



**Aboriginal Employment Plan  
2021-24**

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## Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

We would like to acknowledge staff who contributed to the development of our Aboriginal Employment Plan, in particular our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

Special thanks to our incredible employees who were courageous and willing to share their stories: Dr Brooke Trinham, Latoya Floyd and Lyle Hodgson, as well as Aliya Chalmers who participated in the Barring Djinang Internship Program (a Taungurung language phrase meaning "pathway of the feet").

Thanks also to Mirriyu Cultural Consulting for providing feedback and guidance throughout the development of this plan.

We are proud to have partnered with the following Aboriginal suppliers on design and production:

Photographer: Tiffany Garvie from T J Garvie Photography  
Artwork: Gary Saunders  
Graphic Design: Dreamtime Art Creative Consultancy  
Printing: Indigi Print

If you would like to learn more about our plan or employment opportunities contact our Aboriginal Employment Coordinator at **[Diversity&Inclusion@austin.org.au](mailto:Diversity&Inclusion@austin.org.au)**

Note: Throughout this document the term "Aboriginal" is used to refer to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.







## About the artwork

The artwork featured in this document was designed by Gary Saunders, a proud Bangerang, Yorta Yorta, Wiradjuri and Dja Dja Wurrung man born in Mooroopna. Gary is an artist, graphic designer and musician.

Gary explains that the artwork "represents the three major sites of Austin Health: the large circle the main site; the other circles the smaller sites. The staff are represented by the symbols around the outside of the large circle. The lines within each circle are the clients, while in between each of the circles we see the pathways of teaching and

research that link each of the sites and contribute to high quality person-centred care. The different designs throughout the 'site circles' represent the many services and programs that Austin Health provides the community.'

The background represents collaboration. Gary worked with children from Austin Health's childcare centre who drew the design.

The children's foot and hand prints denote the strength and future of Austin Health.

# A message from our CEO and Executive Sponsor

We are delighted to launch our Aboriginal Employment Plan 2021-24.

This plan has been developed in consultation with our people – including our Aboriginal staff – and will guide our actions and priorities over the next 3 years.

Our People Strategy 2018-22 outlines our commitment to building on the efforts and progress we have made through the successful implementation of our past Aboriginal Employment Plans.

This plan articulates how we will attract Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates to our health service and support Aboriginal employees to thrive in their roles.

We recognise that providing meaningful employment and development opportunities has

the potential to transform the lives of Aboriginal Peoples, their families and the community. We also appreciate that employing Aboriginal staff will support our patients and have a significantly positive impact on the care that we provide them and the experience of their Community who support them through their health journey.

Accordingly, we are committed to taking deliberate steps to increase our Aboriginal workforce, ensure that they feel safe and supported in their roles, and encourage them with their career goals and aspirations. Our goal is for Austin Health to be an employer of choice for the Aboriginal community.

We look forward to bringing the initiatives in this plan to life. We encourage all staff to embrace this plan and consider the role they can play in ensuring its success.



