Health to attract, retain and develop Aboriginal staff, and to increase the cultural competence of our whole workforce.

We must not shy away from tackling the challenge simply because it seems big or difficult.

There is much we can do and I urge you all to commit to change and consider what contribution you, your team and workplace can make to positive Aboriginal workforce outcomes.

Vickie Kaminski
The SA Health Aboriginal Workforce Framework 2017-2022 (the Framework) aims to increase the Aboriginal workforce across the public health sector in clinical, non-clinical and leadership roles.

Increasing Aboriginal employment in SA Health will have a positive impact on the care received by Aboriginal people as well as supporting the economic and social wellbeing of Aboriginal people through direct and indirect benefits of employment.

In addition, Aboriginal people provide a unique perspective through lived experiences that will enhance and diversify the service provided by SA Health.

Through the Framework we aim to:

- Create a culturally safe environment
- Increase the representation of Aboriginal employees across SA Health
- Increase the representation of Aboriginal people working in all professions
- Ensure that the unique contributions of Aboriginal employees are valued and used within models of care and health care teams
- Improve career pathways for existing Aboriginal staff and for new Aboriginal staff entering the health workforce
- Build a South Australian health workforce which eliminates the difference in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people by providing culturally safe and competent health services
- Strengthen partnerships with Aboriginal communities, the education and training sectors and other key parties to deliver options for Aboriginal people wanting to enter the health workforce
- Provide high quality employment opportunities to Aboriginal graduates, with a focus on health professions
- Provide leadership and planning in Aboriginal workforce development.
- Develop SA Health’s reputation as an employer of choice for Aboriginal people.

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

Developing the Framework

The Framework has been based on input provided by participants in a workshop held for this purpose in March 2017. The workshop was opened by Mr Don Frater, Deputy Chief Executive, SA Health and Mr Frank Lampard OAM, Commissioner for Aboriginal Engagement, and facilitated by Mr Jason Downs, Leader for Engagement, Department of State Development. Participants included Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal clinicians, executive leaders and team members drawn from:

- Aboriginal Senior Leadership Group, SA Health
- Workforce Directors Group, SA Health
- Department for Health and Ageing (DHA), including Drug and Alcohol Services SA
- Northern Adelaide Local Health Network
- Central Adelaide Local Health Network, including Statewide Clinical Support Services
- Southern Adelaide Local Health Network
- Country Health SA Local Health Network
- Women’s and Children’s Health Network
- SA Ambulance Service (SAAS)
- Transforming Health Aboriginal Expert Advisory Committee
- Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia Inc.
- Office for the Public Sector

SA Health thanks all those involved for their active participation and thoughtful contributions, both on the day of the workshop, and in providing subsequent feedback.
The SA Health executive leadership team is committed to improving health outcomes for Aboriginal people in South Australia, with a particular focus on enabling our workforce to deliver high quality and culturally appropriate care. DHA will lead the implementation of the Framework, with the support of all Local Health Networks (LHNs) and SAAS. Regular input and advice will be sought from the SA Health Aboriginal Senior Leadership Group. A phased approach to implementation will be developed, monitored and measured to ensure that the Framework delivers on identified priorities.

### Governance

**VISION**

The Framework shares the vision articulated in the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2013-2023*, *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework 2016-2023* and *Cultural Respect Framework 2016-2026* of an Australian health system:

> that is free of racism and inequality;
> in which cultural respect principles are embedded;
> where all services are effective, equitable, appropriate and accessible for Aboriginal people;
> delivered by a health workforce with appropriate clinical, management, community development and cultural skills to provide culturally-safe and responsive health care;
> in which the number of Aboriginal employees reflects the proportion of Aboriginal people in the population as a whole; and
> in which Aboriginal leadership is present at all levels of decision-making and governance.

### South Australian targets

Aboriginal people make up 2% of South Australia’s population, with more than half of this population (53.8%) living in metropolitan Adelaide.\(^1\)

#### Government of South Australia

The South Australian Government is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal South Australians, having set explicit targets in South Australia’s Strategic Plan (SASP) in such areas as reducing the number of low birth weight Aboriginal babies, increasing Aboriginal life expectancy, and increasing Aboriginal leadership and public sector employment. The SASP established a target to increase the participation of Aboriginal people in the South Australian public sector, spread across all classifications, to 2%.

A number of initiatives are being driven by the Office for the Public Sector (OPS) to increase the participation of Aboriginal employees and to support agencies in reaching and surpassing the SASP target.

