People Strategy
2018-22
A message from our Chief People and Culture Officer

With a bold new strategic plan, Austin Health’s leadership team understands and values the critical contribution our people make to our success - now and into the future.

Over the next five years, Austin Health is committed to strengthening our greatest asset: our people.

Our first ever People Strategy identifies five critical imperatives aimed at valuing leadership and building leadership excellence, engaging and enabling our staff, supporting the health, safety and wellbeing of our people, developing future skills and capabilities and improving our ability to attract the best staff.

Our People Strategy is a contemporary approach that will strengthen and leverage the talents of our people. It focuses on the areas that will help us deliver against Austin Health’s 2018-22 strategy and vision: Shaping the future through exceptional care, discovery and learning.

At its heart, the strategy aims to support and encourage our people to thrive. It places value on the role our leaders play in driving positive workplace culture, employee engagement and better outcomes for patients, and commits us to supporting them in this endeavour. It illuminates the need to change systems, processes and structures to enable our people to focus their efforts and to support their physical, social and emotional wellbeing at work.

The purpose of the strategy is to ensure that we have the right programs and tools in place to help our people bring their best to work and give their best to the community we serve.

Its five key pillars address leadership, staff engagement, workforce development, staff health, safety and wellbeing, and attracting and employing the right people. It sets out clear activities to achieve desired outcomes, outlining a map for the future and making us accountable for reaching our goals.

At Austin Health we are immensely fortunate to have a committed, talented and dedicated workforce. Through this strategy, we can remain responsive to our fast-changing world and deliver on our strategic ambitions – an aspiration that we can only realise through our greatest asset; our people.

Anna Phillips
Chief People and Culture Officer
Austin Health’s Strategic Plan 2018-22 opens with a bold and inspirational vision “Shaping the future through exceptional care, discovery and learning”. It articulates our ambitions to:

- Grow our leadership in the delivery of highly-specialised tertiary care
- Have more patients cared for in the community in partnership with other providers
- Advance our reputation as an internationally recognised centre of excellence in research
- Be a health service which delivers exceptional and consistent patient care.

While achieving this vision will be dependent on many factors, we know that it is only possible because of our people. We have long understood and valued the critical contribution our people make to serve the health needs of our community and in delivering exceptional and consistent care.

Austin Health’s people have strong values and a commitment to serve others and we recognise their passion and dedication. We must support and enable them to continue to provide high quality patient care. We must also continue to attract, develop and retain talented, capable and engaged people.

We are operating in a rapidly changing environment

The future will bring significant and increasingly complex challenges and opportunities in healthcare including personalised medicine, digital technologies, person-centred care and the increasing healthcare needs of the community. We will be challenged to progress these in a resource constrained system where funding is finite and where current and future skills shortages continue to impact.

To remain a leader in this dynamic environment, we will foster a workplace culture that supports our people to deliver ‘continuously improving, high quality and compassionate care for patients.” We recognise the importance of creating an open, honest and transparent culture so that our people feel supported to raise concerns including those about standards of care, or about how we work. Our values underpin Austin Health’s positive workplace culture.

The many challenges facing healthcare require our workforce to engage with our patients and community in new ways. We will need new skills and mindsets to support a more integrated, person-centred model of care, requiring us to build on our capacity to work as part of multi-disciplinary teams that extend beyond the boundaries of our organisation. We will also need the capacity and capability to anticipate, respond to and take advantage of change. How we do all of this is the subject of Austin Health’s People Strategy.

We will prioritise the role all our leaders play in driving a positive workplace culture and organisational performance and consider relevant contemporary leadership research/theory. As the key influencers of workplace culture, we will support our leaders to harness our committed workforce through a collective approach to leadership, so that our people are aligned to our strategic priorities, live our values and are enabled to perform at their best to provide exceptional patient care.

Many key documents were reviewed in preparing this strategy, including the draft Austin Health Strategic Plan 2018–22; our refreshed organisational values; results of the People Matter 2017 Survey; People and Culture Leadership Team planning workshop outputs (October and December 2017) and existing People and Culture plans/strategies. Stakeholders were also engaged through individual discussions and focus groups including with the executive team, the medical culture committee, and representatives from divisional management, senior nursing, clinical research, allied health, teaching and learning, people and culture and others.

