

Strategy

Aboriginal Targeted Recruitment

January 2026



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1. Executive Summary

A review was undertaken to assess the effectiveness of existing targeted Aboriginal recruitment processes and identify opportunities for improvement. The review was initiated due to overall head count of our Aboriginal workforce at South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD), sitting stagnant despite recruiting efforts to increase this overall headcount across the district.

The introduction of this strategy is to highlight review findings and implement strategic initiatives to resolve current barriers impacting the district's ability to grow our Aboriginal workforce.

As outlined below, the Strategy is underpinned by key legislation and policies from the Commonwealth and NSW Governments, and NSW Health.

2. Legislation and Policy Directives

Commonwealth Government:

- Closing the Gap strategy:
 - Target no. 7 *"By 2031 increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (15-24 years) who are in employment, education and training to 67%"*
 - Target no. 8 *"By 2031 increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-64 years who are employed to 62%"*

NSW Government

- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW), Section 14(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"
- Government Sector Employees (General) Rules 2014 (NSW) Part 5:
 - Rule 26 Employment of eligible persons: *(4a) an Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander.*

NSW Health

- Recruitment and Selection of Staff to the NSW Health Service (PD2023_024)
 - 1.4.2 Diversity targets including *"is committed to increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce and the number of Aboriginal (and Torres Strait Islander) senior leaders in the government sector"*
- Aboriginal Workforce Composition (PD2023_046)
 - Key Priority Area 3. Attract, recruit, and retain Aboriginal staff
- NSW Aboriginal Health Governance, Shared Decision Making and Accountability Framework
- SWSLHD Aboriginal Workforce Action Plan 2022 –2026



3. Review Findings

Through a review the below findings were identified as areas of improvement for Aboriginal Targeted recruitment.

3.1 Inconsistent and non-compliant recruitment practices relating specifically to targeted recruitment campaigns

- Outdated and limited education resources available to hiring managers across SWSLHD and relevant advisory areas including Employment Hub and Human Resource Teams.
 - The lack of resources available has created confusion and inconsistent advice being provided to hiring managers.
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3.2 Limited accessibility to Aboriginal panel members across sites and services within SWSLHD

- To meet the guidelines set out in the Recruitment and Selection of Staff to the NSW Health Service for all Targeted and Identified positions, it is required that an Aboriginal panel member be included on selection panels.
 - The existing pool of Aboriginal staff with understanding of recruitment practices and prior experience partaking within selection panels is limited, hindering the ability to increase targeted recruitment whilst maintaining compliance.
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3.3 Reduction of Targeting positions across SWSLHD due to resistance, role limitations and decreased conversion rates

- A decrease in the total number of targeted positions across SWSLHD has led to lower conversion rates of employment for Aboriginal staff.
 - Historically most targeted positions have been limited to entry-level or casual roles, there is a lack of vision or support for targeting higher level roles for the purposes of onboarding new talent and retaining existing Aboriginal staff.
 - Conversion rates for the historical service agreement mentioned above were low due to roles not offering higher salary opportunities and limited job security on the basis they were entry level or casual. Other factors for the low conversion rates relate directly to the recruitment campaign and promotion of the opportunities.
 - Targeting positions for Aboriginal employment has encountered resistance and bias, often stemming from inadequate education or negative past experiences with the recruitment processes.
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3.4 Inefficiencies in targeted recruitment and promotional strategies



- General advertising methods have often failed to attract suitable candidates for positions targeted for Aboriginal employment, resulting in minimal engagement from prospective candidates.
- Attraction strategies exist for other Aboriginal employment initiatives such as the Aboriginal traineeships, however have not historically been developed to accommodate targeted recruitment.

4. Action Plan

4.1 Establishment and implementation of a Standard of Practice (SOP) document specific to Targeted and Identified recruitment

Establishment of a Standard of Practice will outline and streamline recruitment practices for Targeted and Identified recruitment campaigns, acting as an education resource for hiring managers, Employment Hub and Human Resources Teams.

