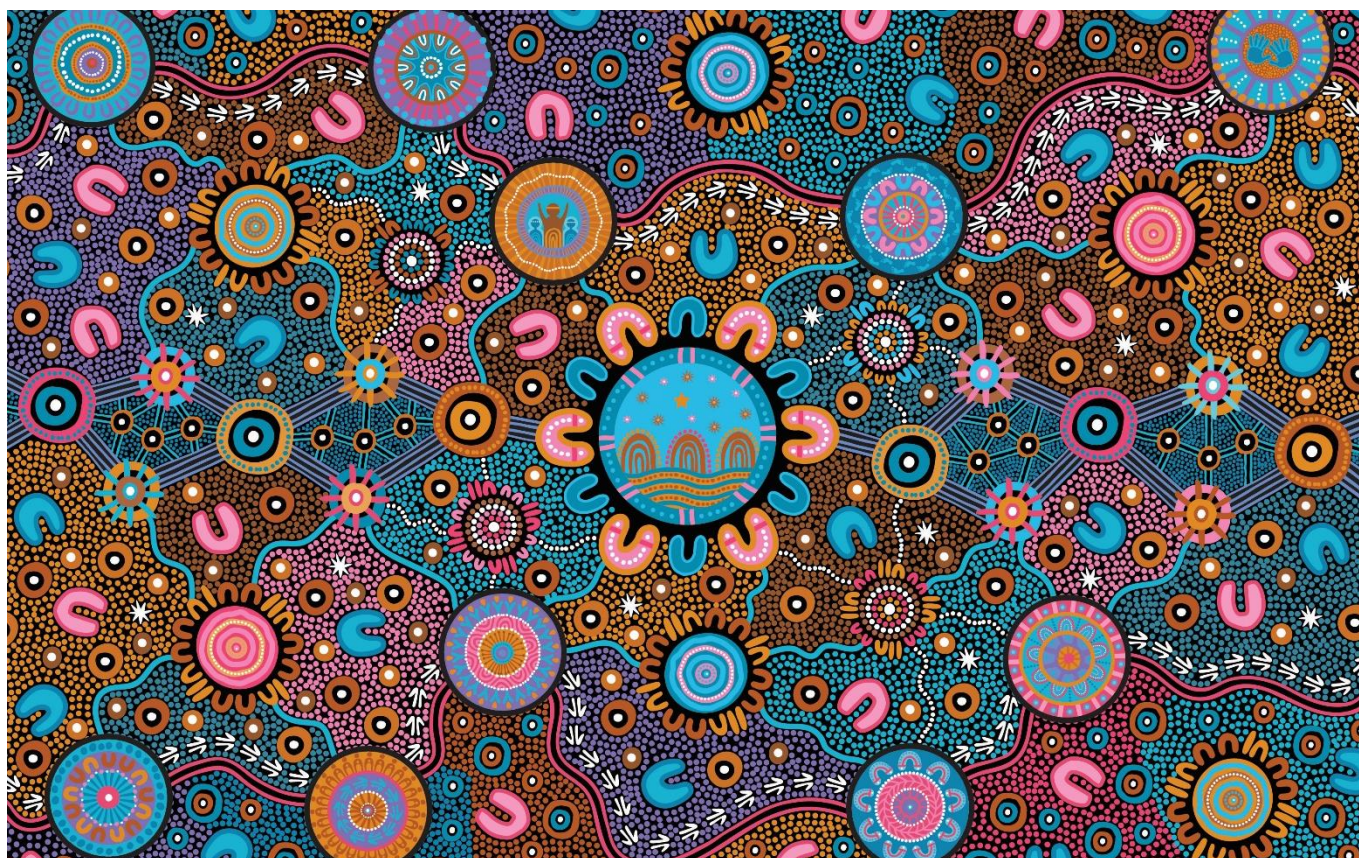


Standard of Practice Aboriginal Targeted and Identified Recruitment

January 2026



Contents

1. Purpose and objectives	3
2. Legislation and Policy Directives	3
3. Definitions	4
4. Advertising requirements	5
5. Shortlisting & Selection panel requirements	5
5.1 Selection panel requirements.....	5
5.2 Shortlisting (Aboriginal Targeted Recruitment only).....	6
6. Interview selection and recommendations	6
6.1 Priority interviews (Targeted Recruitment only)	7
6.2 Interview Questions & Cultural Capability Assessment	7
6.3 Creating a culturally safe space at interview.....	8
6.4 Confirming Aboriginality at interview	9
6.5 Recommendations.....	9
7. Culturally connecting candidates prior to commencement	9



1. Purpose and objectives

The Aboriginal Identified and Targeted Recruitment Standard of Practice has been introduced as a resource for all staff and managers to increase education, cultural safety and compliance of equitable recruitment practices across South Western Sydney Local Health District. The Standard of Practice provides clear guidelines relating to Aboriginal Identified and Targeted recruitment, for managers and the relevant advisory units across SWSLHD, to adhere by.

