

HSS Aboriginal Workforce Action Plan

2023 - 2026

"The power of a job can be transformational through the provision of not only greater financial independence, but also skills and training that can open up future opportunities."
Closing the Gap, 2018

Workforce & Organisational Development

July 2023

Our vision: Great services, valued partner, healthy Western Australians

Document control and approval

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Acknowledgement of Country

Health Support Services acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to the land, waters, and community. We pay our respects to all members of Aboriginal communities and their cultures and acknowledge the wisdom of Elders both past and present.

Use of the Term – Aboriginal

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander may be referred to in the national context and 'Indigenous' may be referred to in the international context. Within Western Australia, the term Aboriginal is used in preference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, in recognition that Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of Western Australia. No disrespect is intended to our Torres Strait Islander colleagues and community.

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1. Introduction

Health Support Services (HSS) acknowledges the Aboriginal people as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which we work. This document outlines HSS' actions 2023-2026 to increase Aboriginal participation in the workforce to meet our target of 3.2% by 2026. This Action Plan is embedded in our HSS Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, which forms part of the HSS Strategic Plan.

Background and Context

The WA Health Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Framework notes the impact that employment has on the health equity of Aboriginal people and identified "building a strong, skilled, and growing Aboriginal Health workforce" at all levels as a strategic priority area for improving the wellbeing of Aboriginal people in WA. Increasing Aboriginal participation in the workforce is equally a priority for HSS, since having a diverse workforce that is representative of the community will support a customer centric culture at HSS.

The HSS Diversity and Inclusion strategy 2019-2022 prioritised increasing the number of Aboriginal employees to meet the WA Health's target of 3.2% Aboriginal representation in all public sector agencies by 2026.

After this initial work, HSS' is committed to focus on increasing our aboriginal workforce through development of the inaugural Aboriginal Workforce Action Plan 2019-2021. This plan outlined priority activities for increasing recruitment and retention of Aboriginal employees and for facilitating successful implementation of Section 51 at HSS. This initial plan was then extended to 2022.

Research and Consultation

Development of the inaugural 2019-2022 plan was informed by evidence-based best practice for improving Aboriginal recruitment and retention, and Aboriginal workforce plans from other Public Sector agencies and health organisations. In addition, consultation, and engagement with the following external and internal partners:

- DOH Aboriginal Health Policy Directorate and respective policies, strategies, and plans:
 - WA Health Aboriginal Workforce Policy
 - WA Health Aboriginal Workforce Strategy 2014-2024
 - WA Health Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Framework 2015-2030
- East Metropolitan Health Service
- Northbridge Jobs & Skills Centre
- HSS HR and Capability
- HSS Employee Services

This updated plan builds upon the foundations laid down by the former HSS Aboriginal Workforce Aboriginal Action Plan 2019 – 2022. Consultation of this current plan has also been conducted internally.

2. Previous Achievements

Since the launch of HSS's Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2019-2022 and our inaugural Aboriginal Workforce Action Plan, we have been on a journey to raise cultural awareness of the Aboriginal people's history and build a culturally and psychologically safe workplace.

A summary of the achievements from our first Aboriginal Workforce Action Plan 2019-2022 are outlined under their respective themes below.

Theme 1: Aboriginal Cultural Awareness and Organisational Readiness

To ensure HSS is a culturally safe and supportive place for Aboriginal employees to work, we have been proactive in increasing cultural awareness and understanding of our Aboriginal heritage. This has been completed through the development and integration of Aboriginal art, stories, and language at our locations and in our day-to-day work.

Walking Together as One Artwork

In 2020, HSS commissioned an art piece, drawn by Aboriginal artist Jade Dolman titled 'Walking Together as One'. It was a collaboratively designed piece, with more than 130 employees contributing to the 3-meter canvas. Once complete it was divided into three pieces so each could be hung at our main sites. Creating this artwork was a foundational and important step in becoming a more culturally inclusive organisation and is a symbol of HSS' journey towards reconciliation and acknowledging and celebrating our Aboriginal people. The artwork also forms the backdrop of our Acknowledgement of Country which is undertaken at the beginning of all key events and meetings at HSS.