Adam Horsburgh  
Chief Executive Officer



Anna Phillips  
Chief People & Culture Officer  
and Executive Sponsor





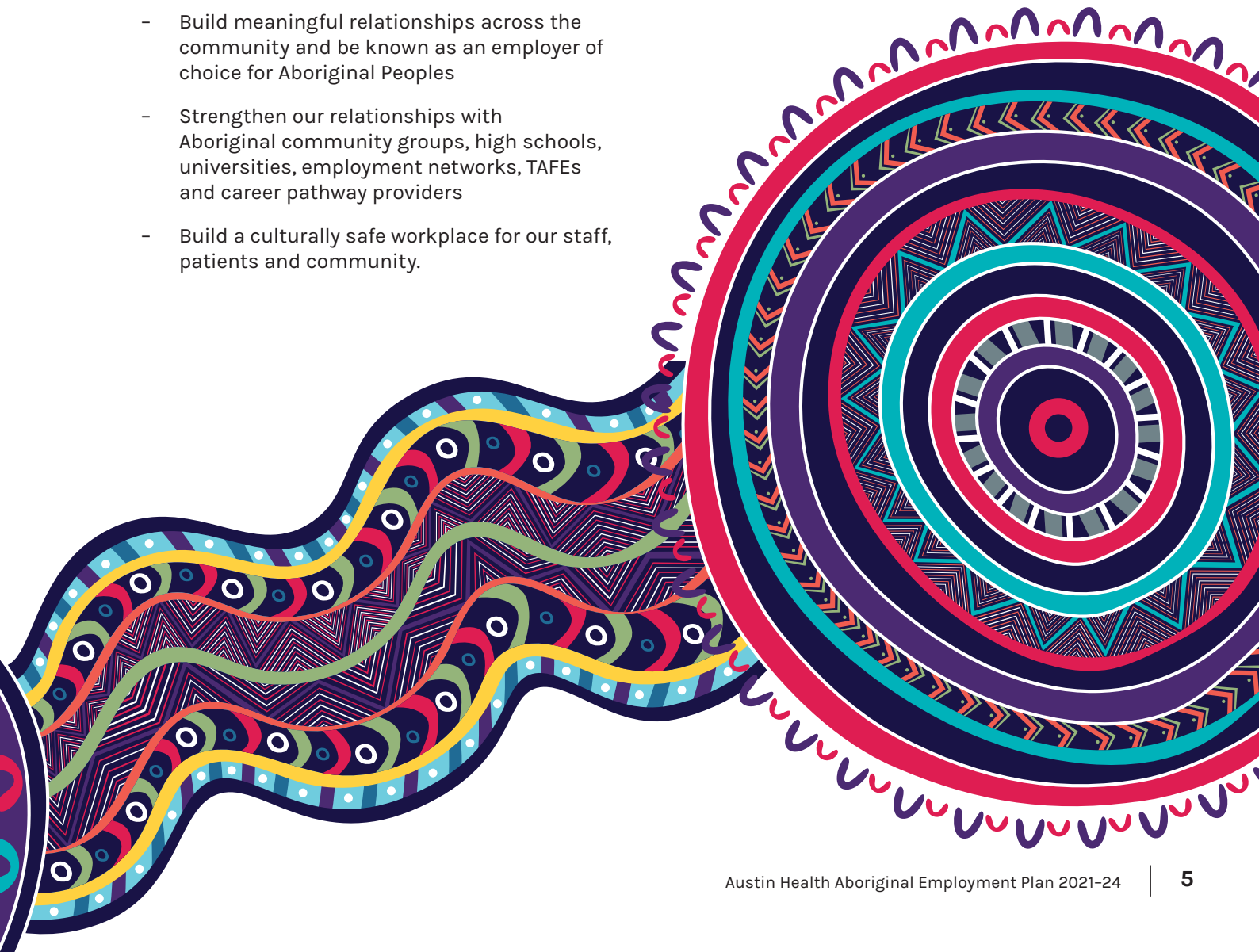
# Our commitment to Aboriginal employment

As at July 2021, we have 45 staff that identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. We're committed to increasing and supporting Aboriginal employment and ensuring that our Aboriginal staff are provided with opportunities to thrive and succeed in their chosen careers.

This plan will guide our priorities and ensure that we are focused on initiatives that support us to attract, retain and develop Aboriginal employees.

## Our priorities are to:

- Increase employment opportunities for Aboriginal Peoples across our health service
- Build meaningful relationships across the community and be known as an employer of choice for Aboriginal Peoples
- Strengthen our relationships with Aboriginal community groups, high schools, universities, employment networks, TAFEs and career pathway providers
- Build a culturally safe workplace for our staff, patients and community.











## **Dr Brooke Trinham** Consultant Emergency Physician

Brooke Trinham is a Consultant Emergency Physician. She started as an intern in 2006 after attending the Austin Clinical School (a partnership between Austin Health and The University of Melbourne) where she developed her connection with our health service. "I've always felt part of a big family working here, and the friends I've made are why I enjoy working at Austin Health so much," she says.

Brooke grew up in Hastings on the Mornington Peninsula. "My mum is a dental nurse/receptionist and my Dad was a carpenter. My sister and I were the first to go to university from our extended family. My dad was adopted so I don't really know much about my Indigenous background," she explains.

"Medicine wasn't on my radar as something that I could do when I finished high school. Having an interest in the human body and pathology, I studied an applied science degree in human biology at RMIT, then went on to study postgraduate medicine at Melbourne University," Brooke says.

Brooke also works at the Alice Springs and Tennant Creek hospitals. "I travel up there about six times a year for a few weeks. The time the Austin has given me to pursue work in the Northern Territory has most definitely benefited my understanding of cultural safety and sensitivity in the Aboriginal community, allowing me to bring this knowledge back to Austin Health."

