

Service Provider Special Interest Panel

Session Summary

Background

The Service Provider Special Interest Panel met for its first discussion session on Tuesday 8 November 2022.

Participants represented a diversity of service size and type, with representation from all seven Country WA regions and Perth metro area.

Conversation was predominantly focused on cultural competency in the context of Aboriginal health and needs of Aboriginal people in the community and as employees.

Further conversations to explore the challenges and enablers related to LGBTIQ+ and multicultural competency would be beneficial to expand on the specifics for these communities.

Panel members were invited to contribute their thoughts and insights in response to three questions sent in advance.

Questions posed to the panel

1) In what ways do you already demonstrate and report on the cultural safety and competency of your organisation and services?

Organisations already present a range of evidence to report on their cultural safety/competency, including:

- Progress towards a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)
- Numbers of their workforce who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- Numbers of Elders engaged in governance roles
- Numbers of Aboriginal people accessing their service
- Training and Education provided for staff on Cultural Awareness and Safety
- Numbers of employees completing relevant professional development activities

Question 1 (continued)

In general, panel members felt that:

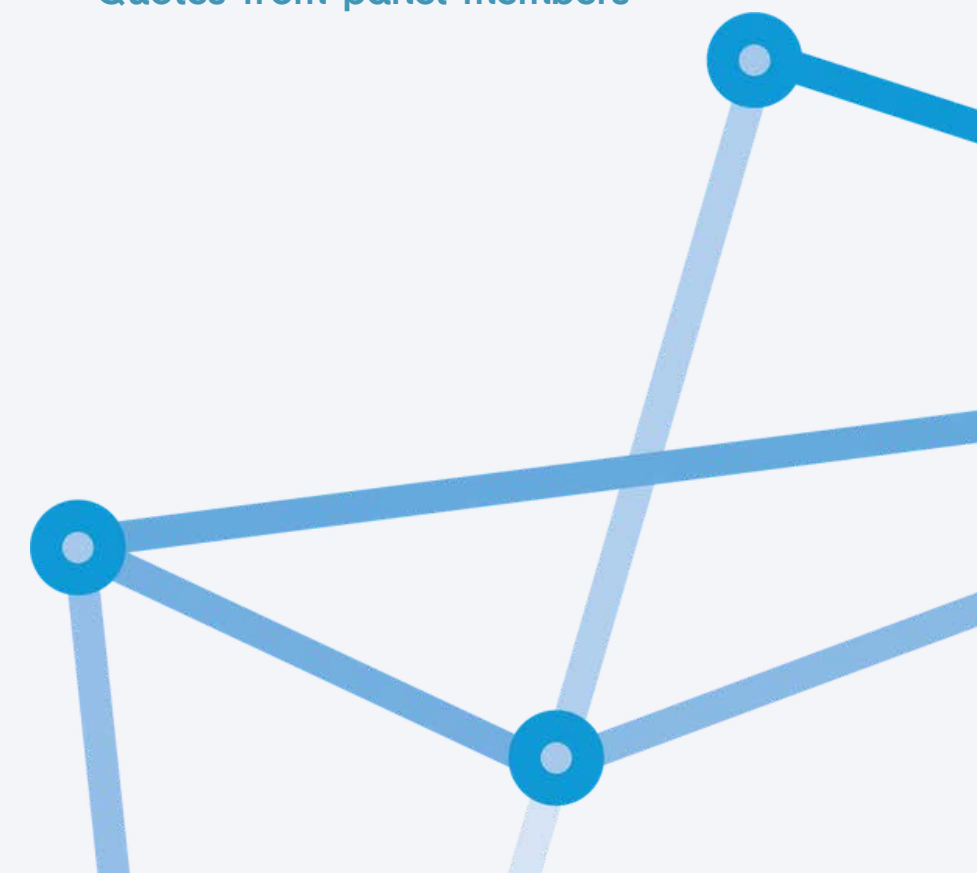
- Stories and the journey to build relationships and achieve outcomes are more meaningful indicators of the cultural practices of an organisation than numbers and tick boxes
- Commitment and progress on a RAP is just one element
- Achievement of accreditation to national standards has been beneficial to progressing practice of organisations, however is still just one element of what makes a difference
- It's critical to recognise the uniqueness of each place when considering what culturally safe means. Practice and community expectations and protocols vary greatly even between the locations in which a single service is delivered.
- The way that cultural competency is reported needs to be flexible enough to reflect the needs of the people and places in which the service is delivered

