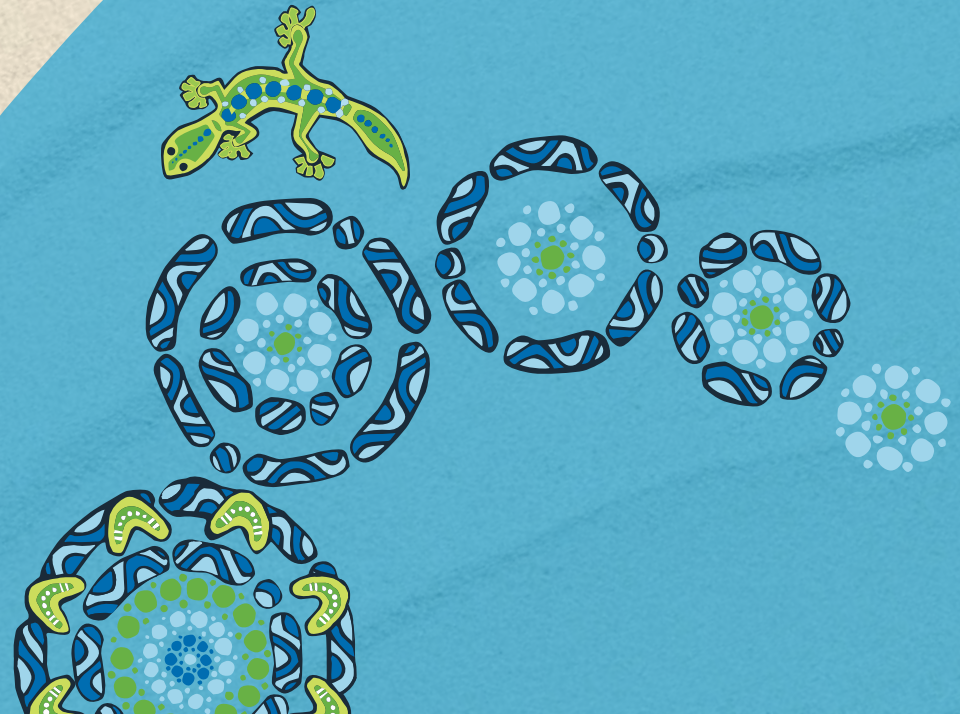
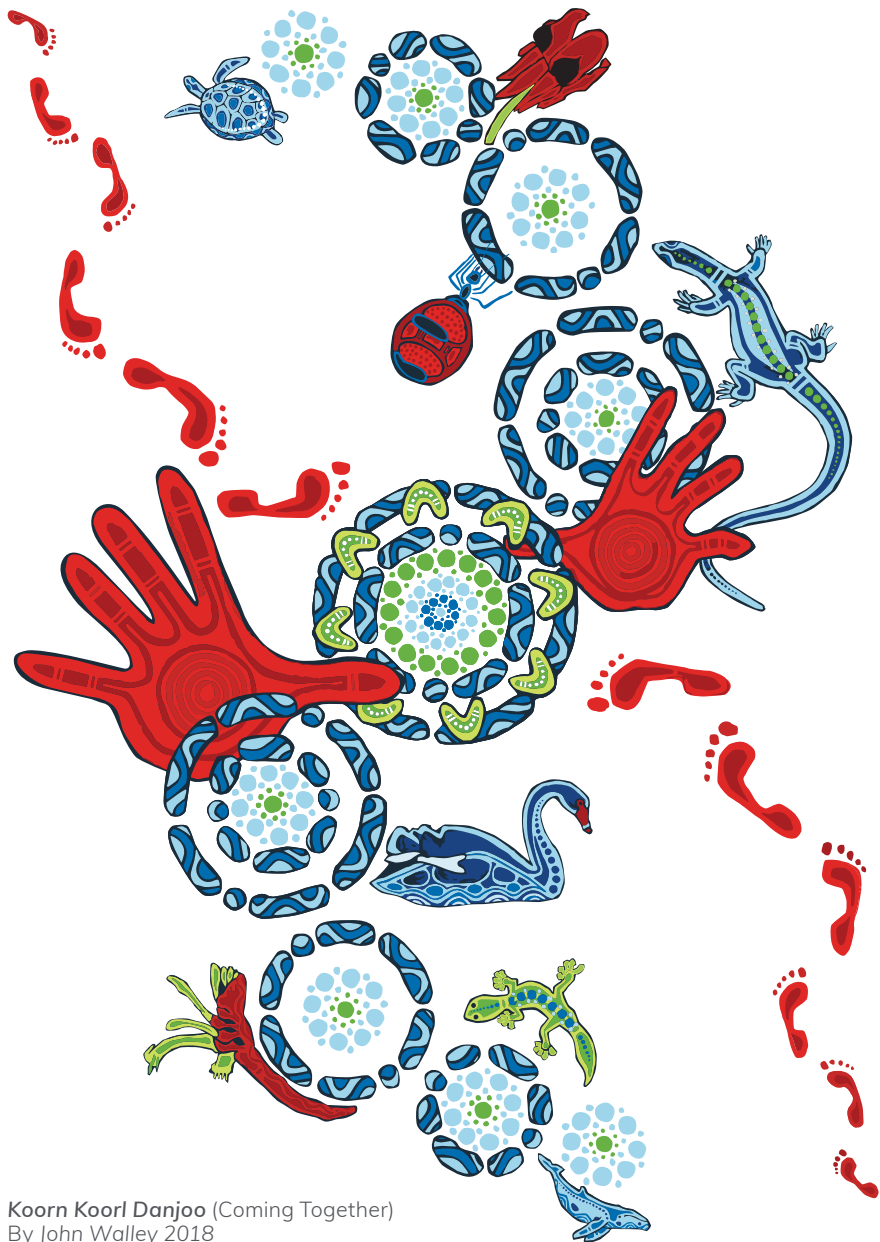


Aboriginal Cultural Competency and Capability Framework



2023 - 2025





Koorn Koorl Danjoo (Coming Together)
By John Walley 2018

Acknowledgement

WA Primary Health Alliance acknowledges and pays respect to the Traditional Owners and Elders of this country. We recognise their diversity and the significant importance of their cultural heritage, values, beliefs and self-determination in contributing to the positive health and wellbeing of the whole community.

Contents



Foreword	4
About WAPHA	5
Aboriginal Cultural Competency and Capability Framework	6
Expected outcomes	7
Strategic approach to cultural competency	8
Quintuple Aim	9
Importance of cultural competency and capability	10
Cultural determinants of health and wellbeing	11
Reconciliation	12
Cultural competency and capability	13
Community feedback	14
Key considerations	15
Vision, Principles and Standards	16
Principles	17
Standards	19
Transitioning to cultural competency	22
Accountability	23
References	24
Implementation Plan	25
References	35

Foreword

We are delighted to present the WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) Aboriginal* Cultural Competency and Capability Framework 2023-2025.

Aboriginal people are the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this country. We all benefit from their rich and diverse culture, and vast knowledge through their custodianship of the land for thousands of years.

We know, however, that for many Aboriginal community members, inequity exists in the health system leading to shorter life expectancy, other adverse health outcomes such as chronic health conditions, and poor access to, and a lack of, culturally appropriate services. This inequity has endured for generations alongside racism and intergenerational trauma.

WAPHA strives to address inequity through commitment to Closing the Gap targets and the Quintuple Aim for Health Care Improvement and recognises that the most effective services are those that people feel safe to use. Safe services are usually developed and implemented in partnership with local Aboriginal health teams and organisations, Elders and communities and are delivered by culturally competent staff members. WAPHA is now on a learning journey towards authentic partnerships with Aboriginal communities and we will use this Framework to hold ourselves accountable to our Board, staff and community members.

The Framework, along with WAPHA's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan and Quality In Practice accreditation, commits WAPHA to a three-year timeframe, working internally, with services WAPHA commissions, and with other primary care services, to support their journeys to developing cultural competency.

It has been developed in collaboration with Kambarang Services and in consultation with community members, WAPHA reference groups, service providers, peak bodies and WAPHA team members.

Dr Richard Choong, Board Chair

Leanne Durrington, Chief Executive Officer

* 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 the State.



About WAPHA

As part of the Australian Government's Primary Health Network (PHN) initiative, WAPHA operates the state's three PHNs – Perth North, Perth South and Country WA. As a state-wide agency, we support a population of over 2.5 million and cover an area of almost 2.5 million square kilometres.

We currently invest about \$170 million a year into the primary health care system in WA, commissioning services and supporting GPs and primary health care workers to improve access to health care for people with an increased susceptibility to adverse health outcomes. This includes Aboriginal, culturally and linguistically diverse communities and LGBTIQ+ communities.

Our investment sits alongside that of state and federal agencies, and our strong partnerships and ability to look system-wide at issues of equity and access mean we can help shape, strengthen and sustain a culturally safe health system for the future.

WAPHA Strategic Plan

Better Health Together, WAPHA's [Strategic Plan 2020–2023](#) outlines WAPHA's vision of a more connected primary health care system, that minimises barriers to access and ensures individuals can access care as close to home as possible.