"The Austin has provided me with fantastic training opportunities, offering experience in many different aspects of emergency medicine. They also offer great rotations for junior doctors to enable them to choose their own path in medicine. Now that I'm a Consultant, I'm involved in the Fellowship teaching of future emergency physicians and feel very privileged to be able to give back to the institution that has helped to shape and train me," she says.

Brooke adds: "Austin Health is a fantastic, supportive environment and a great place to work as a junior doctor. The opportunities and resources provided will definitely form a strong foundation for your career."

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## What we've achieved so far

Our focus on Aboriginal employment and cultural safety has been in progress for some time and has been guided by the actions of our past Aboriginal Employment Plans.

In 2018 we launched our People Strategy and committed to focusing our efforts on recruitment and retention strategies and providing career opportunities for our Aboriginal workforce.

While we still have much to do, we are proud of what we have achieved including the partnerships we have built in the community. Our achievements include:

- We successfully recruited seven Aboriginal graduate nurses over the past 4 years, as well as four Aboriginal nursing cadets who work as Registered Undergraduate Students of Nursing (RUSON) within our clinical nursing teams.
- A representative from our Clinical Education Unit was appointed the Chair of the Aboriginal Graduate and Cadet Network. This network provides a forum for health services to collaborate and share knowledge and resources to achieve optimal support systems for Aboriginal graduates and cadets across Victoria.

### Career pathway opportunities

- Over the past two years we've hosted an Aboriginal intern as part of the Victorian Public Sector Commission (VPSC) and Career Trackers' Barring Djinang Summer Internship Program. We created a tailored program to ensure that our intern gained meaningful work experience in their chosen field.
- We delivered a Careers in Health program to give Aboriginal high school students an insight into our health service and the various career opportunities available to them.

### Employment opportunities

- We created two new dedicated roles for Aboriginal staff in the Ngarra Jarra Health Program and our first Aboriginal Employment Officer, whose key focus is to positively contribute to improved employment outcomes for Austin Health.
- We refreshed our recruitment processes to ensure that we contact all Aboriginal applicants to maximise their employment opportunities.

### Creating a culturally safe workplace

- We launched a mandatory Aboriginal Cultural Awareness online training course for staff and managers.
- Our senior leaders attended face-to-face cultural awareness training.
- We continued to strengthen and evolve the relationship with our Aboriginal staff network.
- We've regularly shared Aboriginal staff and patient stories, as well as career milestones and achievements, to create a connection with our Aboriginal staff across our health service and in the community.
- We continue to create an environment that is welcoming for our Aboriginal staff, patients and their families, including an Acknowledgement to Country window decal displayed at all main entrances of our three sites.
- We've engaged the services of a number of Aboriginal suppliers to partner with us and support the delivery of key projects and initiatives.





## Developing our plan

Our Aboriginal Employment Plan was developed through a robust consultation process with Aboriginal staff, as well as clinical and non-clinical staff across our health service.

### Through this process we:

- Identified initiatives through discussions and engagement with internal and external stakeholders
- Facilitated a number of consultation sessions with key stakeholders across the organisation to seek feedback on proposed focus areas and initiatives
- Conducted a separate consultation session with our Aboriginal staff network
- Engaged Mirriyu Cultural Consulting, an Aboriginal owned and operated business, to provide support and guidance throughout the development of this plan.

## Governance of our plan

People & Culture has ownership of our Aboriginal Employment Plan and our Chief People & Culture Officer is the Executive Sponsor.

The Executive Sponsor will establish an Aboriginal Employment Working Group with representation from across our workforce who will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the plan. The Working Group will report to the People & Culture Committee on a regular basis and determine the resources needed to implement and monitor the plan.





## **Aliya Chalmers**

### **Intern, Barring Djinang Internship Program**

Aliya is a proud Aboriginal woman who is currently in her thesis honours year of psychology at The University of Melbourne.

"I hope to one day become a clinician (clinical psychologist) and help grow the number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander psychologists in Australia," she says.

"I've grown up on Ngunnawal land (Canberra), and have been living and studying on Wurundjeri land for four years. As well as a university student, I've been a dancer since I was six years old. Prior to studying psychology, I was dancing full time on Darkinjung land (Gosford, NSW) at NAISDA in ballet, contemporary and cultural dance. Before my honours year, I completed a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Psychology and Indigenous Studies in 2019," she explains.

Aliya participated in the Barring Djinang Internship Program at Austin Health over two consecutive summer rotations.