The People Strategy has five pillars:
- Leadership excellence and capability
- Engaged and enabled workforce
- Future workforce
- Health, safety and wellbeing
- Employing the right people

These pillars could apply to many organisations – it will be our ability to address the underlying challenges that are inherent in our context that will make this strategy a success.

The People Strategy defines broad objectives and actions to guide the implementation of these priorities over the next five years. It will be a ‘living document’ – providing the flexibility to be responsive to future changes, while maintaining a focus on our long-term goals. Implementation will be governed by our planning cycles.

Talented people will always have career choices, and meeting their needs will grow increasingly complicated against a backdrop of change and the ever-increasing pressure for continuous improvements and better outcomes. We must be at the forefront in defining our offer and delivering the kinds of employee experiences that will be appealing to the people we want to attract and retain. We must remain responsive to these challenges and to the changing employer landscape, including new and emerging personal, generational, life-stage, lifestyle and aspirational differences.

With Austin Health’s vision, values and strategic plan in place we can be deliberate in what we do next for our people.

The People Strategy clarifies the focus of our future efforts so that Austin Health can take our team to the next level and ensure that the community we serve benefits from our talented, capable and engaged workforce.

The People Strategy focuses on leveraging our positive workplace culture so that we support our people to thrive and free them to do what they do best for patients. It places value on the role our leaders play in driving positive workplace culture, employee engagement and outcomes for patients and commits us to supporting them in this endeavour. It highlights the need to change systems, processes and structures to enable our people to focus their efforts and to support their physical, social and emotional wellbeing at work.
1. Leadership excellence and capability

International research has reinforced, ‘the central importance of effective leadership and management at all levels, from the ward to the board and across traditional organisational boundaries. The purpose of effective leadership, put simply, is to improve population health and patient care; this needs to be recognised now more than ever’.2

Austin Health operates in an increasingly dynamic and changing environment, and compassionate leadership will provide an engaging and compelling vision for the future, delivering stewardship and direction in the face of increasing pressures. By recognising and valuing the importance of leadership, we will focus our efforts on developing our leadership skills and reputation to match that of our excellence in healthcare and research.

Delivery of our strategy requires an integrated approach to developing leadership capability at Austin Health. It involves all leaders – clinical, non-clinical and research. We want to support our leaders to harness our committed workforce so they are aligned to our strategic priorities, live our values and are enabled to perform at their best to provide exceptional patient care.

**We will:**
- Build leadership excellence
- Build leadership capability into staff appointments

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**Build leadership excellence**

Leaders across all levels of the organisation must have the capability and commitment to deliver world-leading performance through their people and model the behaviours and values that are critical to Austin Health’s success. Our leaders play a vital role in realising the potential of all staff, as well as strengthening connections with the primary and community care partners and the communities with which we work.

As we build a focus on our strategic priorities, alongside adapting to new challenges and ways of working, we must strive to support our leaders to perform their role.

**Actions:**

Develop and implement a leadership development framework

We will develop an organisation-wide view of what leadership is at Austin Health and a core set of leadership skills and expectations that align with the strategic plan. We will enable leaders to deliver the necessary level of organisational change, transformation, and growth in our dynamic environment.

Skilling and supporting leaders

We will build leadership excellence and capability through a suite of integrated leadership development offerings. We will develop tailored programs aligned to Austin Health’s strategic plan that reflect the needs of executive, senior and emerging leaders and enable them to translate our vision into actions. This will equip leaders with the right blend of skills and behaviours to meet both current and future challenges.

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2. Engaged and enabled workforce

Austin Health is proud to have high levels of employee engagement where our people are committed to our overall purpose and are willing to give discretionary effort in caring for the health needs of the community we serve.

We do not take employee engagement for granted and understand that we must continue to seek new and better ways to engage our workforce. In particular, we need to provide greater clarity and understanding of our strategic direction and progress on an ongoing basis.

