



Barwon
Health

Aboriginal Employment Plan

2023–2025





Acknowledgement

We, Barwon Health, acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land, the Wadawurrung people of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respect to the Elders past, present and emerging. We thank the Traditional Owners for Custodianship of the land, and celebrate the continuing culture of the Wadawurrung people, acknowledging the memory of Honourable Ancestors.

Artwork

Cover artwork by Nathan Patterson, Wagiman man from Northern Territory, who currently lives on Wadawurrung Country (Geelong, Victoria)

Message from Frances Diver, Chief Executive, Barwon Health



I am honored to introduce the Aboriginal Employment Plan (AEP), which aims to support the employment and career development of First Nations peoples.

The AEP reflects a significant step towards reconciliation, recognising and addressing the historical injustices that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have faced in Australia for generations.

The AEP is a comprehensive framework that seeks to create a more inclusive and equitable society. It recognises the unique skills, knowledge, and cultural strengths that First Nations peoples bring to the workplace, and it seeks to create meaningful opportunities for them to succeed. By doing so, it will contribute to building a stronger, more diverse, and culturally rich community.

The AEP represents a critical commitment by Barwon Health to create a more just and equitable society. It recognises that employment is a fundamental aspect of well-being and social inclusion, and that First Nations peoples have been historically disadvantaged in this area. It provides a roadmap for action, a set of clear and measurable goals, and a commitment to ongoing evaluation and improvement.

The AEP acknowledges that there is much work to be done to address ongoing inequalities faced by First Nations peoples. However, it also recognises that positive change is possible and it begins with action. It is my hope that this plan will inspire others to take action, to work towards a more just and equitable society.

I commend all those who have contributed to the development of the Aboriginal Employment Plan, and I look forward to seeing the positive impact it will have on the lives of First Nations Peoples.

May 2023



Wadawurrung Country

Barwon Health is situated on Wadawurrung country. The traditional boundaries of the Wadawurrung people (shaded in beige on the map below) span the coastline from the Werribee River to Lorne peninsula and traverse inland in a north westerly direction towards Ballarat extending some 7,800 square kilometres.





Above: Samantha Watts, Barwon Health employee and 5th generation Wadawurrung woman with Christine Couzens MP, State Member for Geelong

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Barwon Health understands that being the largest regional health service in Victoria commands that we lead the way in ensuring culturally safe services within the Barwon South West region.

Providing a wide range of health services, including acute care, primary care, community health, mental health, alcohol and other drug services, rehabilitation, geriatric medicine, palliative care and hospital in the home, and healthcare in the youth justice environment; there are countless ways that Barwon Health can have an impact on the wider community.

Over the past few years, Barwon Health has been working hard to fortify services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities in our local area and to promote acknowledgement, understanding and respect of Aboriginal culture. We recognise that we have much more to do.

In line with the strategic vision and organisational values of Respect, Compassion, Commitment, Accountability and Innovation, Barwon Health are committed to maintaining a culturally inclusive and culturally supportive workplace whilst concurrently improving our service delivery and care to Aboriginal patients and their families.

We aim to be an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Greater Geelong area and beyond. With this in mind, we commit to increasing and retaining our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce across all areas within Barwon Health services.

Mission

Provide best care, every person, every day, so that everyone feels better

Vision

By 2050 everyone in our community enjoys the best health and wellbeing in Victoria

Values

Respect

We respect the people we connect with

Compassion

We show compassion for the people we care for and work with

Commitment

We are committed to quality and excellence in everything we do

Accountability

We take accountability for what we do and act with integrity

Innovation

We drive innovation for better care

Barwon Health's Aboriginal Health Unit

Within Barwon Health sits a comprehensive Aboriginal Health Unit that is committed to providing culturally appropriate and responsive care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, families and communities. Accessible health services are critical given the complex health conditions and co-morbidities that continue to exist in our local community. Cultural safety is a significant factor in accessibility of healthcare for community, so the strategic gathering of a range of Aboriginal Health workers allows for a holistic and innovative response to be provided to those accessing Barwon Health.