Our Strategic Priorities

**Empower people
and communities**



**Promote and
prioritise an integrated
health system**



**Commission services
in a planned and
targeted way**



**Continuously improve
primary health
care practice**



Aboriginal Cultural Competency and Capability Framework

The WAPHA Aboriginal Cultural Competency and Capability Framework (the Framework) has been developed to support us on our journey to meet the social, cultural and linguistic needs of the Aboriginal communities that we serve.

The Framework provides a set of key principles for developing cultural competency, and standards with agreed actions to guide the design, development, delivery and evaluation of cultural competency for WAPHA staff, commissioned service providers and primary care services.

The Framework is the result of consultation with Aboriginal people, peak agencies and service providers on how WAPHA and our commissioned primary health care services can become more culturally competent in providing for the diverse needs of Aboriginal people.

Learning journey

WAPHA acknowledges that improving cultural competency is an ongoing journey of listening to and learning from community on how to better engage and commission safe services.

This is a journey WAPHA has already committed to through implementation of our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).



Expected outcomes

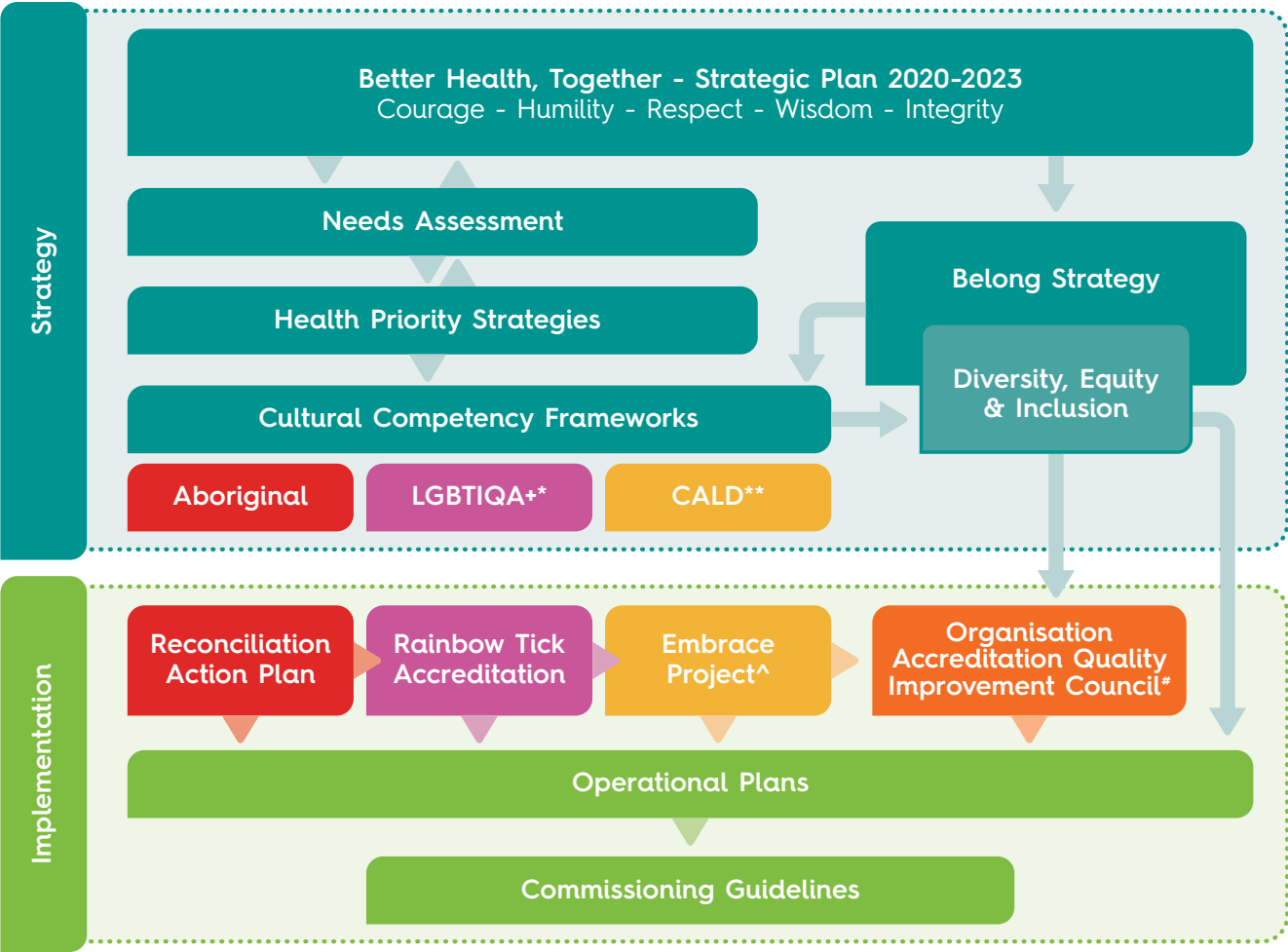
- WAPHA provides culturally safe employment and working conditions for Aboriginal staff members.
- Ongoing development of a culturally competent workforce.
- The services designed, procured and commissioned by WAPHA are culturally competent, accessible and meet the needs of Aboriginal people and communities.
- Principles, standards, performance indicators and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of culturally safe primary health care services (as determined by the service user) are clearly set out and communicated to WAPHA's staff and commissioned service providers.
- There is an established Framework to assist WAPHA in meeting legal, ethical, quality and performance responsibilities for culturally safe programs and services provided by staff, contractors and subcontractors.
- Primary health care providers are supported, through quality improvement initiatives and tailored resources, to deliver culturally safe and appropriate services, with ongoing improvement in patient experience, engagement and health outcomes.

The Framework is supported by:

- WAPHA Innovate RAP 2021-2023
- Commissioning Guidelines for Aboriginal cultural competency, LGBTIQ+ equity and inclusion, and culturally and linguistically diverse cultural competency to provide guidance on WAPHA's expectations in relation to cultural competency, safety, equity and inclusion.
- An online toolkit of collated resources to assist WAPHA staff and primary health care providers to achieve competence and improve safety, equity and inclusion.



Strategic approach to cultural competency



The Framework is one of three cultural competency frameworks focused on priority community groups.

All the frameworks are designed to complement WAPHA's existing strategies and initiatives, build on agreed actions and contribute to the organisation's accreditation requirements.

They sit under the umbrella of the WAPHA Strategic Plan and Belong Strategy's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion pillar and are supported by commissioning guidelines and resource toolkits.

* Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans/transgender, intersex, queer, asexual, aromantic and other sexuality, gender, and bodily diverse people and communities

** Culturally and Linguistically Diverse - Multicultural

^ [Embrace Project: Embrace Multicultural Mental Health](#) (the Embrace Project) is run by Mental Health Australia and provides a national focus on mental health and suicide prevention for people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

Quality Innovation Performance (QIP) Accreditation against the Quality Improvement Council (QIC) Health and Community Service Standards.

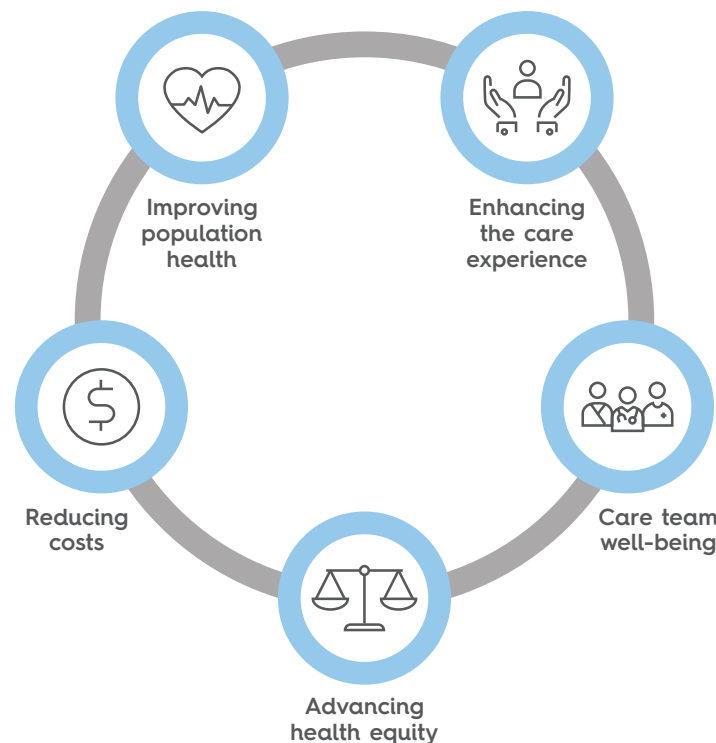
Quintuple Aim

WAPHA, along with many other health care funders, aims to achieve the goals of the Quintuple Aim for Health Care Improvement. This commitment provides a unique opportunity for WAPHA, like-minded health care providers and communities to work together to provide culturally safe services, address equity, improve work experiences and health outcomes at a more sustainable cost.