Corporate Branding

Following the development of our Walking Together as One artwork, HSS worked in partnership with an Aboriginal graphic design consultancy 'Nani Studios', to integrate this into our corporate branding and attire. This refreshed brand identity has been developed to ensure we retain the artistic expression, meaning and cultural integrity of the artwork. This also demonstrates to our customers that we are building our knowledge of Aboriginal culture, that we value their history, and we want to keep their stories alive in our workplace.

Renaming Site Locations

In 2021, HSS officially renamed four locations and installed window decal artwork as part of our commitment to creating an inclusive and culturally safe workplace for Aboriginal employees. The Noongar site names were researched and selected by Whadjuk Noongar traditional owner, Professor Len Collard from Moodjar Consultancy and were chosen for their connection to our Walking Together as One Aboriginal artwork.

- Kura (yesterday) for the staff common area on level 11 at 81 St. Georges Terrace
- Yeye (today) for meeting room 16-15 at 140 William Street,

- Boorda (tomorrow – the future) and Jin da Koort (a lovely place to walk) mark the entrances of the State Distribution Centre and Jandakot Distribution warehouses.

A QR code is available at each location for employees to learn from Professor Collard about the renaming and why it's important to acknowledge the traditional name of a place.

The HSS Hub on Level 3 at 81 St. Georges Terrace was also renamed as part of this initiative. Manjaree is interpreted as 'an inhabitant of this place, or location' and reflects that the Hub is a meeting place for coming together, sharing and celebration. It is also a place where constructive and sometimes difficult conversations are held. This reflects the conversations we need to have to implement change.

Awareness and Events

HSS has embedded a culture of respect and acknowledgement regarding dates of cultural significance for our Aboriginal people. These have included Global messages from our Chief Executive about Sorry Day, Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week. Where possible, HSS has engaged Aboriginal elders to lead local events across our sites for Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week, helping connect our employees with the theme and meaning for Aboriginal people.

In 2022, our communications team initiated a campaign to build awareness and understanding of the Noongar seasons. This innovative project, led by one of HSS' Aboriginal cadets captures the introduction of the new season, changes in the environment and why it is significant to Aboriginal people. Accompanying this, has been a well-received photo competition to capture the essence of each Noongar season. These initiatives have significantly helped build our workforce understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal culture, stories, and history.

Early in 2023 we updated our "Acknowledgement of Country" guide, which is now incorporated in our core business protocols. This document provides a deeper understanding of when and how to use an Acknowledgement of Country to show respect and awareness to our first nations people and traditional owners of the land on which we live and work.

Theme 2: Attraction and Recruitment

HSS extended the application of its corporate branding to our online and social media footprint, in all job advertisements and job description formats. This has further strengthened the messaging about the value and importance we place on our shared Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Application of Equal Opportunity Act (the Act) - Section 51 and 50D

Section 51 of the Act has been applied to all Tier 6 frontline roles at HSS. In addition, hiring managers can apply Section 51 of the Act to vacancies to roles higher than Tier 6, at the time of advertising.

In 2020-2021, 127 vacancies were advertised with Section 51 of the Act. Two Aboriginal employees were appointed from this process. In 2021-22, 120 vacancies were advertised with Section 51 of the Act and one Aboriginal employee was appointed from this process. One Section 50D vacancy was recruited for, and a successful candidate also appointed.

Aboriginal Cadetship Program

HSS has continued to be an active partner with the Department of Health to embed the Aboriginal Cadetship Program as a pathway into employment. The Aboriginal Cadetship program provides a well-structured development plan for undergraduates to gain valuable workplace experience at HSS (relating to their field of study) and paid employment to minimise the financial impact and facilitate ongoing studies.