The Aboriginal Health Unit is made up of the following employees:

- Program Manager
- Aboriginal Workforce Officer
- 2x Aboriginal Health Policy & Projects Officers
- 2x Aboriginal Health Liaison Officers
- 2x Koorie Mental Health Liaison Officers



Introduction

All Victorian public sector organisations have ongoing reporting requirements under Karreeta Yirramboi¹ to enhance Aboriginal employment outcomes across the Victorian public sector. These strategies require Barwon Health to provide data on Aboriginal employees as part of the annual workforce data collection undertaken by the Victorian Public Sector Commission.

The Department of Health supports the development and implementation of Aboriginal Employment Plans across Victorian public health service settings, accepting that it is not just a key to increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment, but to also promote career pathways in health and improve the cultural responsiveness of service provision.

Barwon Health aims to provide a workplace that enables equal employment opportunities for all applicants and employees, and highlights the fundamental importance of each employee acting in a way that supports diversity and inclusion in our workforce and service access. The development of our AEP incorporates and expands on the previous Plans in place at Barwon Health. The AEP provides the opportunity to align Barwon Health's workforce development aims of supporting a high performance, culturally safe work environment whilst increasing the Aboriginal representation within the workforce.

To construct the Barwon Health 2023-2025 AEP the following framework has been applied to focus initiatives:

- Accountability & Reporting
- Attraction & Recruitment
- Development & Retention
- Cultural Safety & Support
- Collaboration

This three year plan equates to a commitment to positively assist employment outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the Barwon South West region.

Continuing to grow the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce is understood to be a beneficial way for Barwon Health to ensure that health services are culturally safe environments where community can be provided with high quality health outcomes.

1 vpsc.vic.gov.au/workforce-programs/aboriginal-employment/about-the-aeu/karreeta-yirramboi/

This iteration of the AEP was done collaboratively to ensure that a culturally appropriate and organisation-wide approach is taken to further develop the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce at Barwon Health. With the projected growth in the health industry in the coming years, including aged care, disability, mental health and research, it is important that we put in place a strategic workforce plan now that will focus on pathways and allow Barwon Health to meet the future health needs of the community.

The success of Barwon Health meeting the health needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities within south-west Victoria is heavily reliant on the skills, knowledge and experience of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce. With that in mind, this AEP will not just focus on increasing numbers of employees, but also consider the holistic health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in an effort to have strong retention rates.

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Employment

Barwon Health currently employs 69 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff (as at May 2023).

The objective of the Barwon Health AEP 2023-2025 is to achieve year-on-year increases to our Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employment numbers. Our yearly Key Performance Indicators have been set with incremental rises, as follows:

- FY 2022/23 – 65 employees
- FY 2023/24 – 75 employees
- FY 2024/25 – 90 employees

Review Process

During 2023, a consultation will be undertaken with both internal and external stakeholders to gain reflections on the previous AEP (2016-2020).



Above: The Aboriginal Health Unit team, June 2023

Focus Areas

Barwon Health considers it critical that senior leaders take a coordinated approach to ensure that employees across the entire organisation truly understand the value and values of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in relation to the services that it provides.

With accountability at the centre of our approach, Barwon Health endeavours to embed cultural safety and respect throughout the workforce, accepting that much needs to be done to achieve transformational and sustainable change within the health system.

The focus areas of attraction, career progressions, cultural safety and collaboration to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff all stem from our senior leadership team, who will ultimately lead the way forward.



Above: Corrina Eccles, Traditional Owner, performing a Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony at the Community Vaccination Hub in Norlane.



Focus Area 1 Accountability and Reporting

The very existence of this comprehensive Aboriginal Employment Plan (AEP) conveys a strong message that Barwon Health are dedicated to ensuring a coordinated approach to increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment.

Accountability and consistent reporting, to and by the senior leadership team, will be required to provide central oversight, Governance will sit with

the Executive team, who will hold accountability for outcomes throughout the life of this Plan.