"What we get asked to report on is not what we would be asked to report on at our AGM"

"Evidence that most funders are looking for is a very wadjela concept, it's a colonial concept, so it's the intangible items that our Elders and community would prefer to see us report"

"it's a long-term relational piece before we start on the transactional"

-Quotes from panel members





2) What are the barriers and enablers to providing a culturally competent service to your service users and communities?

Themes shared among participants included the importance of sharing between organisations and to use what is already available to build cultural competency.

Examples of existing cultural competency resources shared by participants in the session:

- Kimberley Aboriginal Health Forum Cultural Security Framework
- Weavr Indigenous Management System
- Debakarn Koorliny Wangkiny ('Steady Walking and Talking') Approach
- Headspace Cultural Practice and Safety Project
- SNAICC - national voice for our children

Engaging with local Elders is essential, however funders and organisations also need to recognise the capacity of Elders and look for the opportunities to engage and build relationships with emerging Elders and youth in communities.

Leadership positions held by First Nations people in the organisation are critical to the culture of the whole organisation and building strong partnerships with local Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and Elders.

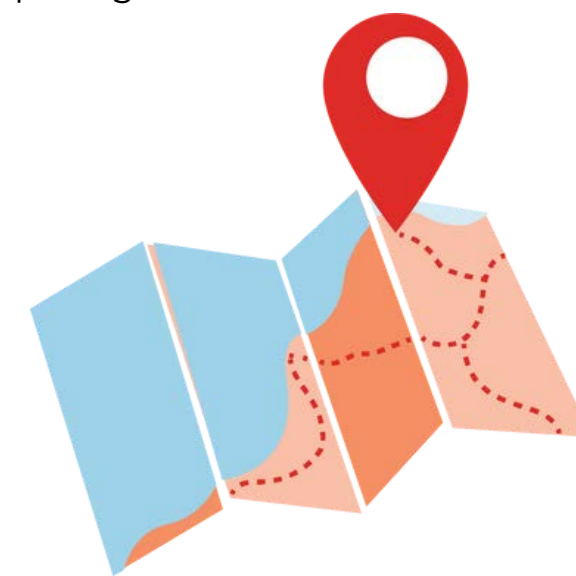
"we have a lot of benefits in linkages and relationships and access to communities that we don't necessarily have a service in"
-Quote from panel member

Working on internal organisation process and policy has been essential to long term cultural competency organisation wide. Examples shared by participants in the session:

- Recognising limitations of standard Employee Assistance Program model of support and offering options of cultural healing
- Including sorry business leave in organisation policies
- Making changes to recruitment practices
- Updating website home pages with an Acknowledgement to Country

3) What is the most useful role WAPHA can take in supporting you to deliver culturally safe services?

- Offer grant funding to lift organisation capability has been helpful in the past, including resourcing the cost of auditing for accreditation standards
- Enable local co-design to inform service model and delivery - recognising this is not always possible in the contracts WAPHA has with Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care
- Recognise the time and resourcing it takes to work in community by giving longer contracts and development lead time
- Facilitate networking for CEOs to build collaboration and collective governance
- Value qualitative indicators and not just quantitative reporting data
- Avoid more reporting when determining how to assess the competency of organisations
- Look for opportunities to work with other commissioners and funders on shared standards and resources
- Consider how underspent funds can be reinvested in activity that builds organisation competency
- Be innovative in the ways competency is assessed and avoid reverting to traditional reporting formats



Overall Themes

Cultural competency is relational and not transactional

Cultural competency is a journey without a start or end - it's about continually learning

It's a combination of factors that influence the cultural competency of an organisation and the services it delivers

Addressing competency in all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, CALD and LGBTIQ+ safety is a challenge - each complex in their own way

WAPHA's focus on cultural competency was generally welcomed along with the opportunity to inform the work through the Panel discussion