

# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2022-2031

Townsville  
Hospital  
and Health  
Service



## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2022-2031

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### The Integration of Two Worlds

Created by Juru Man, Robert Paul for  
Townsville Hospital and Health Service

In the middle of the design is a large circle with multiple layers, this depicts the Health Care System. Within the large circle are different departments of health care services, including health care workers, with members and families from both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The outer layer of the circle has small “U” shaped symbols, with small dots in between. These symbols represent health care workers, who are culturally sensitive to the needs of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Coming in from the left-hand side are two paths. One with white feet, the other with dark feet. They come together at a junction and walk side by side into the health care system. This is the beginning of working together, to improve health outcomes. The journey continues out the other side of the circle, with the path representing the help needed to travel to the various centres outside communities, to access health care they require. It depicts both the giving, and acceptance of help.

The blue waves at the top of the design represents the waters of the Torres Strait Islands. The circles in these waves, are the many Islands of the Torres Strait. The smaller circles inside, represent the community and families of the island. The arrows in the lines between the circles, represent individuals travelling from the outer islands to onshore community health care centres.

The arrows travelling from these centres to the larger circle, show the individuals being directed into the health care system. There are a few paths leaving the health care system. The blue lines depict the health care workers following up on the individuals, making sure they have accessed and understood their special needs. The brown lines represent the individual and their family members making their own way to the services, required to help them with their health needs.

At some of these larger circles are “U” shaped symbols. These depict healthcare workers that are sensitive to the needs of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, following up and assisting them. At the bottom of the design there are small leaves in each corner, these represent the traditional medicines of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. There are multiple learning areas, made up of larger “U” shaped symbols facing three smaller “U” shaped symbols. The larger symbols are Elders and culturally sensitive health care workers, that are helping to educate other members of the health system, about the needs and requirements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families, and communities.

## Acknowledgment of Country

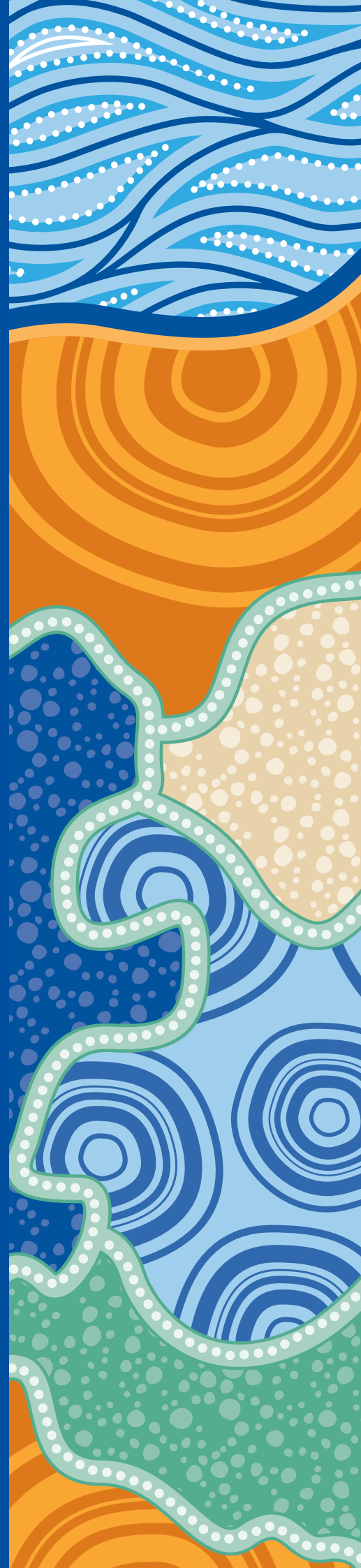
We acknowledge the Traditional and Cultural Custodians of the lands, waters and seas on which our health facilities are placed. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and recognise the role of current and emerging leaders in shaping a better health system.

We acknowledge First Nations peoples in North Queensland are both Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and support the cultural knowledge, determination and commitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in caring for the health and wellbeing of First Nations peoples for millennia.

Townsville Hospital and Health Service is committed to honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters, and seas and their rich contribution to society.

Townsville Hospital and Health Service is proud to recognise and celebrate the cultural diversity of our communities and workforce at the following locations:

LOCATION	TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS
Townsville	Bindal (Birri Gubba) and Gurrumbilbarra Wulgurukaba
Palm Island	Manbarra Bwgcolman (historical)
Ayr/Home Hill	Juru (Birri Gubba) Bindal (Birri Gubba) - still to be determined
Charters Towers	Gudjal
Ingham	Nywaigi Warrgamay Bandjin
Cardwell	Girramay
Richmond	Wanamara / Woolgar Valley
Hughenden	Yerunthully



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# Message from the Board Chair and Health Service Chief Executive

It is a great pleasure and privilege to endorse the Townsville Hospital and Health Service's inaugural Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy.

This is an important strategy that will help build the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce across the Townsville Hospital and Health Service.

Bricks and mortar and improvements in service delivery are important but health, at its core, is a human industry, and our workforce is our most vital asset.

