



Aboriginal Employment Plan 2012 - 2015



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Introduction

Background

Karreeta is the Gunditjmara word for “grow” and Yirramboi is the Taungurung word meaning “tomorrow”.

Karreeta Yirramboi is the Victorian Government’s plan to improve public-sector employment and career development outcomes for Aboriginal people. The plan spans a timeline of 2010 – 2015 and responds to COAG’s National Partnership Agreement in Indigenous Economic Participation and the commitment to halve the gap in employment outcomes between indigenous and non-indigenous people within a decade.

Karreeta Yirramboi sets an Aboriginal employment target of one per cent for the Victorian public sector and requires public-sector organisations with 500 or more employees to develop an Aboriginal employment plan.

Austin Health is a significant employer within the Victorian public sector, employing in excess of 8,000 staff. This plan has been developed to respond to the intent of Karreeta Yirramboi by outlining strategies and actions to position Austin Health to attract and retain more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as part of its workforce.

Austin Health would like to acknowledge the Department of Health and Department of Education, Employment and Workforce Relations (DEEWR) for providing consultant resourcing to assist with the development of this plan.

Objective

The objective of this plan is to outline and implement strategies that will encourage the growth of Austin Health’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce by creating opportunities and building an environment that’s welcoming to Aboriginal* people. The plan aims to ensure that Austin Health is equipped with the right policies, support frameworks and cultural awareness training to position itself as an attractive employer of choice to an Aboriginal workforce.

*The term “Aboriginal” will be used throughout this document to refer to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Proposed timeframe

The strategies in this plan are aligned to the timeframe given under Karreeta Yirramboi, which is to have a one per cent Aboriginal workforce representation by 2015.

Approach

This Aboriginal Employment Plan is designed to provide practical steps to work towards increasing Aboriginal participation in Austin Health's workforce.

The Aboriginal Employment Strategic Framework outlines the key initiatives to be undertaken to lay the platform for successful attraction and integration of new Aboriginal employees into the workforce. It addresses the following areas:

- Planning & Governance
- Identification and Creation of Opportunities
- Attraction and Recruitment
- Building Cultural Awareness
- Mentoring and Support

The objectives and outcomes of the plan are spread over the period 2013 to 2015. It is important to remember when utilising this document that this is not a 'static plan'. As opportunities arise and momentum grows through new initiatives and greater employee and partnership participation, this plan will change.

Environment

Organisation Profile

Austin Health is the main provider of tertiary health services and health professional education and research in north-eastern Melbourne. It is one of Australia's leading teaching and referral centres and comprises the Austin Hospital, Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital and Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre. The oldest and most well-known of the three facilities is the Austin Hospital.

Internationally recognised as a leader in clinical teaching and training, the organisation is affiliated with eight universities and is also the largest Victorian provider of training for specialist physicians and surgeons.

Austin Health is renowned for its specialist work in cancer, liver transplantation, spinal cord injuries, neurology, endocrinology, mental health and rehabilitation, and provides a number of state-wide services:

- Victorian Spinal Cord Service
- Victorian Respiratory Support Services
- Victorian Liver Transplant Unit
- Acquired Brain Injury Unit
- Child Mental Health Inpatient Unit
- Austin Toxicology Service

Over the previous 12 months the Austin's staff attended to:

- 99,552 inpatient admissions
- 2,009 admissions to the Hospital in the Home program
- 24,200 operations
- 186,485 attendances to 360 specialist outpatient clinics
- 80,100 attendances to a range of allied health outpatient clinics
- 68,168 emergency department attendances.

Part of Austin Health is 'Austin Life Sciences' which brings together internationally-renowned research institutes and over 800 Austin Health researchers, with a focus on cancer, diabetes, respiratory disease, liver disease, heart disease, stroke, epilepsy and psychiatry.

The Austin Health research institutions include:

- The Florey Neuroscience Institutes
- Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research
- Institute for Breathing and Sleep
- Austin Medical Research Foundation
- Parent-Infant Research Institute
- Spinal Research Institute

Austin Health currently:

- supports more trainee cancer researchers than any other Australian medical centre
- has the largest number of students studying health professions on a single site outside of a university
- has the largest veteran clientele of any Victorian public hospital
- has the largest translational cancer research program in Australia
- receives external research funding of over \$20 million per annum.

Recently Austin Health opened the Olivia Newton John Cancer & Wellness Centre in Heidelberg. The Centre has state of the art facilities to provide excellent physical, emotional and social support for cancer patients, to help them achieve their best possible 'state of wellness'.

Development Process

A cross section of relevant staff were interviewed to provide input into the development of the Aboriginal Employment Plan and impart information about Austin Health's policies and procedures relating to Aboriginal employees.