In our increasingly complex and constrained landscape, we must continue to build on our positive workplace culture in parallel with improving systems, processes and structures so that we remove any barriers which may be impeding our people to do what they do best.

We will focus on improving employee engagement as well as enabling our people to be their most productive.

We will:
- Foster continuously improving levels of workforce engagement
- Identify and remove barriers to getting work done - to enable our people
- Develop a measurement strategy to support improving engagement

Foster continuously improving levels of workforce engagement

The business case for leadership and engagement is compelling: organisations with engaged staff deliver better patient experience, fewer errors, lower infection and mortality rates, stronger financial management, higher staff morale and motivation and less absenteeism and stress. ³

The changes needed to implement our strategic plan must happen at scale and pace. Leaders have a significant impact on the engagement of our people and their willingness to contribute to achieving our plan. We will consider contemporary models of engagement and support leaders at all levels of the organisation to build engaged teams.

Actions:
Consider contemporary models of engagement

We will use contemporary theory as our guiding principle to create a culture of sustained levels of engagement with our people.

Develop and embed a leader-led approach to engagement

We recognise the important role leaders play in engaging our people. In building a leadership framework for Austin Health, we will explore a leader-led approach to building engagement which considers the model of distributed leadership over heroic leadership to build shared visions.

Enhance communication and listening mechanisms

We will seek to improve employee engagement through more relevant and frequent communication and improved listening mechanisms.

Identify and remove barriers to getting work done – to enable our people

We recognise that despite high levels of engagement our people are often impeded in doing what they do best and in being able to focus on their core role because of administrative and other barriers to getting work done. Complex processes with manual touchpoints create barriers to efficient working practices as well as lead to increased levels of operational risk. Streamlining HR processes and looking for opportunities to automate will allow our people to spend more time focused on providing exceptional patient care.

Our future workforce will also expect Austin Health’s systems to keep pace with contemporary approaches to workforce management. A critical component of this includes providing timely and accurate people data to leaders to support their decision making. We will consider how to improve HR systems, processes and structures to better enable our people and free up their capacity to focus on their core role.

Actions:
Identify processes, systems and structures that are impeding getting work done

We will explore the barriers to efficient and effective working practices to identify the systems, processes and structures that are impeding productivity and getting work done.

Develop a change plan

We will identify changes that could have the biggest impact on reducing the administrative burden on our people and providing better access to information and data, and develop a change plan for these. As part of this, we will pursue more integration of our systems and processes.
Develop a measurement strategy to support improving engagement

Austin Health has prioritised measuring engagement as a critical aspect of our organisational performance. We will continue to explore contemporary theory on employee engagement and consider new ways to approach its measurement. We will use data to support leaders to build engaged teams.

Actions:

Measure engagement in new ways

We will consider options for defining and measuring engagement that best align with and support Austin Health’s strategic direction and priorities.

Provide information and data to leaders – We will provide engagement data to leaders to support them to build engaged teams.

3. Future workforce

Austin Health has a reputation for fostering a positive workplace culture, which underpins our success. Leveraging this culture by focussing on the types of behaviour, the values and the skills of leaders will ensure we better engage our people, improve relationships and collaboration. Importantly, it will also ensure we have a workforce that continues to be committed and passionate about delivering outstanding patient care.

To reach the bold ambitions outlined in the Strategic Plan 2018-2022, we must continue to invest in the skills, structures and processes that drive and deliver world-leading performance and excellence across all areas of the health service. We will anticipate the capabilities we need for the future and support our people to grow and develop.

A more contemporary approach to performance development reviews will ensure that performance expectations are aligned with the organisation’s goals and objectives, and are measured and evaluated in a consistent manner.

We must ensure our leaders and their staff have both the time and the skills to have the conversations that matter around performance and development and build strengths-based coaching skills. These conversations must be meaningful, and support ongoing and reflective performance enhancements.

We will:

- Support our people to grow and develop.
- Foster a feedback/coaching culture.
- Create succession plans for critical roles.

Support our people to grow and develop

Austin Health will attract the best talent by becoming known, among other things, for the importance we place on the growth, development and achievements of our staff.