#### SA Health

The targets set by Government are ambitious, particularly as we know that we start from an overall base of approximately 1% and that we have a highly-professionalised workforce, with many professions requiring lengthy educational preparation. However, we know that change is imperative and that much can be achieved through commitment at all levels, building effective partnerships, applying focused effort and allocating resources to support our goals.

Service Level Agreements between DHA and LHNs-SAAS outline key performance indicators in relation to Aboriginal workforce targets and these will continue to be reviewed regularly.

Executive performance agreements will also incorporate key performance indicators as applicable.

Implementation of the Framework will assist SA Health to meet the requirements of the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers. In addition, the Framework complements SA Health Reconciliation Action Plans, which outline practical action to build strong relationships and enhance respect between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people.

---

1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population – 2016 Census Data Summary, Australian Bureau of Statistics
In June 2017, SA Health had 417 people, or 1% of the total workforce (40,122) who have identified as being Aboriginal. However, there were almost 14,500 employees (36%) in our workforce whose identity was not recorded.

Of the 417 employees who identified as Aboriginal:

- 78% Females
- 22% Males

- 57% Full time
- 43% Part time

- 57% are employed on an ongoing basis

Employee statistics as reflected in the CHRIS21 data source

The largest Aboriginal workforce and the highest proportion of Aboriginal employees were within the Country Health SA LHN. Employment numbers can be found on page 13.
In relation to the 2017 intake of Aboriginal people with professional qualifications into our formal transition programs:

- **There were 4 NURSES** in the Transition to Professional Practice Program (about 1% of the total intake).
- **There were 2 MIDWIVES** in the Transition to Professional Practice Program (3.7% of the total intake).
- **There were 2 Aboriginal MEDICAL INTERNS** (0.8% of the total intake).
PROVIDE A POSITIVE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

RECOGNISE AND REINFORCE

INVOLVE AND ENGAGE

DEVELOP SKILLS AND POTENTIAL

EVALUATE AND MEASURE
The key priority areas of the Framework are reflected through the themes of PRIDE:

**Provide a Positive Working Environment**
A whole workforce that is culturally aware and responsive will contribute to an environment where Aboriginal staff have pride in their work and feel their contributions are valued.

**Recognise and Reinforce**
We recognise that Aboriginal people bring unique knowledge and skills to the workplace and value the contribution these can make to our services and to eliminating differences in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

**Involve and Engage**
To expand our Aboriginal workforce we will work in partnership with Aboriginal communities, education providers and others.

**Develop Skills and Potential**
We want Aboriginal staff to achieve their career aspirations and be proud of their contribution to the workplace.

**Evaluate and Measure**
Evaluation throughout the life of the Framework will allow us to monitor progress, make changes to our approach if needed, and hold ourselves accountable for achieving our goals.

---

A positive work environment encourages employees to feel good about coming to work. A whole workforce that is culturally aware and responsive will contribute to an environment where Aboriginal staff feel safe, welcomed and supported, have pride in their work and know their contributions are valued. Providing a positive work environment goes beyond the workplace and recognises that individual workers may have personal responsibilities that need to be balanced with work responsibilities.

**WHAT WE WANT TO SEE:**

> All staff understand that cultural competence is central to being a skilled and competent worker and that respect for Aboriginal people and cultures is valued and encouraged within our workplaces
> Increasing cultural competence in our workplaces reflected in behaviors, attitudes, policies and practices
> An inclusive workplace culture that provides a safe and welcoming environment for Aboriginal employees
> Leaders at all levels tackling racism and providing positive reinforcement to recognise and reward desired behaviour

**WE WILL:**

> Implement the SA Health Aboriginal Cultural Learning Framework and ensure all staff across SA Health complete mandatory training
> Promote, observe, acknowledge, and encourage employees to celebrate and commemorate Aboriginal culture, including dates and events of significance
> Incorporate Aboriginal cultural practices and protocols in meetings and events
> Encourage and continue to build a workplace/organisational culture that promotes and values a balance between work and personal responsibilities
> Promote and support flexible work arrangements/public sector leave provisions (including cultural leave) to support Aboriginal workers in meeting their work, family and cultural obligations
> Ensure that leadership development programs across SA Health address the need for tackling racism and supporting respectful behaviours
We recognise that Aboriginal people bring unique knowledge and skills to the workplace and that we need to draw on these contributions to improve our services and reduce disparities in health outcomes. We recognise that we need to provide leadership that reinforces and acts on these messages.