Historically, HSS has funded two cadets per year (at 0.2FTE per cadet). Cadets have been placed in business areas relevant to their course of study, including Finance and Operations, the Office of Chief Executive, Procurement and Supply, ICT Program Delivery and Nurse West.

With increased internal funding made available in 2021, this increased the number of funded Aboriginal cadets to four. As at end 2022, HSS had three active cadets in the program, after one successfully completed the cadetship and transitioned into a Graduate Program at Perth Children's Hospital.

Theme 3: Growth, Development and Retention

To support our Aboriginal workforce to develop and remain with HSS, we have increased funding for additional cadet positions in 2021, 2022 and 2023 budget cycle which enabled our cadets to complete a second and third year of the program. Having cadets remain with HSS until they graduate, builds their capability and confidence, and enables us to explore retention strategies to keep them employed at HSS.

In addition, we supported Aboriginal employees to apply to participate in the Institute for Health Leadership 'First Step Aboriginal Leadership Program'. Due to number restrictions only one employee was chosen from HSS, though we continue to identify Aboriginal specific leadership development opportunities for all our employees.

3. Plan Overview

The actions within this plan flow and progress us on our journey from the previous Aboriginal Workforce Action Plan 2019-2022. The three priority themes have been retained and are:

- **Aboriginal Cultural competency and organisational readiness**
Objective: To visibly demonstrate respect and support for Aboriginal people and to ensure that HSS is a culturally safe and inviting place for Aboriginal employees to work
- **Attraction and recruitment**
Objective: To increase the attraction and successful recruitment of prospective Aboriginal employees and to achieve the target 3.2% Aboriginal employees by June 2026.
- **Growth, development, and retention**
Objective: To establish and improve access to career and development opportunities for Aboriginal employees at all levels.

Targets and Measurements

4.1 Current Aboriginal Workforce and Target for 2026

As at end May 2023, HSS had 10 staff members who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (Aboriginal). This represents 0.7% of HSS's total workforce. At the current headcount of 1514, HSS would need another 38 Aboriginal employees to meet the Public Sector target of 3.2% by 2026. The workforce percentage and respective target rates are indicated in Table 1 are as at June each year.

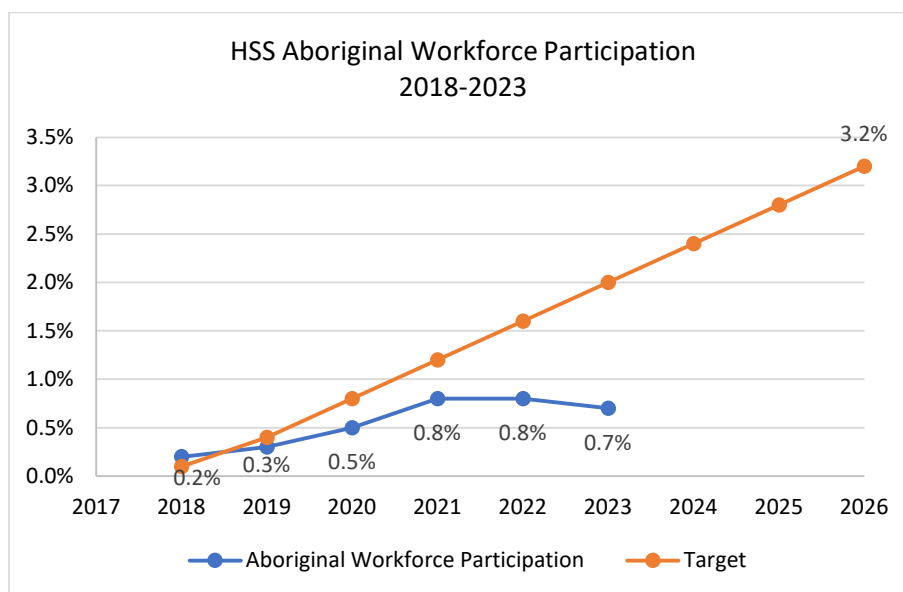


Table 1: HSS Aboriginal Workforce Participation

4.2 Measures

The following data will be tracked to monitor progress towards quarterly targets. It will also inform progress on the actions in this plan to enable ongoing updates to proposed actions to be identified.