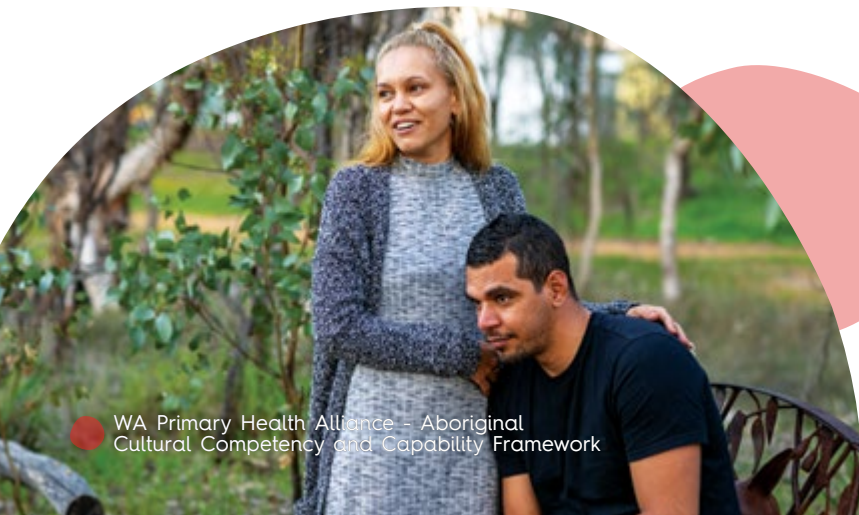
WAPHA has used the Quintuple Aim for Health Care Improvement to guide the development of the Framework's standards, actions and performance indicators.

Evidence suggests that a culturally competent health service can help to improve health outcomes, increase the quality of care, build relationships and cooperation, lead to shared decision making and program development and to reductions in health disparities based on race and ethnicity².

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) (2021) states that a culturally competent health service can also lead to more effective advocacy, engagement and better understanding of health issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities³. It does, however, require more than just a commitment to cultural awareness training with the most effective programs "developed and delivered in partnership with input from local indigenous communities".³



The Quintuple Aim is an extension of the Triple and Quadruple Aim, developed by Institute for Healthcare Improvement¹.



Importance of cultural competency and capability

Aboriginal people are 3.3 per cent of Western Australia's population.⁴ The average life expectancy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women born between 2015-2017 is 71.6 years for men (8.6 years lower than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders) and 75.6 years for women (7.8 years lower than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders)⁵. The differences are even more stark in remote and very remote areas⁶.

Despite National Closing the Gap Commitments, the burden of disease for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is 2.3 times greater than for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities⁷. The 2018-2019 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey showed an increase in the percentage of Aboriginal people with chronic conditions and who were overweight. The survey also indicated that 24 per cent of adult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reported having a mental or behavioural condition, with anxiety and depression being the most common, while the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reporting psychological distress (31 per cent) hasn't decreased since the 2012-2013 survey (30 per cent)⁸.

A range of cultural, social, environmental and physical factors can impact on health outcomes. These factors, including adverse living conditions, low incomes, lack of access to and cost of healthy food, and mistrust due to racism, cultural dislocation, intergenerational trauma and separation from families, are impacting negatively on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities' health and social and emotional wellbeing⁹.

Research reported by the AIHW in 2022 also indicates that disruptions to family and kinship connections, including inter-generational trauma, have been linked to increased suicide and suicidal behaviour in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities (Dudgeon et al. 2021)⁹.

Figure 1 demonstrates that while there has been some progress, not all key health indicators are being addressed effectively for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia. Federal and state governments are reviewing and developing new policies and programs and seeking innovative strategies to contribute to the national effort to close the gap in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life expectancy by 2031.

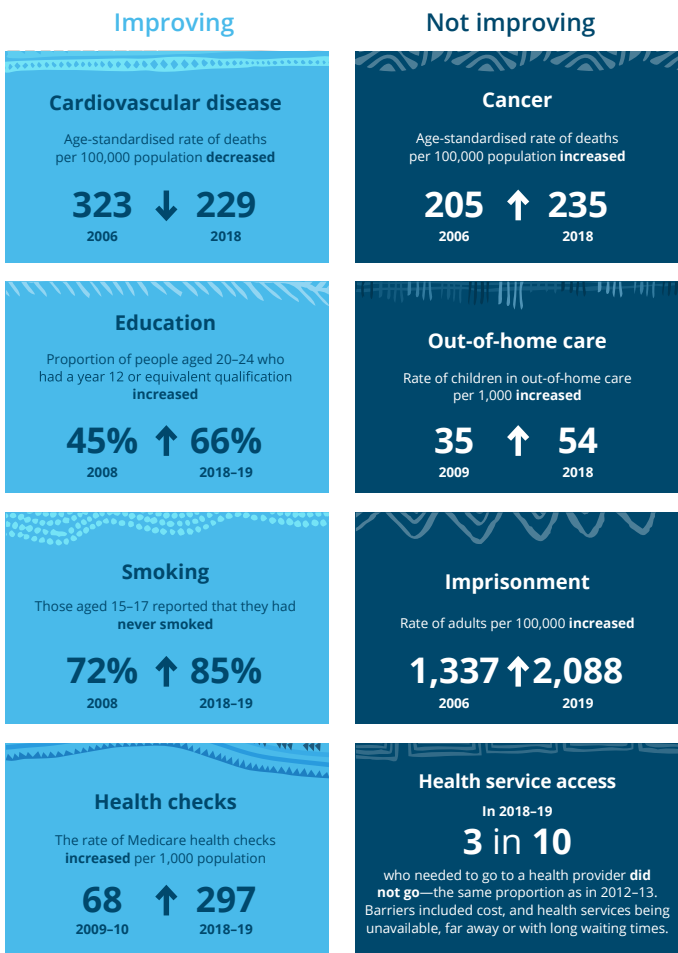


Figure 1: Key Findings of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health 2020¹⁰

Cultural determinants of health and wellbeing

The cultural determinants of health portray Aboriginal communities' holistic understanding of health.

They are described as key to embedding cultural competency strategies within health processes, policies, service design and delivery to increase health outcomes for Aboriginal people, and reports of community members feeling culturally safe when using health services.

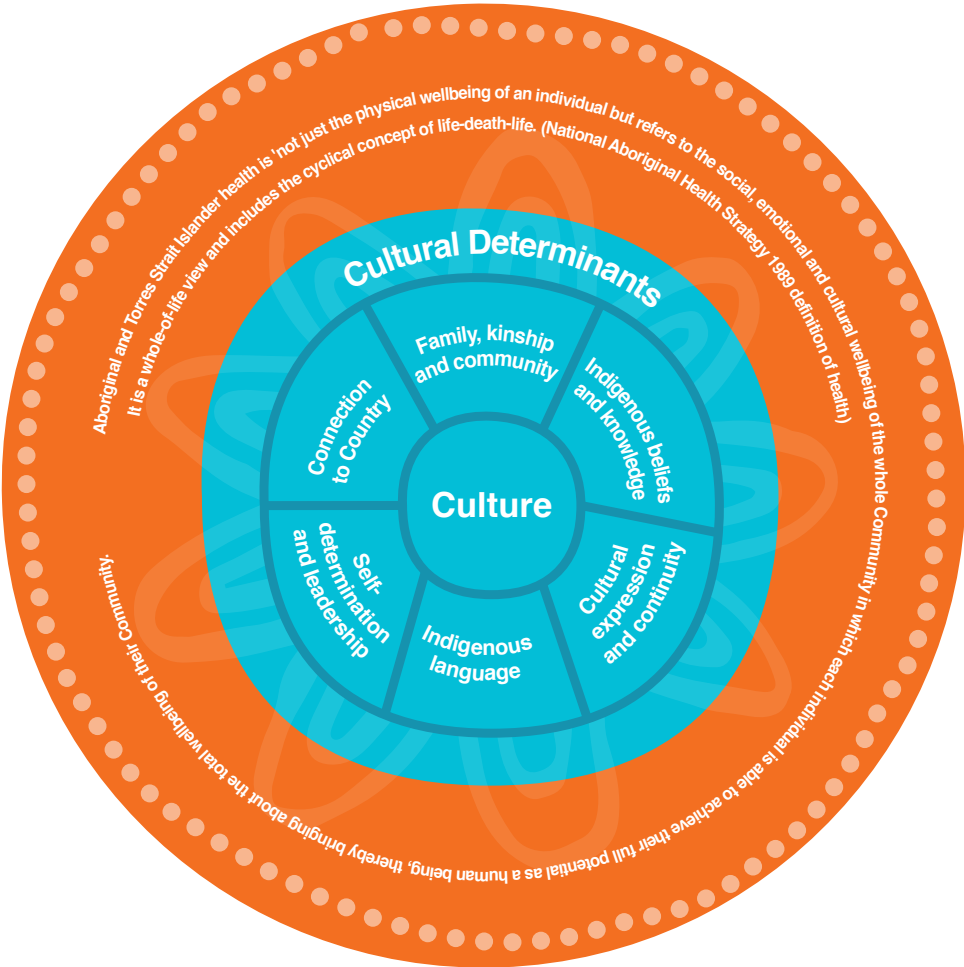
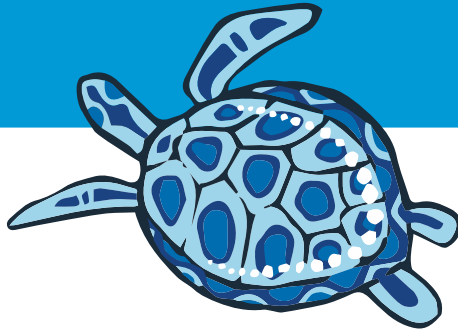


Figure 2: Cultural determinants domains identified by the Mayi Kuwayu study. Adapted from We Nurture Our Culture for Our Future, and Our culture Nurtures Us, Close the Gap Campaign 2020, p.15¹¹

Reconciliation

- Closing the Gap in health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People is a national priority.
- WAPHA is working towards closing that gap and made its first formal commitment in its RAP in 2015.
- The **Innovate RAP 2021-2023** continues this commitment to working together on building respectful relationships and reducing disparity through strengthening connections and increasing focus across the organisation, and with our partners, to improve access to services for Aboriginal people.
- The actions for the Aboriginal cultural competency and capability implementation are aligned with those of the RAP where possible.

