



Aboriginal Workforce Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of the *Aboriginal Workforce Policy* (the policy) is to increase representation of Aboriginal people at all levels of the workforce to improve Aboriginal health outcomes and achieve the Aboriginal employment target of 3.2% by 2026. The policy specifies the mandatory policy requirements to attract, recruit and retain Aboriginal people in clinical, non-clinical and leadership roles.

Growing the Aboriginal workforce is essential for the WA health system to deliver culturally safe and responsive health services. Aboriginal employees bring a diverse range of knowledge and skills to the health sector including a cultural perspective, the ability to break down barriers and to provide culturally appropriate care for Aboriginal Western Australians.

Fostering a culturally safe and supportive workplace, free of racism, is fundamental to growing an Aboriginal workforce.

The [WA Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Framework 2015-2030](#) (Framework) provides the guiding principles that underpin this policy. The Framework recognises that a strong, skilled and growing Aboriginal health workforce across all levels, including clinical, non-clinical and leadership roles, is a key enabler to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal people.

This policy is strongly aligned to the [National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan 2021-2031](#) and the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People: Action Plan to Improve WA Public Sector Employment Outcomes 2020-2025](#).

The policy also reflects the broader commitment of the WA health system to promote equity and diversity in its workforce and address Aboriginal people as a priority diversity group in accordance with the [Workforce Diversification and Inclusion Strategy for WA Public Sector Employment 2020-2025](#).

This policy is a mandatory requirement under the *Employment Policy Framework* pursuant to section 26(2)(c), (d) and (f) of the *Health Services Act 2016*.

This policy must be read in conjunction with [MP 0071/17 Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Policy](#) and [MP 0033/16 Recruitment, Selection and Appointment Policy](#).

2. Applicability

This policy is applicable to all Health Service Providers excluding the Quadriplegic Centre.

The requirements contained within this Policy are applicable to the services purchased from contracted health entities where it is explicitly stated in the contract between the contracted health entity and the State of Western Australia or Health Service Provider. The State of Western Australia or Health Service Provider contract manager is responsible for ensuring that any obligation to comply with this Policy by the contracted health entity is accurately reflected in the relevant contract and managed accordingly.

3. Policy Requirements

Aboriginal workforce strategies

Health Service Providers must implement the following strategies to grow, develop, and retain the Aboriginal workforce based on their workforce needs and priorities:

1. Use streamlined, flexible and culturally responsive recruitment and selection practices to attract, recruit and retain Aboriginal people in the health workforce.
2. Create a culturally safe and supportive workplace free from racism, using a range of strategies to:
 - recognise and respect the skill sets, strengths, and cultural knowledge of Aboriginal employees
 - apply contemporary workplace practices
 - support flexible working arrangements
 - ensure non-Aboriginal health employees have the necessary skills and training in cultural safety and capability.
3. Apply section 51 of the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* to recruitment processes to increase employment opportunities for Aboriginal people.
4. Apply section 50d of the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* when Aboriginality is a genuine occupation requirement for the position.
5. Improve the Aboriginal workforce pipeline by providing employment development pathways and programs for Aboriginal people, including but not limited to cadet, graduate, intern, and trainee programs.
6. Provide clear pathways for Aboriginal people who complete an employment development program in any discipline to transition into employment. This can be achieved using a range of mechanisms, for example:
 - appoint to fixed term contracts to support transition to permanent employment
 - quarantine selected vacant positions
 - reconfigure selected vacant positions
 - create new positions
7. Prioritise the development and employment of Aboriginal people in the allied health, health science and public health professions.
8. Offer graduate positions to applicant Aboriginal nurse and midwife graduates eligible for registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia by applying section 51 of the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*.

9. Offer junior medical officer positions to applicant Aboriginal medical graduates.
10. Develop and grow the Aboriginal Health Practitioner pipeline and support implementation of the profession in clinical settings through clinical training placements, professional development, and culturally safe supervision.
11. Upskill and build leadership capability of current Aboriginal employees in any discipline by providing access to education, training, career development, succession planning, mentoring and leadership opportunities.

Exemptions

Health Support Services (HSS) is not required to implement strategies 7, 8, 9 and 10.

PathWest is not required to implement strategies 8, 9 and 10.

Reporting

North Metropolitan Health Service, East Metropolitan Health Service, South Metropolitan Health Service, Child and Adolescent Health Service and WA Country Health Service must report on the Aboriginal workforce performance indicators under Strategic Direction 5 of the Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Annual Report (Annual Report) in accordance with the [MP 0071/17 Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Policy](#).

HSS and PathWest must complete the Aboriginal Workforce Policy Report Template (the Workforce Report) for the previous financial year.

The reports must be endorsed by the Chief Executive and submitted to the Assistant Director General, Public and Aboriginal Health Division at the Department of Health by 31 August each year via aboriginal.health@health.wa.gov.au

4. Compliance Monitoring

The System Manager, through the Department of Health, Aboriginal Health Policy Directorate, will review the Annual Reports and Workforce Reports to ensure compliance with this policy.

The System Manager may also:

- carry out compliance audits, assurance and reporting including updates to the Director General and other relevant persons regarding the findings of compliance monitoring activities.
- evaluate the effectiveness of this policy in improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people in WA.
- examine alignment to the WA Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Framework 2015-2030.