Conditions outlined within the Standard of Practice referencing services/ areas with an underlying commitment to target 15% of vacancies within their workforce is supported by the Aboriginal Targeted Recruitment Strategy 2026.

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



3. Definitions

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person/s: A person of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as such and is accepted as such by their community in which they live. As supported by the Recruitment and Selection of Staff to the NSW Health Service (PD2023_024) policy confirmation of Aboriginality documentation is not required of candidates to suffice definition requirements.

Aboriginal Targeted Recruitment: Aboriginal Targeted recruitment refers to a recruitment strategy campaign that maximises applications from Aboriginal people provides prioritisation of suitable Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander candidates, prior to the interview assessment of other candidates, as authorised by the legislation and policy directives outlined in 1.2 above.

A person appointed through an Aboriginal Targeted recruitment campaign will undergo written and verbal assessments at application and interview stage to confirm their cultural identity. Responses provided by the candidate in these assessments will suffice requirements to meet the definition provided above for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person/s.

Aboriginal Targeted Recruitment campaigns may be utilised within SWSLHD for the following reasons, with the prospects of increasing our overall Aboriginal Workforce and improvement in delivery of patient and culturally responsive care to our Aboriginal communities.

Additional to the below any positions may be targeted as opted in by the hiring manager, in which case they are encouraged to seek support from their Recruitment Team and the Aboriginal Workforce Unit.

- o Provide entry or career opportunities and progression pathways for Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander people and increase workforce representation
- o Supported by the Aboriginal Targeted Recruitment Strategy 2026, areas within facilities/ services with a higher presentation of Aboriginal patients will target 15% of the vacancies within their workforce as provided under the Aboriginal Targeted Recruitment Strategy.
- o Positions that hold cultural competency or community engagement requirements may be progressed as a targeted recruitment campaign, where the role has not been established as an Identified position. This is dependent on the position duties and would occur where there is a known skill shortage, creating potential sourcing barriers to fill the position with an Aboriginal person. Prior to these positions going to advertisement the Aboriginal Health Unit should be consulted in the first instance.

Aboriginal Identified Recruitment: Aboriginal Identified recruitment refers to a recruitment campaign where the candidate **must** be an Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander person. This requirement is authorised by section 14(d) of the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1997* (NSW).

A person undertaking an Aboriginal Identified position is expected to demonstrate a strong understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, and the ongoing impacts of colonisation. This means holding the ability to work in a culturally competent and culturally safe manner with community, staff and stakeholders.



A person fulfilling this role must bring cultural knowledge, lived experience or community connection to represent Aboriginal perspectives and to support culturally responsive practices and/or patient care within SWSLHD.

Aboriginal Identified Recruitment campaigns will occur where a position has been established as an Aboriginal Identified role. A position may be made Identified where:

- The duties of the position requires cultural knowledge, experience and has connections working directly with Aboriginal people, communities, services or stakeholders to provide culturally appropriate patient care, cultural support or other relevant collaborative purposes.
- The position requires the occupant to bring a cultural lens and hold a connection to culture as an Aboriginal person, to successfully effectively fulfill the responsibilities of the position.

4. Advertising requirements

The Recruitment Team will advertise Aboriginal Targeted and Identified recruitment campaigns utilising culturally appropriate images, templates approved by the SWSLHD Aboriginal Workforce Unit and ensuring selection criteria does not exceed 5 questions where possible.

Upon the advertisement being posted, the Recruitment Team will include the below details in their email correspondence to the hiring manager, with the Aboriginal Workforce Unit copied in.

- Notation of the policy requirement for a cultural representative on the selection panel and
- Instructions on how to source an approved panel member via the SWSLHD Aboriginal Workforce Unit (refer to section 5).

It's strongly advised an approved cultural representative for the selection panel is sourced during the advertising stage of the recruitment process, this will assist in avoiding delays.

5. Shortlisting & Selection panel requirements

Existing operational practices to identify Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander candidates at advertisement closure/ application review stage will continue between the Aboriginal Workforce Unit and Recruitment Team.