Our vision is to be an organisation of choice. We want Austin Health to be sought out by top clinicians, professionals, and researchers as a place that will enable them to succeed and thrive. We understand the importance of ensuring that the great potential of our workforce is realised.

The development of staff, across all areas of Austin Health, is a key priority requiring action both organisation-wide and at a personal level. We will invest in the growth and development of our staff over the life-span of this strategy to enable successful careers for our clinical, professional and research staff.

Actions:

Identify the capabilities needed for the future

We will identify the capabilities needed for the future that best support our strategic ambitions and we will support the development of these skills and capabilities.

Build a learning and development curriculum to support the capabilities needed for the future

We will support the development of the skills and capabilities needed for the future through a diverse and blended range of structured and less formal initiatives tailored to the needs of clinical and professional staff. All training and development will be underpinned by sound and contemporary research, including the fields of neuroscience and positive psychology.
Foster a feedback and coaching culture

As with the patient experience, where we focus on creating the best environments for person-centred care, we will support environments where leaders can bring out the best in our staff. Our leaders at all levels need to have the time, resources, capabilities and commitment to embed a coaching-orientated approach to developing staff.

Improving performance is always a challenging and complex task, and requires leaders to drive change by aligning performance with strategy, and introducing dialogue around accountability, relevance, impact and the value of effort into the performance conversation and process.

Leaders will be supported to play an active and positive role in managing and supporting performance, moving away from a singular reliance on annual performance evaluation, towards a process of continuous coaching, leading to personal growth, development and improvement.

Actions:

Support leaders to develop feedback and coaching skills

Leaders need the skills and capabilities to have authentic discussions with staff about job performance that address performance and expectations. They also need to be able to conduct open and honest discussions about future development and career progression. We will support leaders to develop feedback and coaching skills through our learning and development curriculum and using positive coaching and strength-based models.

Review the Performance and Development Review (PDR) process

We will review our Performance Development Review process to support a performance-focused coaching culture. It is critical that approaches to performance review and development are easy to follow and implement, meet the needs of high performers, and enable underperformance to be dealt with appropriately.

Create succession plans for critical roles

We will seek to build leadership excellence where we want to make the most profound contribution and impact at Austin Health. As part of this we will identify critical roles and develop a succession plan for critical clinical and professional roles so that operational and commercial risk is minimised through planned continuity.

Actions:

Identify critical roles

We will map the clinical and professional roles that are ‘critical’ in supporting the delivery of the Austin Health strategic plan.

Develop a succession plan

We will review relevant workforce capability (collective and individual) to inform a view of existing talent/potential successors. We will then develop a succession plan to grow and leverage this talent.
4. Health, safety and wellbeing

Austin Health is committed to achieving the highest levels of staff safety and to supporting the physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing of staff. Recognising that health, safety and wellness is a shared responsibility, we aim to help staff to take control of their health and wellbeing and to support leaders to create safe work environments where the welfare of staff is paramount.

By focusing beyond regulatory compliance and placing people at the centre of our activities, we aim to remain a leading health, safety and wellness organisation. In attending to the health, safety and wellness needs of our staff we know that they will be better able to serve the health needs of our community and deliver exceptional and consistent care.

We will:

- Foster a culture of respect and collaboration to enhance staff safety and wellbeing.
- Support early intervention and prevention of injuries in the workplace.

**Foster a culture of respect and collaboration to enhance staff safety and wellbeing.**

Austin Health has a strong record in safety and minimising risk but we also care about, and will continually strive for, a culture of respect and collaboration to positively impact overall staff safety and wellbeing.

**Actions:**

**Bullying and Harassment Strategy and Programs**

We will continue to support Austin Health’s zero tolerance policy by considering how best to support leaders in both their preventative and remedial roles and deliver programs accordingly. We will continue to provide the means for concerns to be raised and dealt with without retribution, as part of a culture of openness and trust.

**Occupational Violence and Aggression**

We will equip staff to mitigate and/or respond to instances of occupational violence and aggression and we will support them if instances occur.