On an individual basis, people want to be respected and valued for their contribution. Everyone wants to be recognised as an individual or member of a group and to feel a sense of achievement for work well done. Employees respond to appreciation expressed through recognition of their good work because it confirms their work is valued. When employees and their work are valued, their satisfaction and productivity rises, and they are motivated to build on their good work.

**WHAT WE WANT TO SEE:**

> The unique contributions that Aboriginal workers can bring to the workplace are understood and recognised within models of care
> Designated positions recognised as critically important in contributing to eliminating differences between health outcomes for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people (e.g., Cancer, Stroke, Diabetes, Mental Health, and Maternal and Neonatal Health)
> Strong leadership from both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal workforce in recognising that beneficial health outcomes can be achieved by having skilled Aboriginal staff as part of the health care team

**WE WILL:**

> Review models of care to recognise and utilise the unique skills and abilities that Aboriginal workers can bring to the workplace. This may include defining Aboriginal employment pathways from entry-level positions through to leadership
> Engage the acute care sector to identify opportunities for developing new roles for a range of occupational groups, including but not limited to Aboriginal Health Practitioners
> Promote consistent application of classifications for specialist Aboriginal Health clinical and non-clinical roles, including but not limited to Aboriginal Health Practitioner, Aboriginal Health Worker and Aboriginal Health Liaison Officer/Cultural Consultant roles
> Promote career pathways for Aboriginal employees across occupational groups and the continuum of health services and care
> Collaborate with awards’ program officers to review and consider new categories of excellence awards to support the Framework
> Promote Aboriginal employees’ participation in excellence awards
Strengthening the diversity of our workforce and providing clear pathways for Aboriginal employees is essential; and working through collaborative partnerships to achieve these ends is a key focus of this theme.

The SA Health workforce is highly professionalised, with training pathways often taking many years to complete. In our planning we need to consider which occupations and services will have the biggest impact on eliminating differences in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Engaging with Aboriginal communities, education providers and other key parties will assist us to have a planned approach to workforce supply.

**WHAT WE WANT TO SEE:**

- An increase in Aboriginal representation within our workforce across all occupational groups
- Strong partnerships with education and training providers to promote SA Health’s current and future workforce needs
- Collaborative partnerships with education and training providers and local Aboriginal organisations to strengthen career pathways and opportunities for our current and future Aboriginal workforce
- Aboriginal graduates from Adelaide based universities actively targeted for employment in SA Health
- Stronger partnerships with other State Government agencies, non-government organisations and the private sector to share best practice and build expertise in Aboriginal employment and workforce development
- Ongoing engagement with Aboriginal staff and local communities

**WE WILL:**

- Actively participate on the Aboriginal Employment Public Sector Industry Cluster to leverage best practice Aboriginal recruitment, retention and development strategies
- Actively utilise and promote the SA Government Aboriginal Employment Register and increase the number of Aboriginal staff employed through the Register
- Promote the employment of Aboriginal people in SA Health through the SA Government Flexibility for the Future program and other pathway programs, including traineeships, cadetships, graduate positions and scholarship programs
- Prioritise the employment of Aboriginal applicants, both through our formal transition to professional practice programs and through our scholarship programs
- Support new Aboriginal employees in the transition to employment in SA Health, for example through workplace mentoring
- Engage with universities and other education and training providers to influence program enrolments that reflect SA Health’s current and future workforce needs for skilled and qualified Aboriginal staff
- Work with universities, including their Aboriginal Support Units, and other education and training providers, to support Aboriginal students in preparation for the workplace and the transition from study to employment
- Develop collaborative partnerships with Aboriginal communities, schools and other education and training providers to promote employment opportunities and career pathways in health for Aboriginal students
We are committed to developing the capabilities of Aboriginal staff. Developing a skilled Aboriginal workforce is beneficial for both individuals and system outcomes. We want Aboriginal people to identify and achieve their career aspirations and be proud of their contribution to the workplace.