If there are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander candidates that have applied for Targeted or Identified positions, the below selection panel requirements must be adhered to. **Or;**

If there are no Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander candidates that have applied for the targeted positions, the recruitment may progress in line with general campaign requirements and the need for a cultural Aboriginal representative on the selection panel is removed. This would apply to all targeted positions with the exception of those within the Aboriginal Health Service teams, these positions must still have cultural representation on the selection panel to ensure the appropriate assessment of cultural capabilities.

5.1 Selection panel requirements



All staff participating on selection panels for Aboriginal Identified or Targeted positions must have completed the online Respecting the Difference course as a minimum.

As provided by the Recruitment and Selection of Staff to the NSW Health Service (PD2023_024), in addition to existing selection panel requirements where a recruitment is Targeted or Identified there must be a Aboriginal representative available to partake on the panel.

The Aboriginal representative must identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and be an approved panel member selected and approved by the Aboriginal Workforce Unit.

Positions within the Aboriginal Health Service teams must have an Aboriginal Health manager present on the panel, or an allocated representative endorsed by the relevant Aboriginal Health manager to ensure appropriate assessment of cultural capabilities.

5.2 Shortlisting (Aboriginal Targeted Recruitment only)

The standard shortlisting process will apply to Aboriginal Identified recruitment.

The Recruitment Team will advise the hiring manager of potential candidates for prioritisation, following communications from the Aboriginal Workforce Unit. The hiring manager/ selection panel will review the relevant applicants in accordance with their resume and selection criteria responses to determine their eligibility for interview. Candidates that do not demonstrate meeting the selection criteria will not be progressed for interview.

If there are no suitable Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander candidates suitable for interview as determined by the selection panel, the recruitment may progress in line with general campaign process and other applicants not identifying may be reviewed/ considered.

The Aboriginal Workforce Unit should be copied into all correspondence for record purposes.

[Shortlisting \(targeted only\) - Flow chart.pdf](#)

6. Interview selection and recommendations

Section 1.6.1 relating to priority interviews should be disregarded for Aboriginal Identified recruitment and only be adhered to for Aboriginal targeted recruitment.

The standard interview scheduling process will apply to Aboriginal Identified recruitment.

Hiring managers should utilise the appropriate interview email template when requesting interview scheduling via the Recruitment Team. The targeted recruitment template should be utilised where appropriate to ensure priority interviews occur. **Or;**

Hiring managers scheduling the interviews for targeted positions without the assistance of the Recruitment Team will need to adhere to the below guidelines provided for priority interviews and then complete the appropriate targeted recruitment interview email template when communicating



the finalised shortlist to the Recruitment Team.

6.1 Priority interviews (Targeted Recruitment only)

Where there are suitable Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander candidates progressing to interview for Aboriginal Targeted positions, these candidates should be given a priority assessment meaning their interviews will be scheduled to occur first.

Other suitable candidates that have applied and do not identify, can be scheduled for interview after all priority interviews and a panel discussion occurs.

The Recruitment Team should provide this advice when scheduling interviews to ensure adequate time is allocated to accommodate for the panel discussion between interview rounds.

The structure of interviews where priority interviews are relevant, should be as noted below. All interviews where possible should occur on the same day in line with standard recruitment process.

1. All suitable Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander candidates are interviewed as a priority.
2. The selection panel makes recommendations following all priority interviews occurring. Time should be allowed within the interview run sheet so discussions can occur before candidates that do not identify are interviewed.
3. Candidate suitability should be assessed based on the candidate's ability to demonstrate they can meet basic eligibility criteria as guided by the position description.
 - o If the selection panel has identified a preferred candidate/s from the priority interviews, all other candidates interviewed that do not identify will only be considered for the eligibility list.
 - o Where multiple candidates have been deemed suitable from the priority interviews, the Aboriginal candidate/s must be first under the eligibility ranking order prior to all other candidates. **Or;**
4. If the selection panel did not identify a preferred candidate from the priority interviews, all other candidates interviewed can be considered and progressed as the preferred candidate where suitable.

[Priority Interviews \(targeted only\) - Flow chart.pdf](#)

6.2 Interview Questions & Cultural Capability Assessment

Refer to the interview question bank linked below. This bank contains mandatory interview questions for Aboriginal Targeted and Identified recruitment to assess cultural capability and confirm a candidate's cultural identity and connection to culture.