With cultural safety being at the forefront of our leader's minds and authentically embedded into our organisation-wide practices, Barwon Health will be able to successfully recruit and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

Priority Area	Deliverables/Impact	Action Undertaken	Timeframe	Responsibility
Accountability and Reporting	1. Achieve the objective of year on year growth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait employees working at Barwon Health	Develop an AEP Implementation Group that will collectively report on progress throughout the life of the AEP to the Chief of People and Culture	2023	Program Manager – Aboriginal Health Unit
		Develop a standard report framework that will allow clear and effective updates on outcomes expected or achieved throughout the period	2023	Aboriginal Workforce Officer
	2. Create a system to track, measure and report on initiatives within the AEP	Initiatives of the AEP to be regularly itemised in Barwon Health departmental meeting agendas, ensuring that progress is continually monitored	2023-2025	Chief People and Culture Officer
		Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee numbers to be reported on during all Barwon Health departmental meetings as well as the Wurru-ki Ngitj and Employment Taskforce committee meetings	2023-2025	Chief People and Culture Officer
	3. Have higher than 95% participation rate in compulsory online cultural training	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee numbers to be reported on during all Barwon Health departmental meetings as well as the Wurru-ki Ngitj and Employment Taskforce committee meetings	2023-2025	Chief People and Culture Officer
	4. Determine departments that should invest time in face-to-face cultural training sessions	All departments across Barwon Health to have higher than 95% completion rate of online Cultural Awareness modules (this includes the all staff module and the Manager module where required)	2023-2025	Chief People and Culture Officer
		Conduct an assessment of departments that would benefit from face-to-face cultural training, due to number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and/or employees	2025	Aboriginal Workforce Officer
	5. Guidance on future AEP to be gleaned from an external review process	Conduct an assessment of departments that would benefit from face-to-face cultural training, due to number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and/or employees	2025	Aboriginal Workforce Officer
	6. Celebrate achievements	Seek third Party feedback on the previous AEP, including a review of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, both past and present, and the Aboriginal community at large	2023	Program Manager – Aboriginal Health Unit
The Chief of People and Culture is active in celebrating achievements and milestones throughout the life of the AEP		2023-2025	Chief People and Culture Officer	

Focus Area 2 Improve Attraction and Recruitment

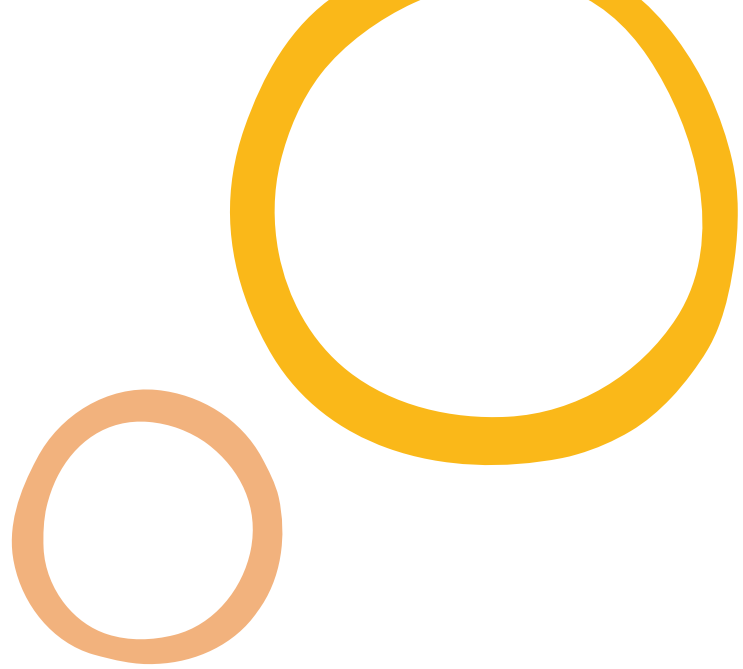
With a long-standing and expanding Aboriginal Health Unit, Barwon Health has a strong foundation to increase and support the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees well into the future.

Advertising Barwon Health's strength as a culturally safe workplace, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, will be key in increasing the number of applications received.

Connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will be initiated at the very beginning, from application assistance and interview preparation. Having the Aboriginal Workforce Officer working alongside hiring managers will allow a cultural lens be applied to the recruitment process, ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants feel comfortable and confident in attending interviews.

