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Liverpool Hospital staff respect the difference

Staff at Liverpool Hospital have strengthened their commitment to significantly improving the health status of Aboriginal people by undertaking Aboriginal Cultural Training.

The *Respecting the Difference* training framework, developed by NSW Health, is designed to improve staff knowledge and understanding of the diverse culture, customs, heritage and protocols in Aboriginal families and communities in NSW.

Liverpool Hospital General Manager Anthony Schembri said the training was an important step in strengthening the Hospital's relationship with the local Aboriginal community.

"We have more than 11,200 residents identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in our Local Health District, with the majority living in Liverpool and Campbelltown," Mr Schembri said.

"We recognise that healthcare outcomes for Aboriginal people can be improved when all our staff have a greater awareness of Aboriginal culture.

"Aboriginal health requires a holistic approach, which as well as physical wellbeing encompasses kinship, family, spiritual beliefs and language," he said.

The training consists of an online learning component, face-to-face generic subject and local content which will be developed in consultation with local Aboriginal Elders.

The training is for all staff and encourages participants to challenge preconceived beliefs and perceptions about working with and providing health services to Aboriginal Communities.

In addition to the training, two pieces of Aboriginal Art by artist Danielle Mate were recently hung in Entrance B of the Hospital.

Mr Schembri said he hoped the artwork would help Aboriginal people feel safe and confident seeking medical treatment in the Hospital.

"We acknowledge that many Aboriginal people do not comfortably engage with healthcare providers and we are committed to changing that," he said.

"We already have great services and programs tailored to the cultural and health needs of Aboriginal people and with this training, our staff will better understand the needs of our local Aboriginal community," he said.

At the Local Health District launch of *Respecting the Difference*, SWS LHD Chief Executive Amanda Larkin and Aboriginal Elder Uncle Ivan Wellington signed a statement outlining the District's commitment to providing respectful, responsive and culturally sensitive services and to improving staff knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal culture. They also unveiled artwork which will be hung alongside the Commitment Statement at Liverpool Hospital (see photos attached).