[Mandatory Interview Questions and Cultural Capability Assessment.pdf](#)



6.3 Creating a culturally safe space at interview

The below recommendations should be considered by the selection panel to assist in creating a culturally safe environment for candidates attending interviews. The interview process is the first impression we leave on a candidate and will shape their view of our organisation early in the onboarding process, adopting the below recommendations aim to influence positive candidate experiences.

Panel seating arrangement:

- The selection panel where possible should consider adjusting the panel seating arrangements to facilitate the interview like a round table discussion to create a more comfortable and inviting environment.
- Moving away from the traditional seating approach of the panel and candidate on opposite sides of the table attempts to ease the candidate's nerves in a formal process and remove any feelings of intimidation.

Selection panel body language and communication:

- The selection panel should present with open body language and use soft communication skills when interacting with the candidate initially.
- Panel members are encouraged to begin the interview by introducing themselves, sharing who they are and where they're from to provide the candidate with an opportunity to share a cultural introduction where they feel comfortable.
- Before moving into formal questions, the panel should explain the interview process and the role, engage in light conversation such as asking how the candidate's day has been, and use small talk to help ease nerves and reduce anxiety.
- The interview process between the selection panel and candidate should feel more like a conversation than a formal question and answer approach. This can be achieved through use of prompting throughout the interview and use of the open conversation at the beginning and end of interview.

Inclusive Assessment of Skills and Lived Experience

- At the stage of assessing a candidate at interview there should be consideration to recognise that skills and knowledge can come from a wide range of experiences gained through lived experience, cultural knowledge and/ or community connections not just solely professional employment.
- To draw out these experiences within an interview the selection panel should aim to ask open ended, conversational questions that invite the sharing of experiences: "can you share an experience where..." "Tell us about a time..."
- An alternative method to assess skills outside of the traditional interview question format, could be through a case study example outlining a scenario relevant to the position. Questions asked of the candidate would directly correlate to the case study and their management of the scenario to assess their skills and ability to integrate cultural considerations into a work-related scenario or similar.



6.4 Confirming Aboriginality at interview

The Aboriginal representative/s on the selection panel at the beginning of the interview will introduce themselves by name, position and speak briefly about their mob/ cultural background. The first question asked to candidates during a priority interview or during the interview for an Aboriginal Identified position will be led by the Aboriginal representative. This question will invite the candidate to speak about their connection to culture, family and community.

The interview response provided by the candidate will be a verbal confirmation of the candidate's cultural identity and connection to culture and is to be utilised in place of asking for a written confirmation of Aboriginality.

Every Aboriginal person's cultural identity journey is unique. Some may not have strong connections to culture or community yet and for many, that's because of the ongoing impacts of colonisation, forced removals, or the Stolen Generations.

We ask Aboriginal representatives on panels to remember the importance of holding space with care. Just because someone is early in their cultural journey doesn't make their identity any less valid and this should not impact a recruitment outcome within reason.

Please refer to definitions provided for Aboriginal Targeted and Identified recruitment under sections 3 & 6.2 that provide clarity around the cultural competency expectations of a person undertaking an Aboriginal Identified position and the assessment determination for targeted position appointments.

If there are concerns, this is not to be raised during the interview and should be flagged in a separate conversation with the Aboriginal Workforce Unit. This is to ensure we are maintaining a safe and respectful space at the time of interview.

6.5 Recommendations

For Aboriginal Targeted and Identified recruitment please ensure Aboriginal Workforce is copied into the interview outcome correspondence sent to the Recruitment Team. The remaining process relating to references, recommendation approvals and pre-employment checks should proceed in line with the standard recruitment process.

All appointments made to Aboriginal Health Worker positions will be forwarded to Aboriginal Workforce Manager and the Aboriginal Health Unit Director for salary recommendation, as per the existing internal district process.

7. Culturally connecting candidates prior to commencement

We encourage Aboriginal Health Service Managers to contact candidates prior to commencement to organise an onsite meet & greet with their retrospective team. This alleviates not only first day nerves for the candidate, but it gives them an opportunity to get a feel for the position and ask their new colleagues any questions they might have before starting.



For all Aboriginal candidates commencing in Aboriginal Targeted or Identified roles, the Recruitment Team will send email correspondence to the candidate at the time their letter of offer is issued providing contact information for the Aboriginal Health Unit & Aboriginal Workforce Team.

Contact us

For more information please contact the Aboriginal Workforce Team:

E: SWSLHD-AboriginalWorkforce@Health.nsw.gov.au