It is no secret that First Nations people feel more comfortable and willing to engage with their health journey with people who share their backgrounds, cultures and lived experiences.

This strategy aims to build upon our strengths and harness the stories and experiences of our existing First Nations workforce as we continue to strive toward closing the gap in health outcomes and achieving equity.

## **Tony Mooney AM**

Chair  
Townsville Hospital and Health Board

We have made some progress with our First Nations workforce currently above the Queensland Government target of three per cent. This strategy is underpinned by an aspiration to make our workforce reflective of our community by achieving a First Nations employment target of six per cent by 2031.

Our First Nations community deserves to live happy and healthy lives and have confidence and trust that the health service they turn to will deliver culturally safe care.

Growing our First Nations health workforce is a crucial component to achieving our organisational vision - world-class healthcare for northern Queensland and our joint commitment to this is resolute.

## **Professor Kieran Keyes**

Health Service Chief Executive  
Townsville Hospital and Health Service



# Message from the Executive Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Division

Townsville Hospital and Health Service acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land and pays our respects to Elders past and present.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy is an important strategy that seeks to overcome barriers that have hindered the growth of the First Nations health workforce.

It is underpinned by inspiring stories of our existing workforce which has experienced first-hand the obstacles that had to be overcome to begin a career that allows them to care for their community.

These stories are front and centre of this strategy for one very important reason, for every barrier they overcame, other First Nations people have not.

These barriers are as complex as not completing high school, living in overcrowded households or not being aware of the opportunities a career in health can offer.

This strategy seeks to take their stories and learn from them to lower the barriers for First Nations people to enter and thrive in the health sector.

This strategy commits us to partnering with stakeholders to grow the capacity of our local First Nations workforce. It also commits us to creating an environment where the Townsville Hospital and Health Service is an employer of choice for First Nations people.

## **Wendy Ah Chin**

Executive Director  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Division





# Introduction

The Townsville Hospital and Health Service (Townsville HHS) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy (this Workforce Strategy) sets out the overarching priorities and strategies for developing and growing a strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce for the delivery of health services in the Townsville HHS region.

This inaugural Workforce Strategy presents an exciting opportunity continuing to build our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce. It offers a strategic approach for identifying and building the system necessary to support, strengthen, and enable this workforce to deliver culturally safe, sustainable and patient-centred healthcare to our local communities now and into the future. This Workforce Strategy will build on the work that is already underway and reinforce the existing Townsville HHS commitment to a strong and empowered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce.

Targeted and sustained investment will be required to effect change and achieve our ambitious objectives within this Workforce Strategy. Continuous

improvement to the quality and availability of data regarding the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce to enable decision-making and the monitoring of progress for the Workforce Strategy has been identified as a critical enabler for success.

The existing workforce governance structures across Townsville HHS will be accountable for monitoring the implementation of the strategies in this document. This will include considering whether each strategy is achieving the desired outcome and supporting Townsville HHS to close the gap. The Workforce Advisory Committee will have overarching responsibility for the Workforce Strategy and will report on progress on a biannual basis to the Townsville HHS Strategic Leadership Team and Board.





# Strategic Context

The Workforce Strategy is aligned to Townsville HHS's strategic priorities and to Queensland Government priorities for improving health equity in Queensland. This includes recognition of Townsville HHS's role in improving health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as outlined in the Townsville HHS Strategic Plan 2022-2026, Townsville HHS Reconciliation Action Plan 2022-2024 and the First Nations Health Equity Strategy 2022-2025. Those documents include commitments to:

- developing a culturally capable workforce that reflects the diversity of the local community;
- developing and implementing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy; and
- increasing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment rate to at least six percent (commensurate to the employability age of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population).

The Townsville HHS Workforce Strategy also aligns with current and emerging Queensland and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce priorities. These priorities include building inclusive workplaces that are culturally capable and

developing employment opportunities and career pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This Workforce Strategy has been developed with consideration of the following National and Queensland strategic documents:

- The National Agreement on Closing the Gap 2020
- Queensland Health's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework 2016-2026
- The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategy Framework 2016-2023
- Challenges identified in Queensland Health's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Career Structure Review 2019.

The Workforce Strategy complements the development and implementation of the Townsville HHS's Health Equity Strategy. The Townsville HHS Workforce Strategy provides a clear pathway for Townsville HHS to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce participation and representation and to enable better Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health outcomes in the Townsville HHS region.

## Scope of the Workforce Strategy

The scope of the Workforce Strategy includes the current and future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce which delivers and supports direct patient care as part of the Townsville HHS's services. Through the implementation of this Workforce Strategy, the Townsville HHS will guide the growth and development of a strong and supported Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce that is positioned to support a healthy future for the Townsville HHS's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

This Workforce Strategy has been informed by extensive stakeholder consultation along with best-practice research and data analysis in relation to workforce demographics and sustainable workforce strategies, the recruitment and retention of staff, and the development of strong partnerships with external organisations.