- Creation and tracking of a register of Aboriginal applicants applying to roles at HSS.
- Number Aboriginal Cadets and Graduates part of a formal program.
- Number of Aboriginal employees in the current workforce at any given time.
- Aboriginal Cultural e-Learning and face to face Cultural Awareness Training completion rates among HSS staff.
- Register of Aboriginal employees participating in learning and development programs.
- New starter feedback from Aboriginal starters.
- Exit feedback from Aboriginal employees who leave HSS.

Theme 1: Aboriginal Cultural Awareness and Organisational Readiness

“A workforce that is culturally relevant and responsive to Aboriginal perspectives will create an environment where Aboriginal staff choose to stay and further their careers.” - WA Health Aboriginal Workforce Strategy 2014-2024

Objective: To visibly demonstrate respect and support for Aboriginal people and to ensure that HSS is a culturally safe and inviting place for Aboriginal employees to work

	Action	Measure	Led by	By when
1.0	Establish a culturally safe workplace and support for Aboriginal employees			
1.1.1	Conduct an informal “cultural safety” audit of HSS. (NB: Northbridge Jobs and Skills Centre Audit May 2019 score was 10/31)	Safety audit tool identified Completed safety audit	Snr Engagement Consultant – Aboriginal Workforce	Jun 24
1.1.2	Support HRBP’s with understanding elements of culture and how it links with our human resource management and public sector obligations and standards. Generate actions based on discussions.	Initial Meeting Conducted	HR Manager & Snr Engagement Consultant – Aboriginal Workforce	Aug 23
1.1.3	Review policies of personal, carer’s, bereavement, cultural and unpaid leave to ensure where necessary that policies are appropriately culturally responsive (i.e., Definitions of ‘family’ and the definition of cultural leave is clearly defined and included)	List of policies to be reviewed identified Policies reviewed and amended if required	HR Manager & Snr Engagement Consultant – Aboriginal Workforce	Dec 23
1.2	Develop a culturally responsive and respectful workforce			
1.2.1	Ensure all HSS employees complete the DOH Aboriginal Cultural eLearning training	ACEL completion rates monitored	Line Manager	Ongoing
1.2.2	Conduct a pilot Aboriginal Cultural Competency training workshop for leaders	Training delivered	Learning, Culture and Development Consultant	June 24

	Action	Measure	Led by	By when
1.2.3	Continue to encourage and support HSS employees to take part in significant events such as Run for Reconciliation and Sorry Day volunteering	Events attended and supported	Line Managers	Ongoing
1.3	Maintaining branding and visible promotion of Aboriginal culture at HSS			
1.3.1	Continue to celebrate NAIDOC week and promote significant days through Yarning articles.	NAIDOC events & Number of articles	Learning, Culture and Development Consultant	Ongoing – Every July
1.3.2	Develop relationships and engage with local Aboriginal contacts to consult on cultural events.	Register of contacts created Consultation completed	Learning, Culture & Development Consultant Snr Engagement Consultant – Aboriginal Workforce	Ongoing
1.3.3	Continue to ensure that HSS branding and promotional material includes appropriate branding that incorporates Aboriginal themes.	List of materials developed	Communications	Ongoing
1.3.4	Ensure that is an assessment of culturally appropriate factors applied to any accommodation changes or facility upgrades.	Aboriginal Reference Group engaged for input	Facilities Management Snr Engagement Consultant – Aboriginal Workforce	Ongoing
1.3.5	Create a statement to be read at all interviews, that highlights HSS inclusion and diversity culture, welcomes potential candidates and explains the interview process.	Developed and communicated to all employees.	Snr Engagement Consultant – Aboriginal Workforce Manager, Human Resources	Dec 23
1.3.6	Include Aboriginal welcome and information on our artwork, in the Welcome to HSS induction sessions and the New Starter Handbook.	Developed and communicated	Snr Engagement Consultant – Aboriginal Workforce	Sep 23