**Build leadership capability to support the health, safety and wellbeing of our people**

We recognise that our leaders influence the culture in their local work area and their behaviour is key to ongoing improvements in the health, safety and wellbeing of staff. We will support them to create safe work environments e.g. training and education, and data and information to help inform decisions.

**Support early intervention and prevention of injuries in the workplace.**

Austin Health is leading the sector in its adoption of an integrated model of Health, Safety and Wellbeing, and is certified to Australian Standard AS/NZ4801 Occupational Health and Safety Management systems. This approach ensures compliance regimes are maintained and preferences early intervention and prevention, which are the focus of many of our programs and activities. Early intervention and prevention requires the active participation of our staff in taking control of their own health and wellbeing and in leading and managing teams of staff.

**Actions:**

**Workforce Mental Health strategy**

We will continue our commitment to supporting and promoting the psychological wellbeing of staff by building upon our Workforce Mental Health strategy.

**Manual Handling Prevention**

We will look at the contributing factors in manual handling injuries and align future prevention strategies with our improved understanding.

**Wellness Program**

We will continue to refine our suite of wellness programs to make sure they help us to mitigate known areas of risk for our people.
5. Employing the right people

Our reputation helps us to attract the best people and our future success will be dependent on our continued ability to attract, develop and retain talented and diverse staff.

Across all levels of Austin Health, we will strive to recruit the best clinical, non-clinical and research talent in the market. We will do this by continuing to enhance our reputation for providing world-leading, inspirational work environments which prioritise the health, safety and wellbeing of all staff who are committed to the care of the patients and communities we serve.

We recognise that the best work is the result of a workplace that welcomes new ideas and a diverse mix of people. We will build on efforts and progress made in recent years to build an inclusive and diverse workforce and we will continue to implement and evolve our Aboriginal Employment Plan.

We will review current recruitment processes and procedures and build internal capability to ensure we are confidently recruiting the best people for Austin Health. New recruits will feel valued and engaged from the very beginning of recruitment campaigns.

We will:
- Recruit the best people with the right skills and cultural ‘fit’ for Austin Health
- Promote and support a diverse workforce and a culture of inclusiveness
- Evolve our Aboriginal Employment Plan

Recruit the best people with the right skills and cultural ‘fit’ for Austin Health

We will develop a reputation for our robust recruitment process and superior candidate experience to source and attract the best people. The best people are those with the right skills and cultural ‘fit’ for Austin Health. Establishing Austin Health as the destination of choice in health for the most talented people is critical to our strategic plan.

**Actions:**

**Improve hiring manager selection skills**

Hiring managers play a critical role in selecting the best people for Austin Health. They are the ‘front line’ in representing our brand and delivering a compelling candidate experience. We will support them to make good decisions by further developing their selection skills and their ability to deliver the candidate experience.

**Enhance the recruitment process for candidates**

We will review recruitment processes to ensure we deliver an outstanding candidate experience and support opportunities to expediently and robustly make high-calibre appointments. The recruitment process must be consistent in terms of its high standard, but tailored to meet the specific needs, remit and responsibilities of each role. Processes will be flexible, agile and responsive, and will enable recruitment decisions to be made robustly and expediently.

Promote and support a diverse workforce and a culture of inclusiveness

We will accelerate steps to support a diverse workforce and a culture of inclusion. Austin Health values diversity because we recognise that differences in age, race, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, physical ability, thinking style and background of our people bring richness to our work environment.

We will develop a Diversity and Inclusion Plan to ensure that at Austin Health we have an environment where the compounding benefits of a diverse workforce are recognised as vital in maintaining excellence in the delivery of high quality patient care. We will reflect the diversity of the community we serve in the diversity of our workforce.

**Actions:**

**Develop a workforce diversity and inclusion plan**

We are committed to increasing the diversity of our workforce and strengthening our culture of inclusiveness. We will develop a diversity and inclusion plan to define our priorities and guide our actions over the lifetime of the People Strategy.
Evolving our Aboriginal Employment Plan

We will build on the efforts and progress made through the successful implementation of the 2016-2019 Aboriginal Employment Plan, focusing effort on recruitment and retention strategies and the provision of career opportunities. We will seek to extend the reach and impact of our strategies by supporting the development and progression of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and establish partnerships with other organisations to create employment opportunities.