Priority Area	Deliverables/Impact	Action Undertaken	Timeframe	Responsibility
Improve Attraction and Recruitment	1. Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants	"Careers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples" content to be created and used in a targeted recruitment campaign	2023	Talent Acquisition Manager
	2. Build strong relationships with local education and employment providers with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	Create a talent pool, by connecting directly with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job seekers, to increase the total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants	2023	Talent Acquisition Manager
		Regularly provide job seekers and local employment and education providers with knowledge of the wide variety of jobs available at Barwon Health, including the availability of traineeships and cadetships through Barwon Health	2023	Aboriginal Workforce Officer
	3. Promote Barwon Health as an employer of choice	Aim to implement two cadetships throughout the life of this Plan	2024	Program Manager – Aboriginal Health Unit
	4. Ensure an organisation-wide approach to finding suitable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to work across all departments of the organisation	Work on pathway projects with The Gordon and Deakin University to ensure clear direction for students interested in work at Barwon Health	2024	Aboriginal Workforce Officer
		Offer work experience opportunities to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students in conjunction with the Geelong Region Local Learning & Employment Network	2023	Aboriginal Workforce Officer
		Advocate and link Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job seekers to stakeholders that can enhance skill development in an effort to increase employment prospects at Barwon Health	2024	Talent Acquisition Manager
		Produce an easy to read resource that includes information on qualifications or experience that are essential for roles within Barwon Health, with clear support structures in place to assist job seekers within Community	2025	Talent Acquisition Manager

Focus Area 2 Continued



Priority Area	Deliverables/Impact	Action Undertaken	Timeframe	Responsibility
Improve Attraction and Recruitment	1. Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants	Share information about the role of the Aboriginal Workforce Officer, the benefits of hiring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and the support that can be provided to Managers	2023	Aboriginal Workforce Officer
	2. Build strong relationships with local education and employment providers with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	Be present at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community events to promote Barwon Health as an employer of choice	2023-2025	Aboriginal Workforce Officer
		Attend open days and careers fairs to promote Barwon Health as a culturally diverse and inclusive workplace	2023-2025	Talent Acquisition Manager
	3. Promote Barwon Health as an employer of choice	Create a Cultural Toolkit: a resource to provide information to Hiring Managers on the application process, culturally safe interviewing, induction assistance and On-Boarding program	2024	Aboriginal Workforce Officer
	4. Ensure an organisation-wide approach to finding suitable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to work across all departments of the organisation	Include a Cultural Welcome Pack to all new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees	2023	Aboriginal Workforce Officer
		Provide an option for new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to be undertake a pre-employment orientation with the Aboriginal Health Unit prior to commencement at Barwon Health	2023	Chief People and Culture Officer
		In addition to Barwon Health's usual job advertising channels there will be a concerted effort to advertise through the following avenues for all roles vacant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Koorie Mail • Indigenous Employment Australia • Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) • Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives (CATSINaM) (nursing & midwifery) • Local Aboriginal Networks (LAN) and Community Forums 	2024	Talent Acquisition Manager

Focus Area 3 Development and Retention

It is acknowledged that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities possess unique skills and knowledge and when an organisation makes a conscious effort to ensure their voices are heard a strong leadership team can develop.

Barwon Health is dedicated to utilising its position as a teaching hospital to provide a robust foundation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to prosper. By harnessing the energy of those employees passionate about making a difference to the health outcomes of their community, Barwon Health will create leaders from within, inspiring the workforce and the community.

Priority Area	Deliverables/Impact	Action Undertaken	Timeframe	Responsibility
Development and Retention	1. Provide a robust foundation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to prosper	Managers to have regular strategic discussions around career progression, with strengths based guidance provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees	2024	Chief People and Culture Officer
	2. Make a conscious effort to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are listened to and respected when it comes to cultural care	Engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in processes that relate to culturally appropriate patient care	2025	Deputy Chief Operating Officer
		Encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to be a part of the planning and delivery of various Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Clinics that are now available throughout Barwon Health	2025	Deputy Chief Operating Officer
	3. Allow opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to work directly with community	Clear and continual communications with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in regards to training available, including on the job qualifications through SWC Training	2023	Senior Manager, Organisational Development
	4. Communicate and support upskilling opportunities	Organisational Development to ensure that there are culturally significant and appropriate activities included in the wellness program provided to employees	2023	Senior Manager, Organisational Development
	5. Creation of cultural wellness activities	Actively promote access to professional networks and knowledge sharing	2025	Aboriginal Workforce Officer
	6. Formulate a Career Pathway Mapping Project	Develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership program with the assistance of mentors (both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) in year two of this Plan	2024	Senior Manager, Organisational Development
		Encourage and create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to undertake secondments to assist with career progression	2024	Chief People and Culture Officer
		Explore and share Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholarships that are available for employees to apply for	2023	Aboriginal Workforce Officer

Focus Area 4

Create culturally safe workplaces

To ensure Barwon Health is an environment free from racism and discrimination we aim to provide continual education on cultural safety.