The SOP will be incorporated into existing training and processes led by the Recruitment Unit, ensuring the documentation is provided through email correspondence to hiring managers, prior to targeted/ identified positions being advertised. This will assist in the initiation of contact between the hiring area and the Aboriginal Workforce unit, for the purposes of reinforcing compliance, cultural considerations and cultural safety throughout the recruitment onboarding process.

4.2 Establishment of an Aboriginal panel member pool for each site and service within SWSLHD and facilitation of training for Aboriginal cultural panel representatives led by Aboriginal Workforce

Expressions of interest from our existing Aboriginal workforce will be sought to establish set pools of Aboriginal panel members for each site and service within SWSLHD. This will act as a support for targeted recruitment and assist in preventing recruitment delays.

Staff members with expressed interest to assist in targeted/ identified panels will be required to undertake a condensed training session facilitated by Aboriginal Workforce. The training provided is specific to Aboriginal panel representatives and will encompass the following topics:

- The purpose of an Aboriginal representative on a selection panel and duties on the selection committee.
- High level overview of targeted and identified recruitment processes, highlighting the key differences from a standard general recruiting campaign.
- Cultural safety reporting and reinforcement as a panel member.
- Behavioural interviewing and creating a safe space for prospective candidates.

The sessions will be facilitated on a quarterly basis by the Aboriginal Workforce Team, or as dependent on the business needs.



Introducing the pool alongside the training aspect supports culturally safe recruitment practices, aligns with the SWSLHD Aboriginal Workforce Plan's professional development priorities, and reflects the shared decision-making principles outlined in the NSW Aboriginal Health Governance Framework.

4.3 Re-establish partnerships within the business between executive teams and Aboriginal Workforce

Aboriginal Workforce to re-establish partnerships with executive teams across the facilities and services within SWSLHD.

Regular touch points are to be established with each area of the business on a proposed quarterly basis at a minimum. The purpose of this engagement is to regularly discuss talent attraction and retention strategies existing within the LHD.

4.4 Targeting positions to enhance employment pathways and the delivery of patient care to our Aboriginal Communities

As an initiative to support the increase of our Aboriginal Workforce and improve our overall delivery of care to Aboriginal patients, targeting of roles will be focused on areas that have shown higher presentation of Aboriginal patients within their services. Whilst priority should be shown to services with a higher presentation of Aboriginal patients, services not listed within the table below are encouraged to also target positions where possible.

With the relevant executive support, services in the top 8-10% of areas for each facility, community health service and mental health inpatient services with an identified higher number of Aboriginal patient presentations will commit to 15% of their vacancies being recruited as targeted campaigns for 2026.

(8-10% has been provided as a variance, to remove drug & alcohol services from facility vacancy numbers)

This will promote increased cultural representation with a proposed purpose to improve patient treatment and outcomes.

Allocation of vacancies are to be targeted across all disciplines where possible within the wards/ services provided in the table below and will be monitored through Aboriginal workforce, the relevant executive and the relevant service managers.

The decision to progress with 15% as our commitment for targeting roles in these areas is driven by the existing Aboriginal Workforce participation rate and the headcount needed to place SWSLHD on a pathway to achieve the Ministry of Health target of 3.5% in the future. This approach will be reviewed 12 months from implementation, utilising candidate conversion data to measure the effectiveness of increasing the SWSLHD participation rates.



Table & data summary: Overview of the wards/ services across each facility and district services with the highest presentation of Aboriginal patients, and the total number of positions to be targeted for 2026.

The data reviewed and obtained to support this strategy includes ED presentations, booked and non-booked admissions for all Aboriginal patients that have accessed SWSLHD within the last 12 months.

The vacancy figures have been determined from retention data specific to each ward/ service for the last 12 months.

