

# WA Country Health Service: Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2010–2014

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The poster presentation will showcase the WA Country Health Service Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2010–2014, which aims at delivering a culturally respectful and competent service for Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people comprise more than 10 per cent of the population in WA Country Health Service (WACHS) regions (about 47,000 people) and represent an even higher percentage of the major users of the health services. Improving the health of Aboriginal people is one of the four pillars on which the WA Country Health Service stands, with a key action being to ‘Improve services to Aboriginal communities and boost Aboriginal employment opportunities’.

Aboriginal employment has also been identified by the National Indigenous Reform Agreement as a key strategy to close the gap.

The strategy and associated implementation plan identifies five priority areas:

- increase employment opportunities to attract and retain staff
- focus on workforce skills development
- develop a workforce culture that supports Aboriginal employees
- redesign the workforce to enable employment and new work roles
- plan for workforce needs and evaluation of initiatives.

## **Employment opportunities**

- Accredited entry level pathways eg traineeships, cadetships and apprenticeships
- Non-accredited entry
- Partnerships with job search agencies and key stakeholders

## **Skill development**

- Professional/career development interviews with all staff
- Career development opportunities, including accredited training, leadership program, graduate program
- Leadership development, including succession planning, cohort of champions, leadership network
- Mentoring support, including internal and external mentors
- Buddies/peer support network

## **Workplace culture**

- Cultural competence
- WACHS Reconciliation Action Plan
- Promote information about the AES across WACHS particularly to managers/supervisors

## **Workforce redesign/human resources**

- Investigate new clinical/professional roles for regional and remote employees
- Investigate HSU Award barriers
- Embed culturally appropriate work–life balance protocols
- Housing policy review

- Culturally appropriate advertising and recruitment processes
- Tailored induction processes

### **Planning and evaluation**

- Increase the number of Aboriginal people employed in WACHS by 300 by 2014
- Regional targets have now been endorsed
- Develop a workforce plan
- Identify baseline Aboriginal employment levels
- Capture Aboriginality data on ongoing basis
- Encourage Aboriginal employees leaving to complete exit survey

The roll out of the implementation plan will involve working with key contacts throughout WACHS to develop and implement regional plans that address local priorities and targets.