Theme 2: Attraction and Recruitment

“Evidence suggests... non-standard recruitment strategies to increase the likelihood of Indigenous people who would be screened out from conventional selection processes having the opportunity to win jobs” – Closing the Gap, 2012

Objective: To increase the attraction and successful recruitment of prospective Aboriginal employees and to achieve the target of 3.2% Aboriginal employees by June 2026.

	Action	Measure	Led by	By when
2.1	Data and reporting			
2.1.1	Collect and report data on the current Aboriginal workforce	People Dashboard	Snr Engagement Consultant – Aboriginal Workforce	Quarterly
2.2	Identify and remove barriers for Aboriginal applicants			
2.2.1	Identify barriers to Aboriginal recruitment and participation and potential actions to remove or eliminate them	Review conducted Barriers identified and action plan developed	Snr Engagement Consultant – Aboriginal Workforce	Sept 23
2.2.2	Complete review of internal hiring processes and ensure they are culturally responsive.	Review conducted	Snr Engagement Consultant – Aboriginal Workforce	Jan 24
2.2.3	Create a register of Aboriginal employees who want to sit on selection panels and provide appropriate recruitment and selection training and an understanding of S 51 selection processes.	Emails sent out half yearly and training provided	Snr Engagement Consultant – Aboriginal Workforce & HR Business Partner	Every 6 months
2.2.4	Include Aboriginal panel members on selection panels for roles advertised as Sections 51 and 50D, where operationally appropriate	Trained panel members identified and invited	HR Business Partner, Line Managers	As required

	Action	Measure	Led by	By when
2.2.5	Review and explore the ability to revise the language used in job advertisements (prioritise pool recruitment)	Appropriately worded job advertisements	Snr Engagement Consultant – Aboriginal Workforce & HR Business Partner	Mar 24 - Jun 24
2.3	Increase representation through use of special provisions within the <i>Equal Opportunity Act 1984</i>			
2.3.1	Provide training for hiring managers and recruitment staff on using Section 51 of the <i>Equal Opportunity Act 1984</i> .	Training delivered	HR Business Partner & Snr Aboriginal Engagement Consultant	Mar 24
2.3.2	Maintain application of EEO Section 51 to all pool recruitment.	s51 applied	Line Managers	Ongoing
2.3.3	Identify roles within in all Business Units across the organisation to increase the number of positions that section 51 is applied too.	s51 applied to jobs across HSS Tiers Utilisation of s51 across job roles and tiers tracked	Snr Engagement Consultant – Aboriginal Workforce & HR Business Partners	Sept 23
2.3.4	Quarantine or add positions to pool recruitment for Section 51 applicants	Minimum one position per pool quarantined	Line Manager & HR Business Partner, Snr Engagement Consultant – Aboriginal Workforce	Dec 23
2.3.5	Ensure direct contact with all Section 51 applicants and provide support throughout hiring process	All s51 applicants contacted	Senior Engagement Consultant – Aboriginal Workforce	Aug 23
2.3.6	Ensure thorough induction for all new Aboriginal employees.	Feedback obtained	Snr Engagement Consultant – Aboriginal Workforce & Line Manager	Mar 24

