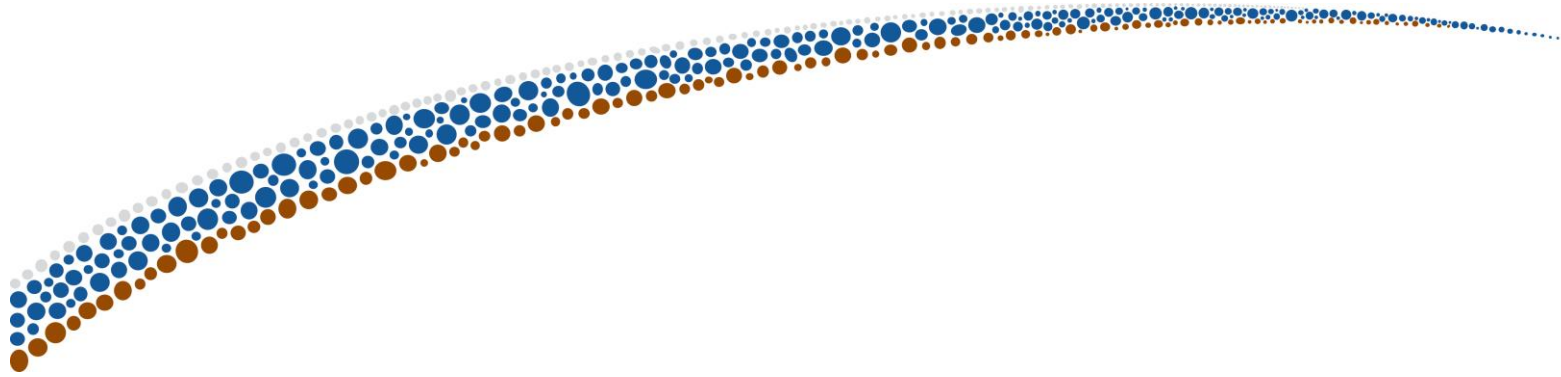




Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**

WA Health Aboriginal Workforce Policy



TITLE: WA HEALTH ABORIGINAL WORKFORCE POLICY

1. BACKGROUND

To align with the [WA Public Sector Commission Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2011-2015](#), WA Health is working towards a target of 3.2 per cent. To achieve this target, WA Health has set a goal of 100 additional Aboriginal staff each year, as per the [WA Health Operational Plan 2014-15](#). The Senior Health Executive Forum (SHEF) and other key stakeholders have agreed to increase the recruitment of Aboriginal staff, and acknowledge the value of employing an Aboriginal workforce within their respective service agreements.

Aboriginal people are greatly under-represented in the health workforce. Aboriginal people represent only 1.1 per cent of the 44,000-strong WA Health workforce. Yet, Aboriginal people comprise approximately 3.8 per cent of the Western Australian population and have the greatest health needs of any group in the State. It is recognised that more Aboriginal people working in the health system is required to help address the significant health issues faced by Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people bring to the health sector a diverse range of skills including the ability to break down barriers to access and cultural perspective, which help meet the needs of Aboriginal people.

As a partner to the Aboriginal Affairs Coordinating Committee, WA Health is committed to ensuring that all Western Australians benefit from, and participate in, the State's economy. WA Health supports the implementation of the [Government of Western Australia Aboriginal Economic Participation Strategy 2012-2016](#), and has been tasked with growing economic participation by increasing the participation of Aboriginal people in all sections of the health sector.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all persons employed in WA Health, which incorporates the following entities:

- Department of Health
- Metropolitan Health Services
- Peel Health Service
- WA Country Health Service

This is a system wide policy and supersedes any policies related to Aboriginal workforce and employment.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

WA Health values diversity in the workplace and is committed to building a sustainable Aboriginal health workforce from entry level to leadership roles, using a variety of career pathways and employment opportunities. WA Health recognises the need to increase employment opportunities for Aboriginal people and has pledged a commitment to this despite the tight fiscal environment. Within this environment, WA Health will work to progress initiatives through the reconfiguration and utilisation of existing resources. Opportunities to attract new funding and program resources will be sought when available.