The Framework complements WAPHA's Innovate RAP and provides strategic guidance and actions on WAPHA's approach to Aboriginal cultural competency.



Cultural competency and capability

“Cultural capability, just like clinical capability, is an ongoing journey of continuous individual learning and organisational improvement, in order to ensure best practice in health service delivery.”¹⁴

What is cultural safety?

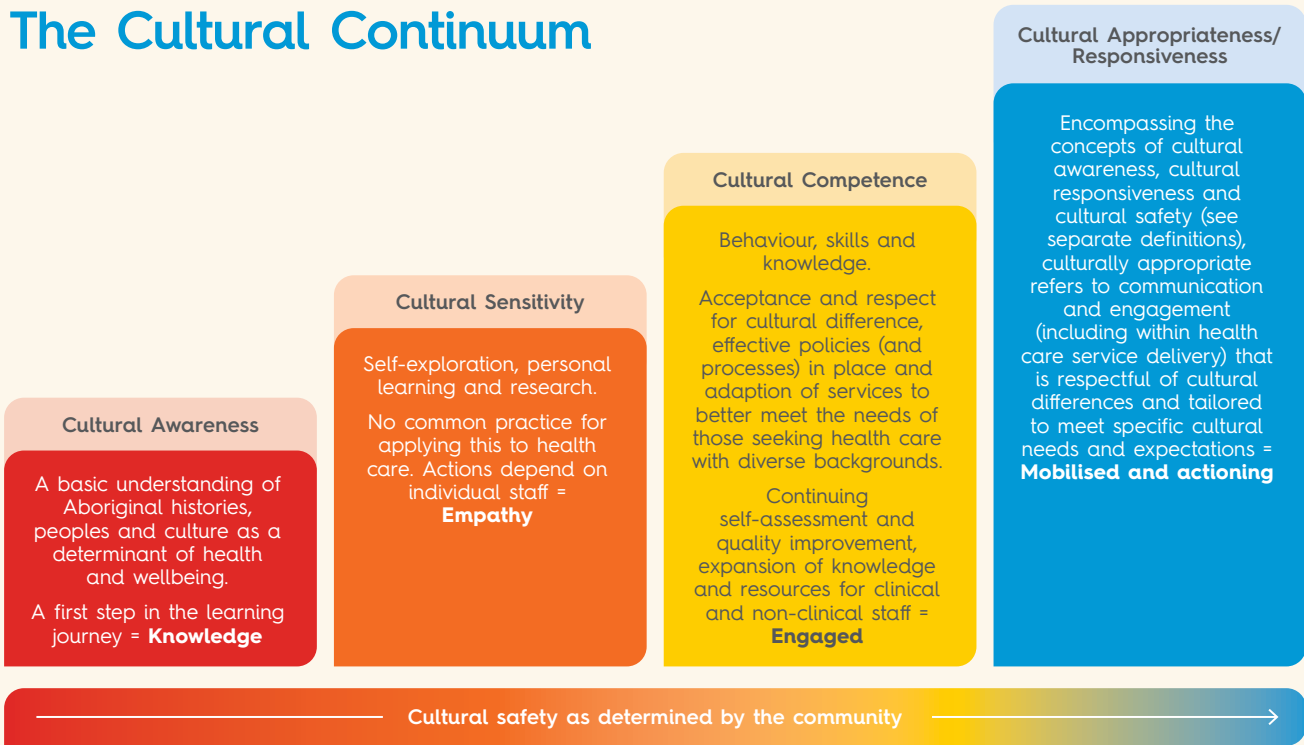
Cultural safety is the “outcome of education that enables safe services to be defined as safe by those who receive the service”. This is contrasted by the concept of unsafe cultural practice, which “is any action which diminishes, demeans or disempowers the cultural identity and wellbeing of an individual”.

Cultural safety is the final phase of the education process where the practitioner or provider looks at themselves, their internal operating systems and their implicit biases.

This is a dynamic and multidimensional process. Cultural safety is based on the experience of the recipient of care and involves the effective care of a person from another culture.

“Cultural safety is determined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, families and communities.”¹³

The Cultural Continuum



Terminology used as the continuum of cultural competency and safety¹².

Community feedback

We engaged Kambarang Services (Aboriginal owned) to consult with community members, commissioned service providers, peak bodies and WAPHA staff members.



120

Aboriginal community members consulted on what makes a service culturally safe for them



4

group sessions held in Perth and the South West, Midwest and Goldfields regions of Western Australia



8

online sessions

What we asked:

- What does a safe service look and feel like?
- What are the barriers?
- What makes a service culturally safe?
- How can WAPHA support services to become more culturally competent and safe for all Aboriginal people?

Consultation feedback identified the following key characteristics for a service to be culturally safe:

- Community guided
- Understanding country and culture
- Holistic and person-centred care
- Respectful communications
- Welcoming environment
- Community representation
- Strong relationships

These characteristics have informed the Framework's Principles and Standards.



Key considerations

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers Association's Cultural Safety Framework (2013)

- Address and eliminate racism
- Balance academic and/or clinical expertise and cultural knowledge
- Universal application and implementation of cultural safety
- Awareness of verbal and non-verbal communication styles
- Respect for cultural obligations, cultural validation, and cultural credentialing
- Respect for cultural protocols including gender specific services

Cultural Respect Framework 2016-2026 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health

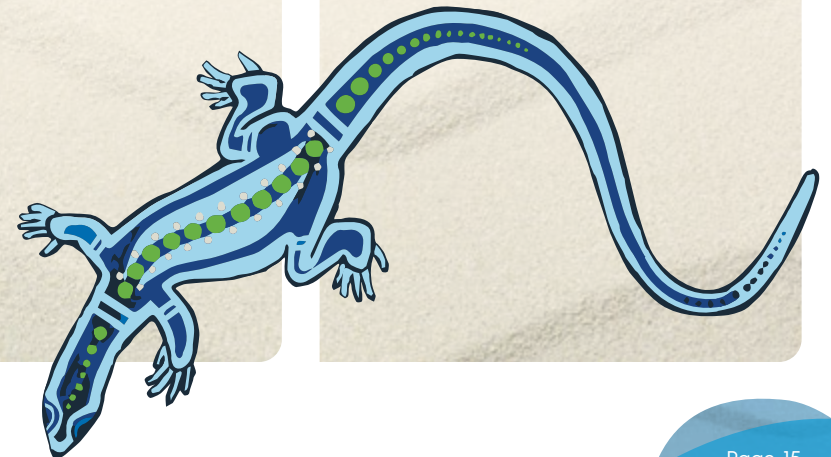
- Leadership and responsibility at all levels
- Whole of the health sector is responsible for efforts to improve the health outcomes for Aboriginal people
- Accessible, culturally responsive and safe mainstream services play a key role in Closing the Gap
- Human rights and health equality play key roles in attaining better health outcomes

Cultural Competency Report AIHW (2015)

- Consult with health services and communities
- Tailor service delivery to the needs and preferences of specific communities
- Embed cultural competence within organisational culture, governance, policies and programs¹⁷

National Agreement Closing the Gap (2019)

- Everyone is accountable for Closing the Gap
- Aboriginal cultures are fundamental to improved life outcomes for Aboriginal people
- Mainstream institutions are culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal people



Vision, Principles and Standards

Vision

WAPHA commits to addressing health equity and access for Aboriginal people by improving cultural competency, leading to improved patient experiences and health outcomes

Principles

Strategic Alignment

Understanding Country and Culture

Community Guided and Informed

Respectful Communication

Strong Relationships

Learning Mindset and Continuous Improvement

Standards

Whole of Organisation Commitment

Workforce

Community (Engagement)

Holistic Person Centred Care/ Welcoming Environment

Partnerships/ Collaboration

Quality Improvement

Commissioning

Definitions

Vision: The ability to think about, or plan, the future with imagination or wisdom (Oxford Dictionary)