Aboriginal Community

Austin Health (via the Ngarra Jarra Aboriginal Health Program) has both formal and informal relationships with a number of external organisations connected to the local Aboriginal community to support the delivery of health services. In relation to employment of Aboriginal people, the organisation has already established a relationship with WISE Employment which could be leveraged further in addition to exploring and developing additional employment partnerships to deliver the strategy. WISE Employment is a key stakeholder in the NIE- Northern Indigenous Employment network, which in 2010 commended Austin Health for Aboriginal employment achievements.

The Aboriginal population in the catchments from which Austin Health largely attracts its workforce (Manningham, Banyule, Boroondara, Darebin and Yarra) totals 2,251 people, or 0.38 per cent of the catchment population. Until now, Austin Health has not asked new entrants or employees to identify their cultural background, so it is not accurately known how many Aboriginal employees are currently employed within the organisation. The 2012 Austin Health Staff Engagement Survey asked respondents to identify their cultural background; 28 of whom identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (0.34 per cent). It's important to note that respondents to the survey contributed anonymously, so this figure is unqualified. However, if we assume this data is indicatively correct Austin Health already employs a percentage of Aboriginal employees reflective of the population it services and largely recruits from.

In addition, of the Aboriginal population in Austin Health's catchment, 26 per cent are under 10 years or over 60 years. A further 18 per cent are aged 10-19, of which it could be assumed a significant proportion would be under 15, making them ineligible to work.

With this in mind, the opportunity to grow Austin Health's Aboriginal workforce is limited by the availability of Aboriginal people who are eligible to work from the catchment area. In order to ensure Austin Health is maximising its opportunity to attract and employ more Aboriginal people, it will be important to form closer connections with other Melbourne Aboriginal communities and ensure it is regarded as an attractive employer for this population. Additionally, by building Austin Health as an attractive employer of choice to an Aboriginal workforce, the organisation will be able to compete for Aboriginal candidates from the wider metropolitan, regional and Australian population.

Targets

In the 2012 Staff Engagement Survey, 28 Austin Health staff identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. This was out of a total workforce of 8,000 employees. To fulfill the one per cent target outlined by Karreeta Yirramboi, Austin Health would need to employ a total of 80 Aboriginal employees.

This plan focuses on the creation of school-based work experience and traineeships to provide Aboriginal people who have limited or no work experience access to job opportunities as a way of increasing Austin Health's Aboriginal workforce. The plan therefore focuses on building processes and support mechanisms for 'new-to-workforce' candidates, and assumes high levels of support may be required by many of these people. These needs are likely to be identified at the role creation stage and managed closely through the assessment, selection and on-boarding process. It is acknowledged that not all Aboriginal people who apply for roles or are already working at Austin Health will need or want any additional support outside of what is ordinarily offered in taking up their role. Internal role-modeling may occur when an Aboriginal staff member has the ability to act as a mentor to other staff who would like culturally specific assistance.

In addition to this, the plan focuses on building policies and practices designed to build Austin Health as an attractive employer of choice to the broader Aboriginal workforce, including those already with health services experience or coming out of tertiary institutions with relevant qualifications.

The plan includes the introduction of more robust ways of measuring the existing Aboriginal workforce and capturing cultural identity at recruitment stage, so progress can be tracked against the target.



Employment Strategy Framework

Planning and Governance

A “working group” of champions will be established to guide the implementation of the plan, and establish appropriate governance and oversight for execution of the plan.

Strategies	Actions	Time frame
Establish an Aboriginal Employment Plan Working Group to develop tangible actions to deliver for the plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select key stakeholders - will include key internal staff and may include external partners (e.g. RTO's, TAFE, local schools, Local Learning and Education Network). Internal membership will include a representative from the Aboriginal Health team and a combination of representatives from the areas of medical, nursing, administration, Allied Health and support services. Chaired by senior HR Representative 	By December 2013
Establish processes for identifying Aboriginal workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design safe and appropriate process for requesting and capturing Aboriginal status for both targeted and general recruitment Include reporting of workforce mix in HR Metrics reported to Executive and Board half yearly 	By December 2013
Establish appropriate oversight and governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide updates on progress against plan to Austin Executive and Board twice yearly as part of the Human Resources performance update. 	March 2014 and 6 monthly thereafter

Identification and Creation of Opportunities

The initial step in the process of implementing the Aboriginal Employment Plan is to identify areas within the organisation that are most suited for providing the environment for positive training and participation outcomes for Aboriginal employees who may require support.