The intention of WA Health is to ensure Aboriginal people have access to the same opportunities, rights and entitlements as other individuals entering the WA Health workforce. Specific substantive equality programs may help achieve this. With this in mind, WA Health aims to:

- increase the Aboriginal workforce
- remove the barriers affecting Aboriginal people entering the WA Health workforce and promote substantive equality
- build community capacity to enter the WA Health workforce
- develop structural mechanisms and processes within the existing system to increase the number of Aboriginal people employed by WA Health. This will include, but not limited to, the use of Section 50(d) and 51 of the [Equal Opportunity Act 1984](#).

Positive outcomes can be achieved by the application Section 50(d) of the Act, enabling services to be provided to a racial group by a person of the same race. The application of Section 51 of the Act enables agencies to create a more diverse workforce.

The [WA Health Aboriginal Workforce Strategy 2014-2024](#) will be implemented across all health services and Royal Street Divisions. Key activities require WA Health to:

- identify and implement initiatives that create pathways into the WA Health workforce such as cadetships/ graduate programs/ traineeships (including school based)
- increase the number of permanent positions within WA Health and work towards substantive opportunities for fixed term contract employees
- ensure ongoing employment of the Aboriginal workforce within WA Health.

All health services and Royal Street Divisions are responsible for developing the structural capacity and flexibility to successfully sustain and engage a broad range of Aboriginal workers at all levels. To achieve this, the following initiatives are mandated until WA Health has reached the Public Sector Commission's employment target:

1. Prioritise the offer of junior medical officer places to Aboriginal medical graduates in Western Australia.
2. Prioritise the offer of nurse and midwife graduate places to Aboriginal nurse and midwife graduates in Western Australia.
3. Quarantine two WA Health Graduate Development Program places for Aboriginal graduates in Western Australia.
4. Develop and implement Aboriginal Traineeship and Cadetship programs in each health service.
5. Identify positions to employ Aboriginal cadets, trainees and graduates on completion of their program.
6. Provide opportunities for Aboriginal people to develop individual capacity to competitively apply for permanent positions. This may include opportunities for appointments to fixed term contracts that are less than six months subject to WA Health Policy requirements.

4. DEFINITIONS

<p>Aboriginal Affairs Coordinating Committee</p>	<p>The Aboriginal Affairs Coordinating Committee (AACC) is established under section 19 of the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972 (the Act). The function of the AACC under section 19(3) of the Act is to coordinate effectively the activities of all persons and bodies, corporate or otherwise, providing or proposing to provide services and assistance in relations to persons of Aboriginal decent.</p> <p>Following the establishment of the Aboriginal Affairs Cabinet Sub-committee (AACSC) in April 2013, the function of the AACC has been expanded to include targeted and issues based AACC Sub-committees focussing on: Health and Mental Health; Education; Regional and Remote Communities; Economic Development and Governance; Family, Youth and Children.</p>
<p>Diversity</p>	<p>Encompasses acceptance, respect and recognition of individual differences such as background, skills, talents and perspectives, as well as characteristics that are protected under equal opportunity legislation.</p>
<p>Substantive Equality</p>	<p>Achieving equitable outcomes as well as equal opportunity. It takes into account the effects of past discrimination and it recognises that rights, entitlements, opportunities and access are not equally distributed throughout society. Substantive equality recognises that equal or the same application of rules for certain groups can have unequal rights.</p>

5. WA HEALTH ABORIGINAL WORKFORCE STRATEGY 2014-2024

In accordance with its obligations under this Policy, WA Health has in place the [WA Health Aboriginal Workforce Strategy 2014-2024](#). The Strategy aims to develop a strong, skilled and growing Aboriginal health workforce across WA Health including clinical, non-clinical and leadership roles. The Strategy seeks to achieve outcomes in four priority areas:

1. Attraction and retention.
2. Workforce skill development.
3. Workforce design.
4. Workforce planning and evaluation.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Chief Executive Officers

CEOs have a responsibility to:

- ensure that the Policy is implemented, guided by the overarching set of mandated initiatives, which drive individual tasks to support the achievement of outcomes in each area
- provide the resources and support required to develop and implement Aboriginal workforce initiatives for the Health Services, Royal Street Divisions and the Health Information Network within their functional responsibility.