Principles: A principle is a kind of rule, belief, or idea that guides you

<https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/principle>

Standards: A standard is an ideal or set of criteria that you use to judge things against

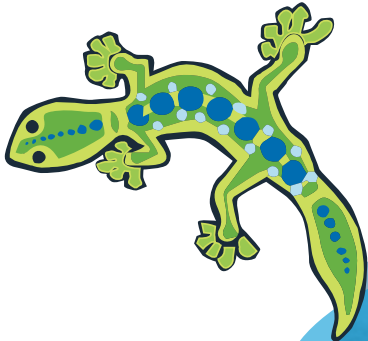
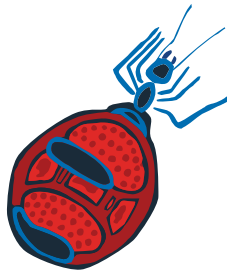
<https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/standard>

NATSIHWP Statement on Cultural Safety 2022¹⁵

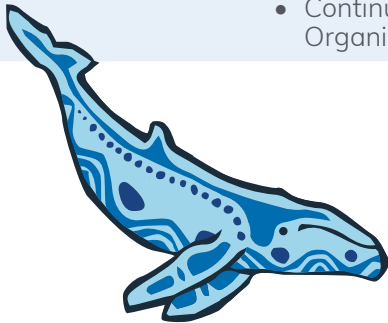
NATSIHWA Cultural Safety Framework¹⁶

Principles

Principle	What does this look like in practice?
Strategic Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Performance indicators are aligned to the Quintuple Aim for Health Care Improvement, organisational Strategic Plan and the PHN Performance and Quality Framework, and demonstrate improved Aboriginal cultural competency and service/program cultural appropriateness.• Performance measures use both quantitative and qualitative evaluations to show progress in Aboriginal cultural competency and capability.
Understanding Country and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensuring sensitivity to, and awareness of, cultural protocols including avoidance, obligation and reciprocity, male/female cultural respect matters.• Being mindful of the impact of the history of colonisation and dislocation from country and culture.• Acknowledging the differing communication styles and provide space for yarning.• Service designs that allow opportunities for traditional medicines and spiritual healing, or both, where relevant.• Cultural training undertaken in a face-to-face format with trainers recommended by the local community wherever possible.
Community Guided and Informed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seeking input and guidance from Elders and community leaders where the service operates, through Board representation, clinical governance or consumer advisory roles, or targeted specific engagement on programs.• Seeking relationships with Aboriginal organisations and providing Aboriginal people opportunity to be employed in and lead primary healthcare services, particularly Aboriginal specific programs and projects.



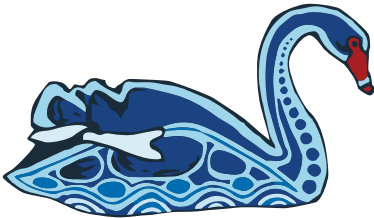
Principle	What does this look like in practice?
Respectful Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking the time to listen and reflect on any bias or prejudice, focusing on the clients' experience, and needs. Ensuring these needs are communicated between practitioners within a service and on referral. • Communicating with empathy and mindfulness of both verbal and non-verbal communications, and in a way that is respectful, clear and easy to understand. • Being brave and professional in receiving and actioning criticism and suggestions for improvement. • Ensuring the cultural safety of Aboriginal people is reflected in the physical and operating environment of services. • Seeking feedback from Aboriginal people.
Strong Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building strong and respectful relationships both with Aboriginal clients or patients, community and staff members to improve cultural safety by reducing the need to repeat explanations and histories and increasing the opportunity to build trust. These relationships assist in understanding the personal commitment and obligation to community and family. • Acknowledging the history of Aboriginal people past and present in all communications on country. • Ensuring Aboriginal community representation in all decision making related to Aboriginal health, social and emotional well-being programs.
Learning Mindset and Continuous Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the diversity of Aboriginal cultures in our community and the inclusivity of language (including body language). • Reviewing research, policy, procedures and templates for inclusive practices and language using references such as the National Safety and Quality Health Services Standards for guidance. • Continually seeking feedback from Elders, leaders, community members, service providers, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and acting on that feedback to improve access and health outcomes.



Standards

These are the standards WAPHA will use to hold ourselves and commissioned service providers to account

Standard 1 Whole of Organisation Commitment	Standard 2 Workforce Development	Standard 3 Community
WAPHA reflects an organisation and system wide approach to cultural competency, safety, inclusiveness and equity and this is demonstrated in leadership, governance, accountability and advocacy.	WAPHA supports the development of an appropriately skilled and resourced workforce that can influence the provision of a culturally competent workplace and accessible, inclusive and responsive commissioned services.	WAPHA actively seeks respectful input and guidance from Elders, community leaders and members to reflect their needs, wisdom, cultural protocols, practices and the diversity of local communities in all activities.
Key Elements	Key Elements	Key Elements
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Governance and leadership commitment• Strategic planning and organisational strategies• Quintuple Aim for Health Care Improvement• Quality improvement and/or accreditation• Policies and accountability• Reconciliation Action Plan• Culturally appropriate performance measures• Health needs assessments• Identification and elimination of racism• Cultural audits• Advocacy and funding/investment locally, statewide and nationally• Empowering Aboriginal people to determine and implement solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cultural awareness and immersion training• Unconscious bias training• Mentoring by Elders, community and team members• Awareness of country and local protocols• Respect and adherence to cultural protocols and practices• Representation in decision making• Aboriginal employment policy – including recruitment and retention, bereavement and cultural leave and resourcing• Learning touchpoints accessible in all working environments e.g. room naming, calendars/seasons, acknowledgements, artwork, dual naming, social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seeking and respecting local cultural protocols• Two-way respectful communication and consultation• Yarning circles• Local representation in decision making• Aboriginal advisory groups/panels• Community designed care, programs, services• Community feedback and follow up• Improved health literacy• Availability of interpreters and health information in languages and plain English



Standard 4 Holistic Person-Centred Care	Standard 5 Strong Partnerships and Collaborations	Standard 6 Continuous Improvement
WAPHA supports primary health care services to provide a service, centred on a person's physical, cultural, community and social and emotional wellbeing.	WAPHA actively engages with like-minded organisations, communities and funding agencies to increase equity, cultural competency and access to value-based care targeting identified community need.	WAPHA is a learning organisation acquiring knowledge, experience, feedback and resources to improve cultural competency internally and within its circle of influence.
Key Elements	Key Elements	Key Elements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcoming environment (Aboriginal artwork, flags displayed, acknowledgement plaque, use of local languages, receptionist greeting, naming facilities and rooms to reflect local culture) • Language policy • Social and cultural determinants of health recognised • Traditional medicines and practices where appropriate • Clinical practice and clinical decision making informed by patients/family/community and place • Lived experience/ peer support workers –gender and age mix • Culturally competent local community health care providers including Aboriginal health workers, Indigenous health project officers and administration staff • Local integrated and coordinated care policies, programs, care plans, clinical protocols, record keeping • Culturally safe patient/consumer feedback • Accessible services e.g. transport, co-location, opening hours, referral processes, readable information • Local community design into new/refurbished facilities acknowledging cultural protocols (e.g. men's and women's business) • Ethical patient self-identification to access services – policy and procedures, training, resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement of communities and partnerships with community-controlled organisations • Stakeholder relationships – celebration of important events, historical dates • Joint funding, reporting and program planning • Building capacity in cultural competency through education, training and acknowledging best practice • Accountability to the community, service users and funders • Identification of health issues, challenges and joint solutions including consideration of the cultural and social determinants of health and Closing the Gap • Support for, and partnerships with, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical data collection, information sharing, planning and research • Best practice models and resources • Knowledge transfer from and to communities – two-way learning • Quality improvement programs and activities • Education and training events • Development of service audits involving Aboriginal community evaluation of outcomes and experiences • Ongoing assessment of organisation/agency's cultural competency and safety through workforce and community feedback, service review, measurement and contracting

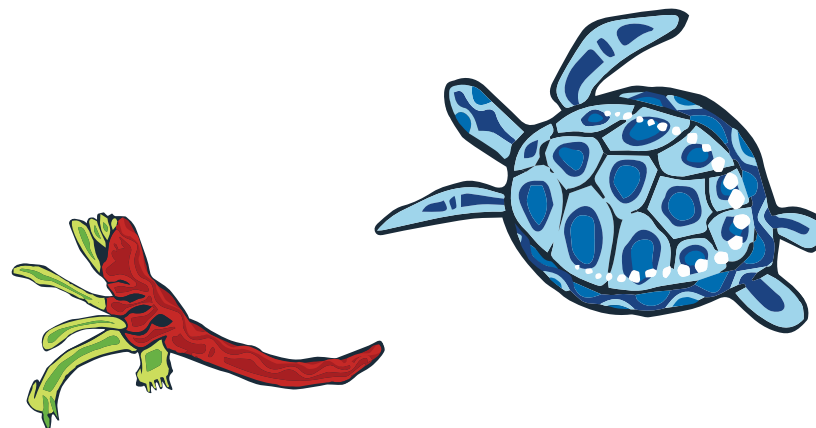


Standard 7 Commissioning

WAPHA supports and learns from the services it commissions to provide culturally competent and safe services through contracting, monitoring and evaluation of services and programs in partnership with Aboriginal individuals, communities and organisations.