**WHAT WE WANT TO SEE:**

- Workplace practices that promote a culturally safe, respectful and inclusive environment to support Aboriginal employees’ learning and development
- Strong Aboriginal leadership across SA Health
- An increase in the number of Aboriginal people in Executive roles
- Employees discussing individual career pathways through their performance review and development process
- Employees’ work skills and abilities are developed to help them reach their full potential

**WE WILL:**

- Build leadership capacity in the Aboriginal health workforce through identifying and actively targeting current and future Aboriginal managers and leaders for development opportunities
- Encourage Aboriginal staff participation in leadership programs, including programs offered by the Office for the Public Sector and SA Health and culturally validated Aboriginal leadership programs
- Provide opportunities for employees to participate in skilled volunteering or mentoring programs with Aboriginal people, communities and/or organisations
- Create opportunities for coaching and mentoring for our Aboriginal workforce with Aboriginal and other leaders in the SA public and private sectors
- Establish and support Aboriginal staff networks to provide an inclusive working environment that enables optimal work performance from Aboriginal employees
- Support and encourage Aboriginal employees employed in Aboriginal designated positions to pursue career development opportunities in line with their career aspirations, including in non-designated Aboriginal positions
- Develop and implement talent identification strategies to support retention and career development for Aboriginal employees
EVALUATE AND MEASURE

We are accountable to Aboriginal people in South Australia, to the wider community and to Government to increase the representation of Aboriginal people in our workforce and reduce the disparities in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal South Australians.

Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the Framework will be critical. Identifying areas for improvement, implementing and evaluating system wide and/or local strategies and monitoring progress will support us to be accountable and to achieve our goals.

WHAT WE WANT TO SEE:

- Active engagement of leaders in making a difference to Aboriginal employment outcomes and Aboriginal health outcomes
- All SA Health employees completing cultural awareness training and developing greater cultural sensitivity and skills
- An increase in SA Health Aboriginal employees identifying their cultural background status in human resource records
- An increase in Aboriginal people applying for roles in SA Health
- An increase in Aboriginal employees recruited and retained
- A decrease in Aboriginal employees exiting SA Health
- Increased expertise in Aboriginal employment and workforce development across SA Health
- More effective use of data to inform planning and evaluation of initiatives and ensure Aboriginal workforce outcomes are met

WE WILL:

- Develop an overarching implementation plan for the Framework, identifying priorities for action during the life of the Framework, and clear lines of responsibility, in consultation with key Aboriginal stakeholders
- Develop an evaluation approach for the Framework, including mechanisms for sharing learnings across SA Health
- Establish baselines to inform future benchmarks for education and employment outcomes, and systems for monitoring and review
- Develop Aboriginal health workforce action plans in each LHN, SAAS and DHA aligned to the Framework in consultation with key Aboriginal stakeholders
- Identify and dedicate resources to support Aboriginal employment initiatives, and training and education opportunities for Aboriginal employees
- Ensure performance reviews for all Executive level roles (and equivalent) include objectives for Aboriginal employment and culturally respectful workplaces
- Regularly review and update Service Level Agreement targets, including profession-specific targets, relating to Aboriginal workforce outcomes
- Establish targets and monitor progress to implement the Aboriginal Cultural Learning Framework across SA Health and ensure these are embedded in Service Level Agreements and performance agreements
- Actively encourage all SA Health Aboriginal staff to self-identify by updating personal details on the CHRIS21 human resource information system as a means of improving Aboriginal workforce development and support
> Regularly review and monitor our Aboriginal workforce data to maintain an accurate profile of our Aboriginal workforce
> Monitor use of the Equal Employment Opportunity exemption granted to permit SA Health to advertise for and preference the appointment of Aboriginal people when filling vacancies in a number of specified Aboriginal Health roles
> Monitor and measure employment outcomes for Aboriginal trainees, cadets, apprentices, and scholarship holders sponsored by SA Health
> Conduct exit interviews with Aboriginal trainees, cadets, apprentices and scholarship holders to improve training/scholarship programs and support
> Conduct exit interviews with Aboriginal employees, and analyse information in order to identify, understand and address issues affecting the quality of working life

Reference for page 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Number of Aboriginal Staff</th>
<th>Number of non Aboriginal Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Adelaide Local Health Network (CALHN)</td>
<td>65 12,941</td>
<td>1,476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Adelaide Local Health Network (SALHN)</td>
<td>43  7,122</td>
<td>2,004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s and Children’s Health Network (WCHN)</td>
<td>62  3,653</td>
<td>1,476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Health SA Local Health Network (CHSALHN)</td>
<td>160 8,089</td>
<td>4,420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Adelaide Local Health Network (NALHN)</td>
<td>51  4,420</td>
<td>1,476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department for Health and Ageing (DHA)</td>
<td>26  2,004</td>
<td>1,476</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: People Analytics June 2017