Managers and Supervisors

Manager and Supervisors have a responsibility to:

- support the implementation of the Policy
- ensure that requests for decisions or issues pertaining to the implementation of the Policy are handled in a timely fashion
- determine the priorities for Aboriginal workforce development within their team
- disseminate the [WA Health Aboriginal Workforce Strategy 2014-2024](#) to all staff.

All Staff

All staff members have a responsibility to:

- comply with the Operational Directive
- provide feedback related to the implementation of the Policy to their manager.

7. EVALUATION

Evaluation of this policy is to be carried out by the Policy Owner (refer below). The evaluation will monitor that the Policy is appropriate, achievable and effective. The following existing mechanisms will support the evaluation of the Policy:

- Operational Plan – Aboriginal Health reports Aboriginal workforce figures on a quarterly basis to the Director General.
- Diversity Data Reporting – WA Health reports diversity data annually through the Minimum Obligatory Information Requirements (MOIR) public sector reporting framework.
- Performance Targets – The Director General is required to report annually to the Minister for Health on the achievement of diversity targets as outlined in the performance agreement.
- Service Agreements – Chief Executive Officers are required to report annually to the Director General on the achievement of diversity and Aboriginal workforce targets outlined in the agreement.

8. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- [Equal Opportunity Act 1984 \(WA\)](#)
- [Public Sector Management Act 1994](#)

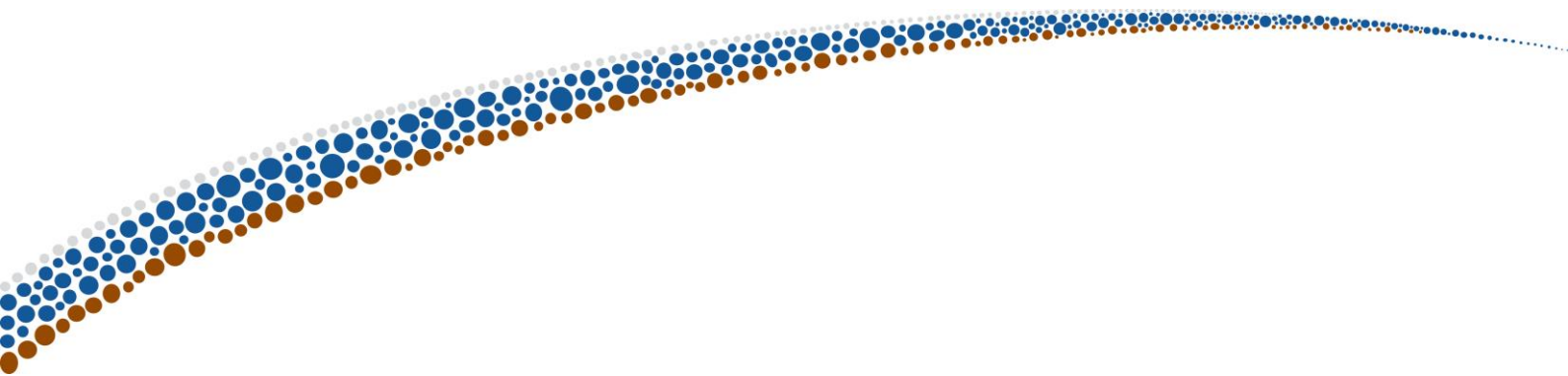
9. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- [WA Health Aboriginal Workforce Strategy 2014-2024](#)
- [WA Country Health Service Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2014-2018](#)
- [WA Health Aboriginal Cultural Learning Framework](#)
- WA Health Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Framework 2015-2030 (in development)
- [WA Health Equity and Diversity Plan 2010-2015](#)
- [National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework 2011–2015](#)
- [WA Health Equal Opportunity and Diversity Policy](#)
- [WA Health Substantive Equality Policy](#)
- [WA Health Recruitment, Selection and Appointment Policy](#)
- [Government of Western Australia Aboriginal Economic Participation Strategy 2012-2016](#)
- [WA Public Sector Commission Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2011-2015](#)
- [National Aboriginal Health Plan 2013-2023](#)

10. AUTHORITY

Title:	WA Health Aboriginal Workforce Policy		
Contact:	Wendy Casey		
Directorate:	Aboriginal Health	TRIM Record Number:	ED-CO-XX-XXXXX
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