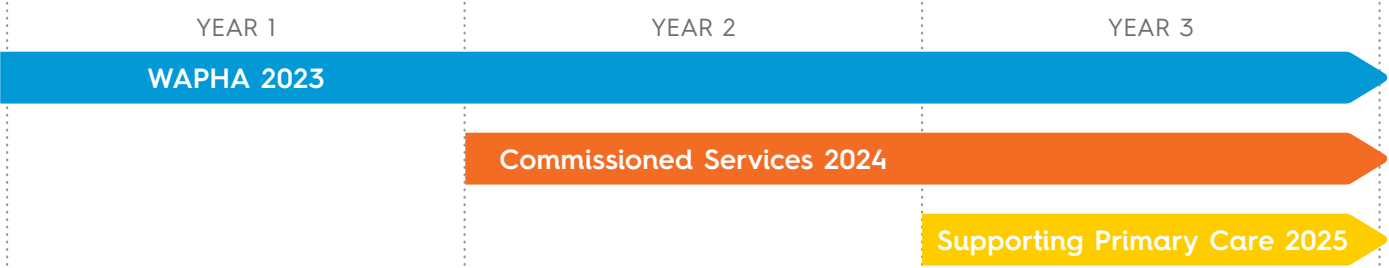
Key Elements

- Commissioning guidelines for cultural competency, inclusiveness and safety
- Standard performance indicators and reporting portals
- Standard contract schedules/clauses/evaluation of tender documents
- Ongoing assessment of cultural competency and safety as part of service review and contracting
- Requirement for Aboriginal membership on tender panels for Aboriginal health and social and emotional wellbeing programs/services
- Needs assessment, planning, and service design and co-design, informed/developed through agreed processes and in partnership with local communities and organisations
- Learnings from community stories, best practice, partnerships and collaborations
- Utilise existing best practice that builds on existing community strengths and assets
- Sharing tools and information to support the development of primary healthcare cultural competency and provision of safe services
- Culturally safe collection and analysis of patient experience and patient reported outcomes/feedback and complaints
- Support for and partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services
- Collaboration with other sectors and organisations to amplify and attract funding to improve the provision of culturally competent services



Transitioning to cultural competency

WAPHA will progressively work towards improving cultural competency and capability over the next three years.



Year 1 will focus internally on WAPHA as an organisation, to ensure that all staff have access to relevant training and education, review policies, procedures, employment processes, employee support, welcoming work environment, conversations and partnerships with communities, and reflective practice. This work will be ongoing.

Year 2 will focus on working in partnership with WAPHA's commissioned service providers to support the ongoing development of a culturally competent and inclusive workforce and provision of WAPHA funded safe and inclusive services. This includes the finalisation of commissioning guidelines, clearly stating WAPHA's competency requirements for procurement and service provision, performance indicators and reporting, funding options, shared knowledge and best practice.

Year 3 will focus on WAPHA's mandate to support and improve the capacity of mainstream primary care services. WAPHA will work together with key partners to continue to build and deliver culturally appropriate services in primary care, focusing on quality improvement activities, education and training using shared knowledge such as the RACGP curriculum on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and best practice.

Accountability

Holding WAPHA accountable

- Achieving Aboriginal cultural competency is everyone's responsibility. WAPHA's leadership has set personal and team goals to work towards improving Aboriginal cultural competency. WAPHA will work with partners, commissioned service providers and primary health care services across the three Western Australian PHNs to encourage and support their organisations and staff to improve Aboriginal cultural competency and provision of culturally safe primary health care services (as determined by the service user).
- WAPHA has appointed the General Manager, Strategy and Engagement as the Executive Sponsor for cultural competency and the WAPHA team will report on their commitments and achievements in implementing cultural competency to WAPHA's Board, Executive, Aboriginal members of WAPHA's Advisory Panels, Aboriginal staff and community members as well as the RAP working group.

Working with commissioned service providers

- Guidelines for WAPHA's commissioned service providers will shape the changes for the commissioning process in terms of expectations, measurement, evaluation and reporting of cultural competency and safety. Community input will be incorporated into the needs assessment and annual planning processes and feedback incorporated into the evaluation processes as part of the progression towards cultural competency. WAPHA under the leadership of the General Manager Commissioned Services, will work with commissioned service providers on preparing for the implementation of the Commissioning Guidelines leading up to their implementation from the second year of this Framework (2024).

Supporting primary health care services

- WAPHA will support primary health care services with information via websites such as Practice Assist, SHAPE and WA HealthPathways on tools and resources to improve cultural competency and make patients feel safer when attending primary health care services such as general practice. WAPHA's Primary Care Innovation and Development team, guided by the General Manager Primary Care Innovation and Development, will also provide and promote opportunities for quality improvement and shared learnings across primary health care services.



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- ¹² The National Scheme's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Cultural Strategy 2020-2025 AHPRA and National Boards.
- ¹³ https://www.naatsihwp.org.au/sites/default/files/natsihwa-cultural_safety-framework_summary.pdf
- ¹⁴ *Queensland Health, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework 2010 - 2033*
- ¹⁵ *Cultural competency in the delivery of health services for Indigenous people, Summary* - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (aihw.gov.au)
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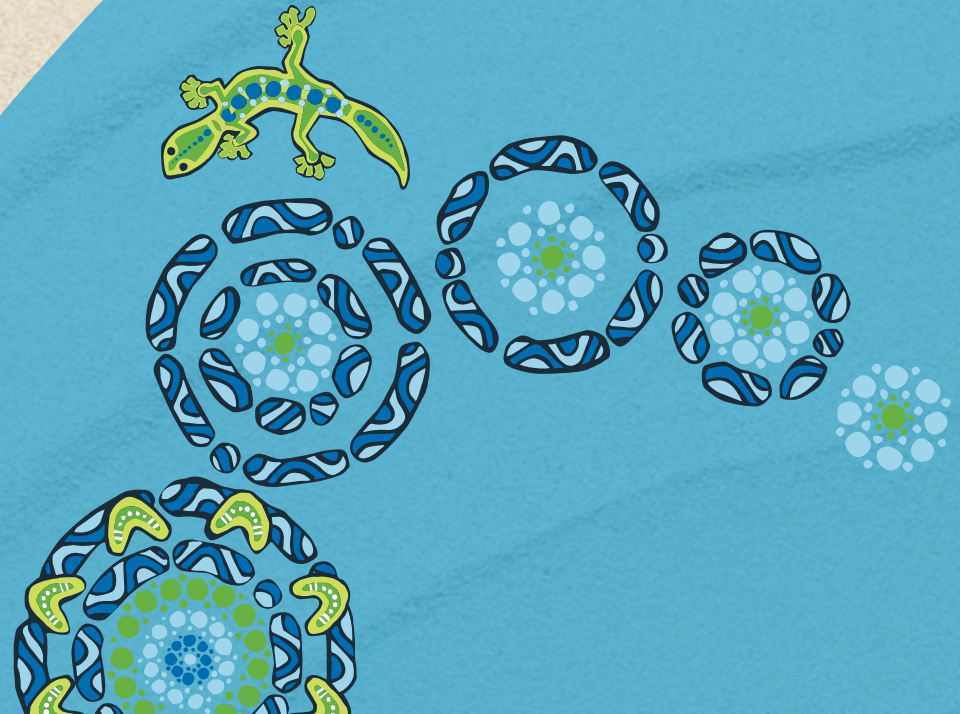




Aboriginal Cultural Competency and Capability Framework Implementation Plan



2023 - 2025



Standard 1	Whole of Organisation Commitment WAPHA takes an organisation and system wide approach to cultural competency, safety, inclusiveness and equity and this is demonstrated in leadership, governance, accountability and advocacy.	Responsibility
Actions	Align WAPHA performance with the Quintuple Aim for Health Care Improvement consistent with a strong focus on equity	Executive
	Publish and action the WAPHA Aboriginal Health Strategy	Strategy & Engagement
	Ensure Aboriginal representation on key governance groups e.g. WAPHA Board, Strategic Alignment Groups, Executive and Advisory Panels where possible	Strategy & Engagement
	Ensure that an Aboriginal Advisory Panel is convened when required to seek input and inform activities	Strategy & Engagement
	Review the PHN Performance Quality Framework measures of cultural competency and translate into measurable actions and outcomes	Commissioned Service
	Ensure that the WAPHA Needs Assessment process includes qualitative and quantitative information sourced from Aboriginal community members	Data & Analytics
	Conduct a review of WAPHA's policies and procedures against the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards User Guide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health ¹⁷	Executive Services
	Maintain and update WAPHA's RAP*	Strategy & Engagement
Performance Indicators	Conduct an annual self-assessment of institutional racism	Executive
	Consultation with Aboriginal community when developing strategic documents including needs assessment, RAP and organisational strategies*	
	Regular interaction with community Elders and leaders, governance committees, groups membership as informed by the governance structure ¹⁸	
	Culturally appropriate performance measures measured quarterly/annually and published	
	RAP actions and progress reviewed quarterly and annually *	
	Ongoing QIC accreditation achieved	
	WAPHA Aboriginal Health Strategy actions implemented and evaluated	
Monitoring & Evaluation	Self-assessment of institutional racism conducted and outcomes tabled at WAPHA Executive (annually)	
	3-monthly and annual review and report on cultural competency implementation actions to WAPHA together with RAP reports to the WAPHA Board, Executive and communities*	
	Annual review of governance arrangement and representation	
	Annual pulse check survey*	
	Aboriginal Health Strategic Alignment Group agenda, minutes and actions	