Facility/ District Service	Top 10% of wards/ services with the highest presentation of Aboriginal patients	Overall number of vacancies to be targeted (15%)
Bankstown Hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ED Presentations ○ EDSSU ○ Bankstown Lidcombe Hospital Home Enteral Nutrition ○ Bankstown Hospital Oncology Chemotherapy ○ Bankstown Lidcombe Hospital Diabetes Clinic ○ Bankstown Hospital Antenatal Clinic ○ 3F ○ BNK AmbDialysis ○ Bankstown Lidcombe Hospital Ambulatory Care ○ 3B ○ Discharge Lounge ○ 2G ○ Bankstown Hospital Social Work ○ Periop Unit ○ Birthing Unit ○ 3E 	19
Bowral Hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ED Presentations ○ Bowral Hospital Antenatal Clinic 	2



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bowral Hospital Community Midwifery Support Program ○ Amb Dialysis Unit 	
Camden Hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Emergency Department ○ Metabolic Rehabilitation (Diabetes Clinic) ○ Bariatric Surgery Clinic 	15
Campbelltown Hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ED Presentations ○ Campbelltown Hospital Antenatal Outpatient Clinics ○ A01 EDSSU ○ Campbelltown Hospital Antenatal Outpatient Clinics ○ Campbelltown Hospital Post Natal Midwifery Support Programme ○ Campbelltown Hospital Midwifery Group Practice ○ A52 Maternity 2 ○ Campbelltown Cancer Therapy Centre Chemotherapy Clinic ○ Day Surgery Unit ○ A24 DTU ○ Campbelltown Hospital Cancer Therapy Centre -Radiation Oncology ○ A91 Childrens 1 ○ A51 Special Care Nursery 	
Fairfield Hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Emergency Department ○ Hand Clinic ○ Physiotherapy Clinic 	4
Liverpool Hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ED Presentations ○ LIV ED Inpt ○ LIV ED SSU ○ Liverpool Hospital Home Enteral Nutrition 	23



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Liverpool Community Medical Paediatrics ○ Liverpool Hospital Cancer Therapy Centre Chemotherapy ○ Liverpool Hospital Cancer Therapy Centre Radiation Oncology Treatment ○ Liverpool Hospital Eye Clinic ○ Liverpool Hospital CTC Radiation Oncology Simulation and Planning Clinic Location ○ Liverpool Hospital Brain Injury Unit ○ Liverpool Hospital Speech Pathology ○ Liverpool Hospital Women’s & Children’s Health Midwives Clinic ○ Liverpool Hospital HIV Clinic ○ Liverpool Hospital Dermatology Clinic ○ CB1D RDU Incentre HD 	
<p>Community Health Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ South West Sydney LHD Narellan Child and Family Nursing Aboriginal ○ Narellan Community Health Social Work Family Connect and Support ○ Rosemeadow Community Health Connect Care - Aboriginal ○ Macarthur Youth Health Service (Trasside) ○ Hoxton Park Community Health Aboriginal Vascular Health ○ Narellan Community Health Centre Social Work Service ○ Narellan Out of Home Care Location ○ Macarthur Community Health Nursing Service 	<p style="text-align: center;">17</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Liverpool Community Health Primary Health Nurse ○ Ingleburn Community Health Centre Child Family Health Psychology Waranwarin ○ Hoxton Park Wellbeing and Health Inreach Nurse Coordinator ○ Community Health Child Protection Counselling Service ○ Ingleburn Child Youth and Family Growing Healthy Kids Service ○ Wollondilly Community Health Nursing Service ○ Rosemeadow Wellbeing and Health Inreach Nurse Coordinator 	
Mental Health Inpatient Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ward A73, Mental Health Young Adult Unit ○ Banks House Psychiatric Unit 	3
Total number of vacancies across SWSLHD to be targeted in 2026:		83

4.5 Targeting non-identified positions within Aboriginal Health Service teams

Vacant positions within Aboriginal Health Service teams that have not been established as Aboriginal identified positions, should be recruited to as targeted recruitment campaigns in the first instance. This approach will act as another employment pathway avenue for Aboriginal candidates and still provides services with flexibility to appoint a non-Aboriginal candidate where a suitable Aboriginal candidate cannot be sourced.

4.6 Inclusive and supported recruitment processes within district-wide bulk recruitment campaigns

Where possible district-wide bulk recruitment campaigns should provide consideration to targeting a portion of the FTE available. This consideration is relevant to areas including new graduate programs across Allied Health, Nursing & Midwifery and Medical, and any other adhoc campaigns that would offer entry level employment pathways across all disciplines.

Alternatively, the convenor should engage with the Aboriginal Workforce Team for Aboriginal representation on the selection panel. This is only relevant where Aboriginal candidates have applied.



Contact us

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