Strategies	Actions	Time frame
Identification of employment and training opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine the Austin Health departments which demonstrate the desired culture and resources to train and host Aboriginal employees who may require support Identify roles throughout Austin Health as suited for targeting as supported Aboriginal employment opportunities Establish if any of the target positions can be offered to work experience or school-based trainees If possible, locate areas that are already staffed with Aboriginal workers so that they may offer direct support and mentoring 	February 2014
Introduce targeted Aboriginal work experience opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify areas and teams conducive for offering supportive work experience opportunities to Aboriginal students Identify and form partnerships with local schools and community groups to work with to identify and create work experience opportunities 	March 2014
Introduce Aboriginal School-Based Traineeship/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop partnerships with local schools and education networks Determine SBT target role/s within Austin Health Determine RTO requirements and relationship with secondary school education Establish funding availability for SBT 	June 2014

Attraction and Recruitment

Austin Health will enhance its ability to attract and recruit Aboriginal people through processes that explore a variety of recruitment and attraction methods.

Strategies	Actions	Time frame
Market Austin Health employment opportunities to Aboriginal audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine the optimum media source and other methods for advertising positions highlighted as suited for Aboriginal candidates Foster partnerships with schools and Banyule Nillumbik LLEN Ensure Austin Health's employment website is culturally appropriate 	February 2014
Culturally aware selection process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a recruitment and selection guide that ensures selection is sensitive to Aboriginal cultural practices, and made available to hiring managers to draw from when an Aboriginal candidate presents Develop pre-interview support and guidance process Look to include Aboriginal representation on interview panel when recruiting Aboriginal staff 	February 2014

Building Cultural Awareness

To build an environment that welcomes and attracts an Aboriginal workforce, it is important to ensure existing Austin Health staff are provided with awareness training of Aboriginal culture. Cultural awareness training will assist in providing the practical tools and expectations for managing and working with Aboriginal people.

Strategies	Actions	Time frame
Build awareness of the Aboriginal Employment Plan amongst hiring managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify departments/leaders and role that are most conducive for successfully taking on an Aboriginal Trainee/work experience candidate HRBP and Aboriginal Education & Liaison Officer to attend local management meetings to create awareness 	April 2014
Provide targeted cultural awareness training to departments/teams welcoming an Aboriginal member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leverage existing internal cultural awareness training, offered by Aboriginal Health Program, to provide just-in-time cultural awareness training to teams who are welcoming an Aboriginal person to their team. Ensure training includes practical advice for managers and supervisors hosting the employees 	May 2014

Mentoring and Ongoing Support

A mentoring framework and process will be established and offered to new Aboriginal employees to support them in their transition to Austin Health.

Strategies	Actions	Time frame
Establish a mentoring program within Austin Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an attraction and selection process for mentors Provide training to all nominated mentors Offer Aboriginal mentor partnerships to new Aboriginal staff/trainees 	April 2014
Program evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey mentors and employees to establish effectiveness and future improvements 	October 2014
Policy and procedure improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review employment policies and procedures to reflect a cultural understanding of an Aboriginal workforce Establish guidelines and procedures to ensure Austin Health monitor and collect Government incentives for any Aboriginal traineeships introduced Review HR policies, guidelines and procedures to ensure they acknowledge and accommodate particular Aboriginal cultural needs (e.g. leave for attendance at Aboriginal community events) Include in new employee applications form, explanation of reasons for seeking identification of Aboriginal status 	March 2014

Partnerships and Alliances

The success of this plan heavily relies on the strength of key partnerships and alliances. Austin Health, through its Aboriginal Advisory Committee, already has established links with external organisations that can be used to advise on this process. This table summarises potential partnerships and alliances that could be formed to support the achievement of the above implementation strategies. This plan has been tested with the following organisations and all have responded positively to engaging with Austin Health and assisting in the strategies outlined in this Aboriginal Employment Plan.

Organisation	Connection
Aboriginal communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Austin Health has established strong personal links with the local Aboriginal community through its Aboriginal Health Program team Ngarra Jarra. These staff members can provide vital connections to the local Aboriginal community for referrals for Austin Health employment opportunities
TAFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE has an active Koori Services Centre providing support to Aboriginal students
Registered Training Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VACCHO is an Aboriginal Health organisation that supports the Aboriginal Health Services across Victoria. It is an RTO and can provide competency training in the health sector. They are a member of the Austin AHAC.
Universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RMIT University provides nursing courses for potential employees and has support for Aboriginal students through the Ngara Willam Centre Monash University provides degree courses and support for Aboriginal students through the Yulendji Indigenous Engagement Unit
Local Learning and Education Network (LLEN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Banyule Nillumbik LLEN has an established relationship with Austin Health and can link trainees with the organisation
Secondary schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Austin Health aims to form partnerships with careers counsellors at secondary schools in the catchment in order to source Aboriginal students for work experience and potential school based traineeships
WISE Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Austin Health has an established relationship with Wise Employment and particularly with the Wise Employment National Community Liaison & Project Manager (Indigenous Opportunities), who can help support Austin Health in marketing and sourcing Aboriginal candidates for opportunities

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