* Existing RAP action

Standard 2	Workforce Development WAPHA supports the development of an appropriately skilled and resourced workforce that can influence the provision of a culturally competent workplace and accessible, inclusive and responsive commissioned services.	Responsibility
Actions	Develop and implement a cultural learning strategy and package which incorporates localised cultural awareness training for WAPHA staff within each of our eight regions*	People & Culture
	Ensure WAPHA workforce cultural competency training and education includes acknowledgement of Aboriginal holistic view of health and wellbeing and cultural determinants of health	People & Culture
	Consult with Aboriginal Elders and community members to develop/source cultural protocols and practices prior to any engagement, collaboration, service delivery planning by WAPHA staff members*	Leadership Strategy and Engagement
	Conduct a review of localised cultural learning needs and unconscious bias training within our organisation*	People & Culture
	Create 4 opportunities a year for staff to 'learn from an expert' from the Aboriginal community/Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services on cultural competency and safety	Employee Experience
	Provide specific training to relevant WAPHA staff on how best to work with Aboriginal people and support to lead culturally competent and safe primary health care services including training on how to co-design and co-produce with Aboriginal people	People & Culture
	Develop and implement an Aboriginal Employment Strategy which provides guidance on recruitment, retention, mentoring and professional development*	Strategy & Engagement
	Promote the guidance for ceremonial and cultural leave as described in the WAPHA employment agreement	People & Culture
	Embed diversity and inclusion questions into staff performance review cycle	People & Culture
	Develop and implement an Aboriginal staff empowerment group which provides opportunities for connecting, mentoring, debriefing, professional development and organisational guidance*	Management
	Develop and publish a cultural conduct code	Strategy & Engagement
	Embed diversity and inclusion questions into staff performance review cycle	People & Culture Management
	Develop a digital library of relevant and best practice learning resources to share with partners and service providers*	Strategy & Engagement Commissioned Services
	Make learning touchpoints accessible in all working environments e.g. room names, calendars / seasons, acknowledgements, artwork, dual titles, social media as informed by cultural advisors	People & Culture

* Existing [RAP](#) action

Standard 2	Workforce Development WAPHA supports the development of an appropriately skilled and resourced workforce that can influence the provision of a culturally competent workplace and accessible, inclusive and responsive commissioned services.	Responsibility
Performance Indicators	Completion of cultural learning package and ongoing learning by 90 per cent of employees	
	Budget allocation for cultural competency training for all staff quarantined	
	Annual training needs review of all staff to support development of cultural competency	
	Assessment of staff attitudes, knowledge and behaviour indicates improvement pre and post implementation of training and support programs	
	Programs and processes to support Aboriginal staff designed and implemented in consultation with relevant staff members	
	Participation by staff members in Aboriginal external activities marking key dates in Aboriginal history and culture as appropriate, facilitated by Stakeholder Engagement Officer – Cultural Safety and support by WAPHA's employee experience champions	
	Mentoring program in place (two way - for and by Aboriginal staff members)	
	All WAPHA People and Culture policies reflect cultural competency and mechanisms to ensure cultural safety e.g. anti bullying and harassment, cultural code of conduct, diversity and inclusion*	
	Maintaining the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees at four per cent, increasing to eight per cent by 2024*	
	Learning resources available on WAPHA website and intranet site	
Monitoring & Evaluation	Annual workplace employee survey to assess progress with cultural competency program and cultural safety within WAPHA	
	Review of progress to be conducted by Aboriginal Reference Group, RAP working group and Aboriginal staff members quarterly and annually	

* Existing RAP action

Standard 3	Community WAPHA actively seeks respectful input and guidance from Elders, community leaders and members to reflect their needs, wisdom, cultural protocols, practices and the diversity of the local communities in all activities.	Responsibility
Actions	Educate senior leaders, and support them to educate their team members, on the effects of racism*	Leadership
	Adapt or adopt existing place based cultural protocols and guiding principles to primary care or develop in partnership with local Elders, senior community members and community-controlled organisations	Primary Care Innovation & Development
	Plan manager engagement with Elders in each WAPHA region biannually/annually to build ongoing relationships	Commissioned Services
	Include increasing health literacy as a component of all programs delivered	Commissioned Services
	Ensure traditional and contemporary communication and healing practices are incorporated in programs and services, where ever practical and possible	Commissioned Services
	Ensure programs developed/commissioned demonstrate an understanding and reflection of Aboriginal people's holistic view of health and well-being	Commissioned Services Primary Care Innovation & Development
	Implement and maintain an Aboriginal data sovereignty protocol	Data & Analytics
	Ensure that a Welcome and/or Acknowledgment of Country is standard practice*	All Portfolios
	Provide co design training to all relevant WAPHA staff, informed by local cultural protocols	Strategy & Engagement
	Participate in commemoration of and acknowledge key dates in Aboriginal history where appropriate*	Strategy & Engagement
	Review the WAPHA Paid Participation Policy to ensure engagement of Aboriginal demonstrates cultural competency and reflection of current industry standards	Strategy & Engagement
Performance Indicators	Develop a WAPHA Language Policy that articulates the agreed use of interpreters, Aboriginal health workers, translated resources and traditional healers	Strategy & Engagement
	Review of new and existing projects by community representatives to provide advice on cultural protocols and community knowledge	
	All WAPHA marketing and communications activities for Aboriginal services or communities reflect communities' first contact history, diversity and respect	
	All staff are orientated, in place, to cultural protocols and meet with Elders to introduce and seek advice as appropriate	
	Cultural protocols are provided to all staff members prior to engagement with local communities	
	Engagement with Elders planned and conducted bi-annually	
	Programs targeting Aboriginal communities co-designed and/or reviewed by local communities	
	Calendar with key dates and celebrations is published and promoted across the organisation	
	Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement Policy and practice implemented	
Monitoring & Evaluation	Paid participation fees are provided in line with WAPHA's policy where community members are consulted	
	Digital library of relevant and best practice learning resources available for primary care services to share with partners and service providers*	
	WAPHA Advisory Group/Panel/RAP Working Group/Community Reference Group review progress implementation of Framework quarterly	
	Community feedback/consultation process mechanism to assess feedback and complaints annually	

* Existing [RAP](#) action



Standard 4	Holistic Person-Centred Care WAPHA supports primary health care services to provide a service centred on a person's culture, community and social and emotional wellbeing.	Responsibility
Actions	Provide a welcoming environment at all WAPHA offices and commissioned service facilities including Aboriginal artwork, flags, acknowledgement plaque, use of local language (e.g. facility/room names) and at reception*	Facilities Management Employee Experience Commissioned Services
	Showcase challenges and best practice in clinical service delivery and cultural competency	Commissioned Services
	Incorporate clinical yarning into commissioned services where appropriate	Commissioned Services
	Use interpreters and translated materials to assist with health literacy, access and pathways between services	Primary Care Innovation & Development
	Map patient journeys for country and metropolitan patients to identify gaps and barriers to access culturally safe services*	Commissioned Services Program Improvement
	Develop culturally safe mechanisms for community members to provide feedback and evaluation of services, outcomes and improvements resulting from accessing WAPHA funded services*	Commissioned Services
	Develop a plan for analysis and reporting of Aboriginal health data in consultation with a community reference group	Data and Analytics
	Consult and survey primary care providers to identify support required to provide culturally competent holistic person-centred care	Primary Care Innovation & Development
	Produce information and resources for local health care providers on culturally safe practices such as welcoming environment, identification, clinical and referral HealthPathways relevant to Aboriginal health, relevant MBS items numbers, My Health Record and cultural concept of health*	Primary Care Innovation & Development
	Promote the employment of Aboriginal health professional and administrative roles across all levels of mainstream primary health care service delivery	Commissioned Services
	Provide a program of support for Integrated Team Care program Indigenous health project officers to improve cultural competency in mainstream primary care services	Commissioned Services Primary Care Innovation & Development
	Implement the primary care actions of the WAPHA Aboriginal Health Strategy	Primary Care Innovation & Development
	Co-locate and integrate services to improve access and service delivery partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations	Commissioned Services Primary Care Innovation & Development Project Management Office