We will build cultural competence across our organisation and develop understanding and respect for Indigenous knowledge, culture and values to develop a culturally safe environment that recognises the value and importance of reconciliation.

Actions:

Advance our capacity to recruit and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff

We will seek to understand why our success in growing our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce has plateaued and we will explore opportunities to create career pathways and positions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We will pursue opportunities with Universities, teaching institutions and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to profile opportunities at Austin Health.

Build cultural competence

We will build and develop a deeper understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and values across the organisation and we will ensure all leaders and managers undertake cultural competence training.

Develop a Reconciliation Action Plan

We will formalise a plan that recognises Austin Health’s role in improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and that commits Austin Health to the advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and development.
Conclusion

We are home to some of the most talented and committed people and supporting and developing them – both clinical, and non-clinical – is the key to our continued ability to serve the health needs of our community and deliver exceptional and consistent care into the future.

Essential to our success is the understanding that strategy without follow-through is meaningless and it is vital that the commitment to our People Strategy is accompanied by activities that ensure its success. We will build accountability through activity planning, measurement, reflection and adaption.

It is our belief that a deliberate focus on these pillars will enable the continued loyalty and commitment of our people to contribute towards Austin Health’s strategic ambitions and in doing so to realise together the benefits we all aspire to for the community we serve.
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<tr>
<th>Pillar</th>
<th>Objective</th>
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| Leadership excellence and capability       | - Support our leaders to build the capabilities to harness our committed workforce so they are aligned to our strategic priorities, live our values and are enabled to perform at their best to provide exceptional patient care.  
- Build leadership capability into staff appointments. | - Develop an organisation-wide view of what leadership is at Austin Health.  
- Build leadership excellence and capability by ‘skilling’ and supporting leaders.  
- Develop leadership capability as a critical selection criterion. |
| Engaged and enabled workforce              | - Foster continuously improving levels of workforce engagement*  
- *Engagement is attachment to the organisation and willingness to give discretionary effort.  
- Identify and remove barriers to getting work done to enable our people to do what they do best.  
- Measurement strategy to support leaders to drive engagement. | - Consider contemporary models of engagement  
- Develop and embed a leader-led approach to building engaged teams as part of ‘skilling’ leaders.  
- Enhance communication and listening mechanisms with employees.  
- Consider the systems, processes and structures that are impeding ‘best work’.  
- Consider options for defining and measuring engagement.  
- Provide information and data to help leaders to build engaged teams and to know how they are going. |
| Future workforce                           | - Support our people to grow and develop.  
- Foster a feedback/coaching culture.  
- Create succession plans for critical roles. | - Identify the capabilities needed for the future.  
- Build a learning & development curriculum to support the capabilities needed for the future.  
- Support leaders to develop feedback and coaching skills.  
- Review the Performance and Development Review process.  
- Identify critical roles.  
- Develop succession plans. |
| Health, safety and wellness                | - Foster a culture of respect and collaboration to enhance staff safety and well-being.  
- Support early intervention and prevention of injuries in the workplace. | - Deliver Bullying and Harassment and Occupational violence and aggression programs and initiatives.  
- Build leadership capability to support health, safety and wellbeing.  
- Renew the Workforce Mental Health strategy.  
- Manual handling prevention.  
- Wellness program – aligning activities to mitigate known risk areas. |
| Employing the right people                 | - Recruit the best people with the right skills and cultural ‘fit’ for Austin Health.  
- Promote and support a diverse workforce and a culture of inclusiveness.  
- Evolving our Aboriginal Employment Plan (AEP) | - Support hiring managers to improve selection skills.  
- Enhance the recruitment process for candidates.  
- Develop a workforce diversity and inclusion plan to increase the diversity of our workforce and strengthen our culture of inclusiveness.  
- Advance capacity to recruit and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.  
- Build cultural competence.  
- Develop a Reconciliation Action Plan. |