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## Projects aim to help Close the Gap

This year, Bankstown Hospital will support National Close the Gap Day (20 March), with a focus on improving the identification of Aboriginal patients who present to the Hospital.

Bankstown Hospital's new Aboriginal Liaison Officer Kamara Ducki said the Hospital was committed to making sure Aboriginal patients felt comfortable and happy remaining in hospital to receive treatment for as long as they needed to.

"An important part of this is encouraging Aboriginal patients presenting to the Emergency Department or any other admission points to let staff know they are Aboriginal.

"My role as the new Aboriginal Liaison Officer is to support patients and check whether they have any concerns, work collaboratively with the other health professionals and help them make contact with any other services they might need.

"We understand that Aboriginal patients might be uncomfortable visiting hospital because of past experiences. But Bankstown Hospital is committed to improving the health of Aboriginal people and we are working on a number of different programs to help staff provide more respectful, responsive and culturally sensitive services," she said.

Another project the Hospital is undertaking is Respecting the Difference Aboriginal Cultural Training. Around 1,090 Bankstown Hospital staff have undertaken the online training and are now participating in face to face workshops. The training is helping them improve their knowledge and understanding of the diverse culture, customs, heritage and health needs of Aboriginal communities in NSW.

Close the Gap Day is Australia's largest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health campaign which aims to close the gap in life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and other Australians.