* Existing [RAP](#) action

Standard 4	Holistic Person-Centred Care WAPHA supports primary health care services to provide a service centred on a person’s culture, community and social and emotional wellbeing.	Responsibility
Performance Indicators	Digital library of relevant and best practice learning resources for primary care is published*	
	Mechanism to share knowledge and information identified and implemented	
	Language Policy published	
	Information packs posted online and promoted	
	Increased uptake of Aboriginal Health MBS items*	
	Increased access and uptake of My Health Record*	
	Increase in content on and uptake of HealthPathways relevant to Aboriginal health	
	Number of Aboriginal staff members in mainstream primary care services	
	Minutes and actions WAPHA Aboriginal Health Strategic Alignment Group	
Monitoring & Evaluation	Audit of WAPHA offices and facilities to ensure physical environment is welcoming	
	Report on implementation actions presented and published annually	
	Number of information packs downloaded/viewed	
	Practice Incentive Program (PIP) outcome measures	
	Quarterly Aboriginal Health Strategy implementation report to WAPHA Aboriginal Health Strategic Alignment Group	

* Existing RAP action

Standard 5	Partnerships and Collaborations WAPHA actively engages with like-minded organisations, communities and funding agencies to increase equity, cultural competency and access to value-based care targeting identified community needs.	Responsibility
Actions	Develop, communicate and implement a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country*	Strategy & Engagement
	Plan engagement with Aboriginal Elders and leadership in each PHN to meet and discuss Aboriginal primary health care needs to inform relevant WAPHA activities and continuous quality improvement	Strategy & Engagement
	Utilise existing and/or formalise relationships with primary health care service funding agencies in Western Australia to (wherever possible): <ul style="list-style-type: none">Align health service performance metrics and data collection mechanisms.Jointly engage with Aboriginal community on feedback regarding community health needs to identify systemic gaps in service provision	Commissioned Services
	Set up Aboriginal knowledge and information sharing sessions or a community of practice with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services, commissioned services and primary healthcare services	Commissioned Services
	Inform local health care providers of endorsed cultural awareness training as determined by a professional medical college such as RACGP or ACCRM; the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO); or the Aboriginal Health Council of WA*	Commissioned Services Primary Care Innovation & Development
	Discuss and participate in the national agenda on Indigenous Data Sovereignty to encourage change at a national PHN level*	Data & Analytics
	Maintain and progress WAPHA/Aboriginal Health Council of WA Statement of Collaborative Intent	Executive Strategy & Engagement
	Maintain WAPHA membership of the Aboriginal Health Planning Forums	Commissioned Services
	Engage with WA Health Service Providers through Partnership Protocol mechanism to include advocacy to address cultural and social determinants of health, inclusion and cultural safety	Executive
	Build local partnerships with stakeholders that continue to support and strengthen access for Aboriginal people and advocate for action on the social and cultural determinants of health*	Commissioned Services
Performance Indicators	Joint planning and funding of Aboriginal primary health care programs	
	Employment of Aboriginal health professionals and administrative staff across service delivery	
	Actions arising from strategic meetings with partners/collaborators	
	Collaboration activities to promote cultural competency and safety within health service delivery	
	Collaboration activities to advocate for attention on the cultural and social determinants of health	
	Progress on Closing the Gap indicators as required by PHN Performance and Quality Framework	
Monitoring & Evaluation	Annual WAPHA Leadership engagement with Aboriginal Elders across the three PHNs	
	Marketing and communication activities promoting cultural competency, safety, diversity and inclusion	

* Existing RAP action

Standard 6	Continuous Learning WAPHA is a learning organisation acquiring knowledge, experience, feedback and resources to improve cultural competency internally and within its circle of influence.	Responsibility
Actions	Maintain WAPHA Accreditation with Quality Innovation Performance (QIP) assessed against Quality In Care Standards (QIC)	Executive Services
	Review practices against the National Safety and Quality Primary and Community Healthcare Standards	Executive Services
	Develop an Aboriginal led Audit program to review WAPHA commissioned services, programs and workplaces	Commissioned Services Strategy & Engagement
	Engage Aboriginal people and embrace their health knowledge and expertise to assist in the co-design, co-production and co-commissioning of services which focus on strengthening and improving health outcomes, and social and emotional wellbeing for Aboriginal people*	Strategy & Engagement
	Conduct research in who is 'leading the way' in Aboriginal cultural competency and safety among services funded and share case studies from leaders	Commissioned Services Program Improvement
	Update WAPHA's RAP at expiry of current version*	Strategy & Engagement
	Develop or adopt Primary Care Cultural Competency Quality Improvement Plans e.g. RACGP/Other PHNs*	Primary Care Innovation & Development
	Analyse de-identified client data for service gaps and improvements	Data & Analytics
	Ensure resources for implementation of WAPHA cultural competency confirmed and quarantined	Executive
	Develop a digital resource library available for WAPHA staff and service providers including self-assessment tools, templates, best practice resources*	Strategy & Engagement Commissioned Services
	Develop internal service audits process involving Aboriginal community evaluation of outcomes and experiences	Executive Office
Performance Indicators	Accreditation with QIP maintained	
	New RAP published and action plan completed 2024	
	A report on quality improvement activities on Aboriginal Health KPIs provided to Executive	
	Case studies of exemplar improvements provided to primary health care staff	
	Cultural Competency Primary Health Care Quality Improvement Plan, resources and tools available to primary health care services	
	Showcase of challenges WAPHA is working on and how these are being addressed by working with Aboriginal people delivered	
	One commissioned service audit conducted annually	
Monitoring & Evaluation	Quarterly quality improvement reports to RAP Working Group, Executive and general managers	
	Biannual feedback from community and stakeholders on CCF progress and improvements	
	Survey commissioned service providers to seek guidelines for improvements	

* Existing RAP action

Standard 7	Commissioning WAPHA supports and learns from the services it commissions to provide culturally competent and safe services through contracting, monitoring and evaluation of services and programs in partnership with Aboriginal individuals, communities and organisations.	Responsibility
Actions	Produce and publish Commissioning Guidelines for procurement and ongoing service improvement including evaluation tool/self-assessment and action plans*	Strategy & Engagement Project Management Office Commissioned Services
	Map the Aboriginal patient journey and utilise this information to inform Aboriginal funded/specific services and other commissioned activity across WAPHA*	Strategy and Engagement Commissioned Services Program Improvement
	Develop engagement and change management plan for the development and implementation of cultural competency guidelines and measurement of cultural safety (as determined service users)	Strategy & Engagement
	Develop a process which is available to commissioned service providers for sharing of information and learning from each other on cultural competency and safety	Program Improvement
	Establish a process to collect feedback from service users/community members on the provision of culturally safe services by WAPHA and commissioned services	Strategy & Engagement
	Conduct a community evaluation of Aboriginal cultural safety of commissioned service providers and publish an annual report on findings and actions to improve	Strategy & Engagement
	Develop and implement an Aboriginal procurement strategy that supports the purchasing of goods and services and employment from Aboriginal owned business and development of formalised relationship*	Commissioned Services
	Maintain community representation on evaluation panels to assess applicants for related Aboriginal programs and services	Commissioned Services
	Endorse WAPHA's position of agreeing in principle with National Agreement on Closing the Gap Priority Reform 2 – Building the Community Controlled Sector and commitment to take action to demonstrate this agreement	Executive
Performance Indicators	Commissioning Guidelines published July 2023	
	Procurement Policy published December 2023	
	Reporting requirements embedded into WAPHA Performance Management Framework July 2025	
	Commissioned Services Reporting Portal amended to include cultural competency and safety generic and specific program measure	
	Commissioning Guidelines incorporated into procurement and contacting progresses and program improvement	
	Three per cent of total contracts awarded to registered Aboriginal businesses	
	Four to eight per cent of commissioned service provider employees are Aboriginal community members	
	One community service audit conducted annually	
Monitoring & Evaluation	Report on feedback from community members / service users published annually	
	Annual commissioned services report on performance indicators to WAPHA Board, Executive, Australian Government, WAPHA partners and community members	

* Existing [RAP](#) action

References

- ¹⁷ Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care Action 1.21 Improving Cultural Competency
- ¹⁸ Department of Health (March 2016) Draft Primary Health Networks (PHNs) and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) – Guiding Principles. Canberra quoted by The PHN HNECC
- ¹⁹ *Cultural competency in the delivery of health services for Indigenous people* | Australian Institute of Family Studies (aifs.gov.au)
- ²⁰ https://www.naatsihwp.org.au/sites/default/files/natsihwa-cultural_safety-framework_summary.pdf
- ²¹ *What unconscious bias training gets wrong... and how to fix it* | Psychology | The Guardian
- ²² Embedding Cultural Practice and Safety Project Report (headspace.org.au)
- ²³ <https://www.wa.gov.au/system/files/2021-11/Aboriginal-Procurement-Policy-Participation.pdf>





Aboriginal Cultural Competency and Capability Framework

January 2023

Acknowledgement

WA Primary Health Alliance acknowledges, and pays respect to, the Traditional Owners and Elders of this country. We recognise their diversity and the significant importance of their cultural heritage, values, beliefs and self-determination in contributing to the positive health and wellbeing of the whole community.

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