This on-going learning framework will not only assist in meeting legislative requirements but also strengthen our ties with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee, patients and families.

By analysing our current workplace settings Barwon Health can actively encourage engagement with current employees to address areas of concern and unconscious bias. With a continued focus on respecting diversity, Barwon Health endeavours to be a workplace that acknowledges, respects and accommodates differences.

Priority Area	Deliverables/Impact	Action Undertaken	Timeframe	Responsibility
Create culturally safe workplaces	1. Create an understanding and culturally respectful workforce	Promote and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to attend local events of cultural significance	2023-2025	Deputy Chief Operating Officer
	2. Ensure that every employee has undertaken the compulsory cultural training	Promote the availability of face-to-face Cultural Training available through the Aboriginal Health Unit	2023	Senior Manager, Organisational Development
		Provide an "Aboriginal Cultural Awareness: Supporting and Celebrating our Aboriginal Workforce" online training module	2023	Aboriginal Workforce Officer
	3. Cultivate "champions" across all departments	Conduct a review to assess the potential benefit in having employees complete annual cultural training	2024	Senior Manager, Organisational Development
	4. Promote the location of the Aboriginal Health Unit	Work with Department Heads to highlight the importance and availability of a voluntary position of Cultural Champion, with nominated employees having the opportunity to upskill	2024	Deputy Chief Operating Officer
	5. To have culturally safe and inclusive work spaces	Undertake a wayfinding project that will provide a culturally significant way for people to locate the Aboriginal Health Unit	2025	Director, Public Affairs
	6. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are provided with culturally appropriate Supervisions	Within year one of the AEP we will undertake a review to understand the current status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and their input on cultural safety	2023	Program Manager, Aboriginal Health Unit
		Provide hiring managers with resources that include information on building and supporting an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce	2024	Aboriginal Workforce Officer

Focus Area 5 Collaboration

Put simply, cultural safety cannot just be the responsibility of the Aboriginal Health Unit or the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees at Barwon Health.

Creating a culture of safety is about educating, knowledge sharing and team work. Together the employees of Barwon Health, irrespective of employment category, can create a true impact on the attraction and retention of employees to our workplace.

Priority Area	Deliverables/Impact	Action Undertaken	Timeframe	Responsibility
Collaboration	1. Embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture into the organisation (including Board Members and the committees that employees sit on representing Barwon Health)	Senior Leadership group to undertake cultural awareness training provided by Barwon Health and share experiences with employees	2023	Chief People and Culture Officer
		Department Heads to assist in the creation of strategies relating to workforce planning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff (existing and new)	2024	Deputy Chief Operating Officer
	2. Each Department Head to facilitate and implement initiatives to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment	Managers to actively assist in creating career pathway strategies for current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, with information on specific scholarships and training opportunities communicated from the Aboriginal Workforce Officer	2023	Program Manager, Aboriginal Health Unit
		Culturally appropriate recruitment practices to be incorporated into Talent Acquisitions Fundamentals Training sessions (provided to Hiring Managers)	2023	Talent Acquisition Manager
	3. Work closely with other Diversity and Inclusion Managers across Victorian health services	The Aboriginal Workforce Officer to join an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment network consisting of other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment leads across Victorian health services	2025	Aboriginal Workforce Officer
4. A combined approach to talent acquisition	Six monthly updates on progress towards initiatives contained within the AEP to be provided to the AEP Implementation Group	2023-2025	Aboriginal Workforce Officer	

Key Strategic Documents

Barwon Health Strategic Plan 2020-2025

Barwon Health Workplace & Culture Strategic Plan 2023-2025

Department of Health: Aboriginal Workforce strategy 2021-2026

Korin-Korin Balit-Djak: Aboriginal health, wellbeing and safety strategic plan 2017-2027

Balit Murrup: Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing framework 2017-2027

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan 2021-2031

Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023

Victorian Aboriginal Employment and Economic Strategy : Yuma Yirramboi

Woorit Koorliny Australian Indigenous Employment Index 2022 National Report

Barring Djinang the 5-year Aboriginal employment strategy for the Victorian public sector

Image: Smoking Ceremony, Community Vaccination Hub, 2021