5. Related Documents

The following documents are mandatory pursuant to this policy for HSS and PathWest:

- [Aboriginal Workforce Policy Report Template](#)

6. Supporting Information

The following information is not mandatory but informs and/or supports the implementation of this policy:

- [Implementation Guide for the WA Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Framework 2015- 2030](#)
- [Build the Foundations: An evaluation of the first five years of the WA Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Framework 2015 - 2030](#)
- [The Sustainable Health Review Final Report to the Western Australian Government](#)
- [Closing the Gap Implementation Plan 2023-2025 Western Australia](#)
- [National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan 2021-2031](#)
- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People: Action Plan to Improve WA Public Sector Employment Outcomes 2020-2025](#)
- [Australian Government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework](#)

7. Definitions

The following definition(s) are relevant to this policy.

Term	Definition
Sections 50(d) and 51 of the <i>Equal Opportunity Act 1984</i> (Act)	<p>50(d) Genuine occupational qualifications Nothing in this Part applies to or in respect of any work or employment where that work or employment involves any one or more of the following – (d) providing persons of a particular race with services for the purpose of promoting their welfare where those services can most effectively be provided by a person of the same race.</p> <p>51. Measures intended to achieve equality Nothing in Division 2 or 3 renders it unlawful to do an act a purpose of which is – (a) to ensure that persons of a particular race have equal opportunities with other persons in circumstances in relation to which provision is made by this Act; or (b) to afford persons of a particular race access to facilities, services or opportunities to meet their special needs in relation to employment, education, training or welfare, or any ancillary benefits.</p>
Aboriginal	Within Western Australia, the term Aboriginal is used in preference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in recognition that Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of Western Australia. No disrespect is intended to our Torres Strait Islander colleagues and community.

Aboriginal cadet	An Aboriginal university student employed in the WA health system and participating in an employment development program whilst completing an undergraduate degree at a recognised university.
Aboriginal graduate	An Aboriginal graduate who has completed an undergraduate degree at a recognised university and is participating in a graduate development program in the WA health system.
Culturally responsive recruitment	<p>Culturally responsive recruitment and selection processes recognise Aboriginal cultural knowledge and expertise, are culturally safe and reflect Aboriginal best practice. Each stage of the recruitment process, from advertising, screening, recruitment, selection to onboarding, is culturally safe. This can include, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of an interview format tailored to the level and role such as conversational, informal, group or story telling • application of recruitment methods that are easy to navigate and understand, and have low wait times for job seekers • development and classification of positions to reflect the specialist knowledge and cultural expertise that Aboriginal people bring to the workplace • inclusion of Aboriginal representation in the recruitment and selection processes, and on the recruitment panel for Aboriginal identified positions • prioritisation of Aboriginal applicants who meet the job requirements • offer of support and guidance to Aboriginal job seekers through each stage of the recruitment process.
Health service provider	A health service provider established by an order under section 32 of the <i>Health Services Act 2016</i> and includes North Metropolitan Health Service, South Metropolitan Health Service, Child and Adolescent Health Service, WA Country Health Service, East Metropolitan Health Service, PathWest, Quadriplegic Centre and Health Support Services.
System Manager	Under section 19 of the <i>Health Services Act 2016</i> , the Department of Health, led by the Director General, is established as the 'System Manager' responsible for the overall management, performance and strategic direction of the system.

8. Policy Contact

Enquiries relating to this policy may be directed to:

Title: Director

Directorate: Aboriginal Health Policy Directorate

Email: Aboriginal.Health@health.wa.gov.au

9. Document Control

Version	Published date	Effective from	Review date	Amendment(s)
MP 0097/18	22 November 2018	22 November 2018	17 May 2019	Original version
MP 0097/18 v.1.1	17 May 2019	17 May 2019	29 May 2019	Update of broken links
MP 0097/18 v.1.2	29 May 2019	29 May 2019	November 2021	Minor Amendment – Fixed broken links
MP 0097/18 v.1.3	14 August 2020	14 August 2020	November 2021	Minor Amendment details summarised below:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated related document: Aboriginal Workforce Policy Report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strategy 5- specifying that data will be provided by the Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer ○ Strategy 6- terminology change to list junior medical officer position types ○ Inclusion of two additional questions. • Removal of supporting information documents: WA Health Equity and Diversity Strategy 2015-2020 and Public Sector Commission Attract, appoint and advance: An employment strategy for Aboriginal people as no longer available. • Hyperlink to MP 0033/16 Recruitment, Selection and Appointment Policy amended. 				
MP 0097/18 v.1.4	28 August 2020	28 August 2020	November 2021	Minor Amendment to Section 3 to address formatting error
MP 0097/18 v.2.0	29 July 2021	29 July 2021	July 2024	Amendments as listed below.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amended to reflect changes to identify internal and state policies and the Aboriginal Workforce Policy Report endorsement process. • Amended related document: Aboriginal Workforce Policy Report Template to reflect changes to the endorsement process and refinement of strategy 1 and 2 measures to support data collection. • As a full policy review was undertaken, a new review cycle will now commence. 				
MP 0097/18 v.3.0	2 November 2023	2 November 2023	November 2026	Policy review and amendments as listed below.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendments to Purpose section to improve clarity. • Updated titles of aligned Frameworks to include National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan 2021-2031 within the Purpose section. • Additional policy requirements included to align with current Frameworks/strategies. • Reporting requirements amended to include the new related documents reporting tools: Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Action Plan template and Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Annual Report template. • Inclusion of four new supporting information documents to align with policy and removal of outdated supporting information. 				

10. Approval

Approval by	Dr David Russell-Weisz, Director General
Approval date	13 November 2018

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with a disability.

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