"My internship was such an incredible opportunity to see how diverse different areas and aspects of psychology can be. I'm so grateful for the clinical experience I was exposed to because it will help give me a great advantage when it comes to applying for postgraduate masters. Participating in this program has given me exposure to many opportunities becoming a clinical psychologist (within the public system) can offer. I was very grateful for the efforts Austin Health put into making my internship experience unique to my career goals," she says.

**“Participating in this program has given me exposure to many opportunities.”**











## Lyle Hodgson

### Team Leader, IT Service Owner Group

Lyle was born and raised on Kamilaroi country (Central West NSW). "I grew up in a small farming community called Coonamble and resided there my entire childhood until I moved to Bathurst where I attended university to study Computer Science. I was always interested in computers from a young age so naturally I made a career out of it. I started working in a small IT shop back home in Coonamble, then moved to Melbourne in search of bigger things," he explains.

Lyle joined Austin Health in 2014 while he was completing a Certificate in Information Technology. "I remember leaving the interview thinking this would be a great place to work. It felt more like a chat than a formal interview. Once I started, I really enjoyed the people I worked with. My colleagues were supportive and helped me learn the role with ease," he explains.

While working at Austin Health Lyle has developed an interest in management and leadership and has pushed himself to gain further skills and experience in this area. "I'm now in a Team Leader position for the Service Owner Group within IT. I really enjoy fostering a good work atmosphere

and developing my team members in their chosen disciplines."

The main thing that keeps me coming to work every day is the people. I'm surrounded by passionate people who have a great vision of where our IT systems need to be. It amazes me every day what my colleagues are able to achieve."

"It's also great to see the organisation taking steps towards fostering a culturally safe workplace. It's all the small things like reaching out to the right people on cultural matters, having a mandatory Aboriginal cultural awareness training for all staff to be able to understand our history and culture, and allowing us to take leave to attend cultural events during NAIDOC week," he says.

Lyle's advice for anyone looking to join Austin Health. "It's a fantastic place to work. It's challenging at times but if you don't mind a bit of hard work it's extremely rewarding. My advice would be to jump in, work hard and don't be afraid to put your ideas forward."

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# Our focus areas

**Our Aboriginal Employment Plan will focus on four opportunities:**

## Attract

Attract Aboriginal candidates to Austin Health

Review our recruitment and selection framework from a Aboriginal employment perspective

Develop a suite of support resources for Aboriginal candidates (for example templates for cover letters on how to address selection criteria, resumes, expression of interest forms)

Build relationships with Aboriginal candidates who apply for roles and establish a "talent" database of potential candidates

Establish relationships with hiring managers who are committed to employing Aboriginal staff and managers who see a high volume of Aboriginal patients

Build our understanding of the types of roles at Austin Health that could be targets for Aboriginal employment

Commence targeted advertising opportunities via Aboriginal newspapers and job boards as well as social media campaigns

Drive our attraction strategy through staff profiles and storytelling

Update our careers page on the website to better articulate our employee value proposition and attract Aboriginal candidates to Austin Health

Obtain commitment from senior leaders to establish new internships, cadetships and graduate positions

Improve our recruitment data to better understand our Aboriginal applicants and enable us to better target our attraction strategies



## Retain and develop

Retain and develop our Aboriginal staff to achieve their potential and succeed in their chosen careers

Establish a buddy and/or mentoring program for Aboriginal staff from the commencement of their employment

Grow and develop our community of practice for Aboriginal staff

Connect new employees with our Aboriginal Employment Coordinator from the commencement of their employment

Provide funding/scholarship opportunities for Aboriginal staff to undertake further qualifications

Support Aboriginal staff with a career development plan

Provide opportunities for Aboriginal staff with leadership aspirations to participate in our leadership development programs

Establish flexible work arrangements to support Aboriginal staff to manage their family, cultural and community obligations

Provide opportunities for Aboriginal staff to be represented on working groups and steering committees

Offer exit interviews (conducted by our Aboriginal Employment Coordinator) for Aboriginal staff to identify challenges and opportunities

Celebrate the career milestones and successes of our Aboriginal staff

## Cultural safety

Continue creating a culturally safe place for our Aboriginal staff, patients and their families

Ensure all staff complete the online Aboriginal Cultural Awareness training every two years

Appoint “reconciliation” champions across wards and departments to support cultural safety

Update our intranet with cultural safety resources for managers and staff

Provide a suite of face to face cultural safety training and awareness options for staff

Explore the opportunity to establish a “culturally aware” Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for Aboriginal staff

Improve messaging and commitments around cultural safety as part of our induction process and manager induction program

Create a safe environment for existing Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff who have not yet identified, to be able to do so