	Action	Measure	Led by	By when
2.4	Improve visibility and access to employment opportunities for Aboriginal people			
2.4.1	Partner with Aboriginal agency employment services, universities, and Jobs & Skills Centres to conduct targeted recruitment to identify Aboriginal candidates, match to available vacancies, track their application and progression to employment within HSS	Partnerships established, Tracking of applicants	Snr Engagement Consultant – Aboriginal Workforce	Sept 23
2.4.2	Identify roles within HSS Business Units for targeted Aboriginal recruitment.	List of roles	Snr Engagement Consultant – Aboriginal Workforce	Sept 23
2.4.3	Advertise available opportunities on the WA Jobs & Skills Centre Aboriginal Jobs Board and other relevant job boards	Jobs advertised	HR Business Partner, Snr Engagement Consultant - AW	Sept 23
2.4.4	Identify partnership opportunities with Aboriginal agencies that will support training and mentoring of our aboriginal workforce	Develop register of contacts	Snr Engagement Consultant - AW	Mar 23
2.4.5	Develop HSS promotional material to distribute at Expo's, potential partners, workshops, and events.	Materials Developed	Learning, Culture & Development Consultant	Sept 23
2.4.6	Participate in job Expo's with a focus on engaging potential Aboriginal candidates	Stall and representatives	Learning, Culture & Development Consultant	Oct 23 & Feb 24
2.4.7	Develop and maintain an internal register of Aboriginal applicants to enable tracking through HSS internal recruitment processes.	Register Developed and Maintained	Snr Engagement Consultant & HR Business Partners	Sep 23

Theme 3: Growth, Development, and Retention

“Employing more Aboriginal people in the health workforce and supporting them to develop their skills and leadership potential, is an important way of incorporating Aboriginal cultural perspectives into our health services.” - WA Health Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Framework

Objective: To establish and improve access to career and development opportunities for Aboriginal employees at all levels.

	Action	Measure	Led by	By when
3.1	Create career opportunities			
3.1.1	Continue Aboriginal cadetship program through the retention of four Cadet positions.	Funding for 4 Aboriginal cadets quarantined	Snr Engagement Consultant – Aboriginal Workforce	Aug 23
3.1.2	Facilitate a process for Cadets to participate in the DOH Aboriginal Graduate program as a career pathway to permanency by identifying and quarantining 2-3 positions for graduates	Aboriginal graduates appointed to permanent roles	Snr Engagement Consultant – Aboriginal Workforce	Jan 24
3.1.3	Partner with other HSPs to create secondment opportunities within the WA Health System for Aboriginal employees	Secondment opportunities identified and offered	Snr Engagement Consultant – Aboriginal Workforce	Jun 24
3.1.4	Ensure development and upskilling opportunities are provided for Aboriginal employees through their MyPerformance process	Training opportunities identified and promoted	Line Managers, Snr Organisational Development Consultant	Mar 24
3.1.5	Provide opportunities for Public Sector Commission Aboriginal interns	Interns hired	Snr Engagement Consultant – Aboriginal Workforce	As Required
3.2	Provide developmental support and improve the employee experience for Aboriginal employees			
3.2.1	Provide a Peer Supporter for all Aboriginal employees. Start informally and develop into formal mentoring program (see 3.2.3)	Each person can connect to engagement consultant	Snr Engagement Consultant – Aboriginal Workforce	Sept 23

	Action	Measure	Led by	By when
3.2.2	Formalise an HSS Aboriginal Reference Group with developing a Terms of Reference and regular engagement	Aboriginal HSS Reference Group meeting regularly	Snr Engagement Consultant – Aboriginal Workforce	Oct 23
3.2.3	Request informal feedback from Aboriginal cadets and new starters regarding their experience during recruitment and induction	Feedback collected and reported	Snr Engagement Consultant – AW	Ongoing
3.2.4	Establish a formal mentoring program for Aboriginal employees	Mentoring program active	Snr Organisational Development Consultant	Dec 24
3.3.5	Encourage Aboriginal employees who decide to leave HSS to provide feedback and track reasons for leaving, identify themes and action for continuous improvement	Feedback collected and reported	Snr Engagement Consultant – Aboriginal Workforce	Ongoing

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