## Develop relationships

Build trusted and respected relationships with external community stakeholders to support us in attracting, retaining and developing Aboriginal staff

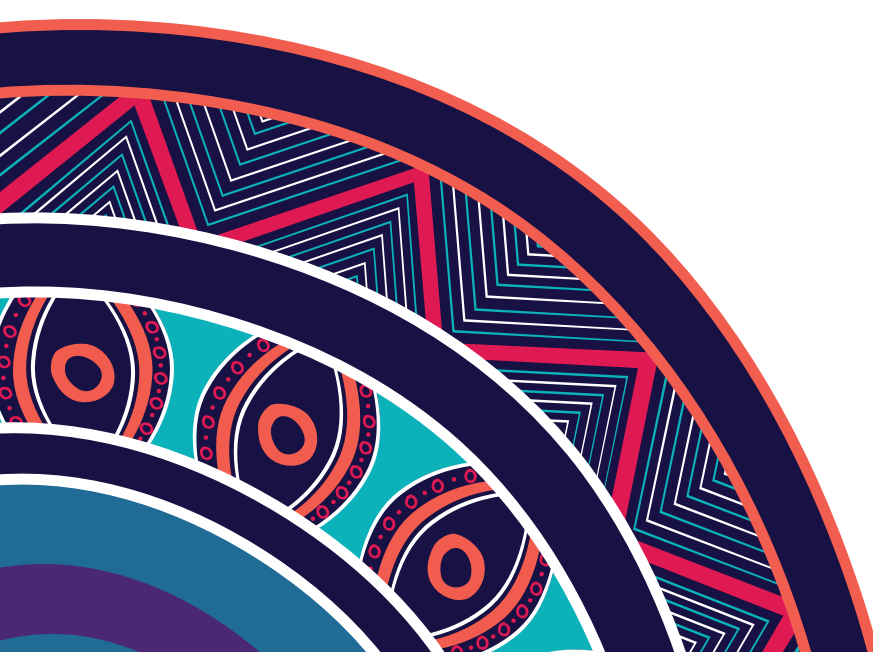
Identify and participate in networking opportunities across other health services and community organisations.

Build relationships with employment pathway providers, community services and training providers (including Career Trackers, VPSC, Banyule Council, WISE employment, Northern Indigenous Employment network)

Work closely with schools, universities and TAFEs to better attract candidates to Austin Health

Leverage opportunities to build relationships with Aboriginal Employment Officers across a variety of sectors

Work closely with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and build mutually trusted relationships











**Latoya Floyd**  
Registered Nurse

Latoya grew up in Perth before moving to Melbourne in 2014. "Unfortunately, I don't have much knowledge of my Indigenous background due to my mother being part of the Stolen Generations. I pride myself on trying to gain more of an understanding and have a presence within my Indigenous community. Through searching, I now know that my country is within the Noongar Nation in southwest WA," she explains.

Latoya joined Austin Health as part of the Graduate Nursing Program in 2018. Following the successful completion of this program, she is now a Registered Nurse in our Emergency Department. "Austin is an extremely supportive and culturally safe workplace. The people are what make me

keep coming back to work every day. Everyone is treated equally no matter what background you come from," she says.

"Austin Health has also given me the opportunity to further my education in emergency nursing, allowing me to look after more complex patients and be a supportive senior staff member to our new or more junior nurses. My advice to anyone wanting to work at Austin Health is 'go for it, you won't regret it!' I've been nursing for about 8 years in different departments and other hospitals, and I can honestly say with confidence that Austin Health is the best hospital I've worked at. I'm so grateful to work here and for the support provided in my career development," she says.

“My advice to anyone wanting to work at Austin Health is ‘go for it, you won’t regret it!’”





**Austin Hospital  
Olivia Newton-John Cancer Wellness  
and Research Centre**  
Wurundjeri Country  
145 Studley Rd  
Heidelberg VIC 3084  
P. 03 9496 5000  
F. 03 9458 4779

**Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital**  
Wurundjeri Country  
300 Waterdale Road  
Ivanhoe Victoria 3079  
P. 03 9496 5000  
F. 03 9496 2541

**Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre**  
Wurundjeri Country  
1 Yarra Boulevard  
Kew Victoria 3101  
P. 03 9490 7500  
F. 03 9490 7501

Austin Health acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of land and pays its respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

We celebrate, value and include people of all backgrounds, genders, sexualities, cultures, bodies and abilities.

**[austin.org.au](https://austin.org.au)**