# Our staff stories

This section profiles the powerful impact that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are having in delivering culturally safe and patient-centred care to our community. These stories highlight some of the areas that are most important to our staff for building a thriving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce through the Workforce Strategy.



# BUILDING A FUTURE

Dr Lisa Waia, Surgical Registrar

Lisa's childhood was spent exploring the beaches and rainforest in Bamaga at the tip of Cape York Peninsula with her two older brothers and two younger sisters. Lisa had an idyllic and free childhood, but her early education left a lot to be desired.

Identifying as a Torres Strait Islander with family roots on Saibai Island, Lisa is one of nine doctors employed by Townsville Hospital and Health Service who identifies as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

At every step on her journey to become a surgeon there has been a persistent voice in Dr Lisa Waia's head calling her an imposter.

Dr Waia's journey has taken her from the beaches of Bamaga, the hills of Herberton, the lecture theatres at James Cook University and the operating theatres at Townsville University Hospital.

"When I look back from that kid who barely had a primary school education, struggled in high school and had no links to the medical industry there has been a lot to overcome."

Dr Waia said it was a combination of good luck and good timing but predominately a stubborn perseverance that has seen her become a doctor and pursue surgery.

"There has always been this nagging voice in the back of my head saying what business does a girl from the Torres have trying to become a doctor," she said.

"The challenges I've had to overcome to reach this stage of my career have been incredibly unique and I've largely had to overcome them in my own way.

"Even now, that feeling of imposter syndrome has never gone away and I don't think it ever will."

In February 2022, Dr Waia completed her general surgery rotation and will soon begin training for her dream specialty as an ear, nose, and throat surgeon. Dr Waia said there was still a long way to go to achieve her goal.

"I think I am a bit of a bad-ass because I knew what I wanted, and I was willing to work as hard as I needed to get it."

Dr Waia said it was essential to grow the First Nations clinical workforce so that policy makers understood the obstacles that needed to be overcome to become a clinician.







## BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES

### Terrance Woods, Plumbing Apprentice

Keeping our hospital and health services running is a multi-team effort, as fourth-year plumbing apprentice Terrence Woods knows all too well.

Currently in the final year of his apprenticeship, Terrence said the learning opportunities he'd experienced across the Townsville HHS had been brilliant.

"As an apprentice, I've been given a really broad scope of plumbing opportunities - from basic skills right through to advanced plumbing," Terrence said.

"We also have the opportunity to increase our domestic and commercial knowledge outside a hospital setting through sub-contract opportunities, which is great for expanding our skillset.

"So for example, I had the opportunity to work on the new stadium here in the city which was an eye-opening experience, and then back at the hospital I had the

chance to install four new pressure tanks so you get a bit of everything."

Terrance said great leadership had helped shape his positive experience at Townsville HHS.

"Our team leader, Michael, has lead by example from the start and that has been great," Terrence said.

"The team also allows for a lot of autonomy when you do big tasks like installations or critical planned maintenance projects because the experience you've accessed along the way has been so strong.

"I'd encourage anyone who comes across an apprenticeship opportunity at the hospital to take it - you won't regret it."



## Vision

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce reflects our diverse community, is representative across Townsville HHS to improve the health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

## What we will achieve

Through the implementation of this Workforce Strategy, we will strengthen innovative recruitment and retention strategies, training and development, career pathways, culturally safe workplaces and data quality to support workforce planning and continuous improvement across all of these areas.

In doing so, we will achieve a six percent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce employment target by 2031. These targets will be met through increasing representation across all occupations and levels of employment within our facilities.

## Key Principles for our Workforce Strategy

Five key principles have guided the development of the Workforce Strategy and will continue to underpin implementation efforts. The principles are described below:

- ① **We will partner with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce and community leaders to implement the Workforce Strategy, monitor our success and strive for continuous improvement.**
- ① **We will use the success measures with associated targets to embed accountability across all parts of Townsville HHS for implementing the identified strategies and achieving our objectives.**
- ① **We will implement and embed a culturally safe and a trauma-informed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee experience.**
- ① **We will adopt a strengths-based and solutions-focused approach to the implementation of the Workforce Strategy.**
- ① **We will develop our workforce with a concentrated focus on data capability uplift to support sustainable workforce growth and planning.**

# Strategic Pillars

This Workforce Strategy is underpinned by five Strategic Pillars: Partnerships; Employment; Professional Pathways; People; and Place. The pillars have been designed with consideration of the Townsville HHS’s organisational structure and the diverse catchment area in which the organisation operates. The pillars are informed by broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce strategies.

Diagram 1 depicts the five Strategic Pillars for the Workforce Strategy that support the achievement of Townsville HHS’s vision for our Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander workforce. The key enablers for the Workforce Strategy are: data and continuous improvement, governance and accountability and monitoring and reporting. The Townsville HHS Reconciliation Action Plan and the Townsville HHS Health Equity Strategy and the strategies within those documents are also important enablers for the success of the Workforce Strategy. The enablers are linked to each of the pillars to highlight their role in implementation and measuring the success of the Workforce Strategy.

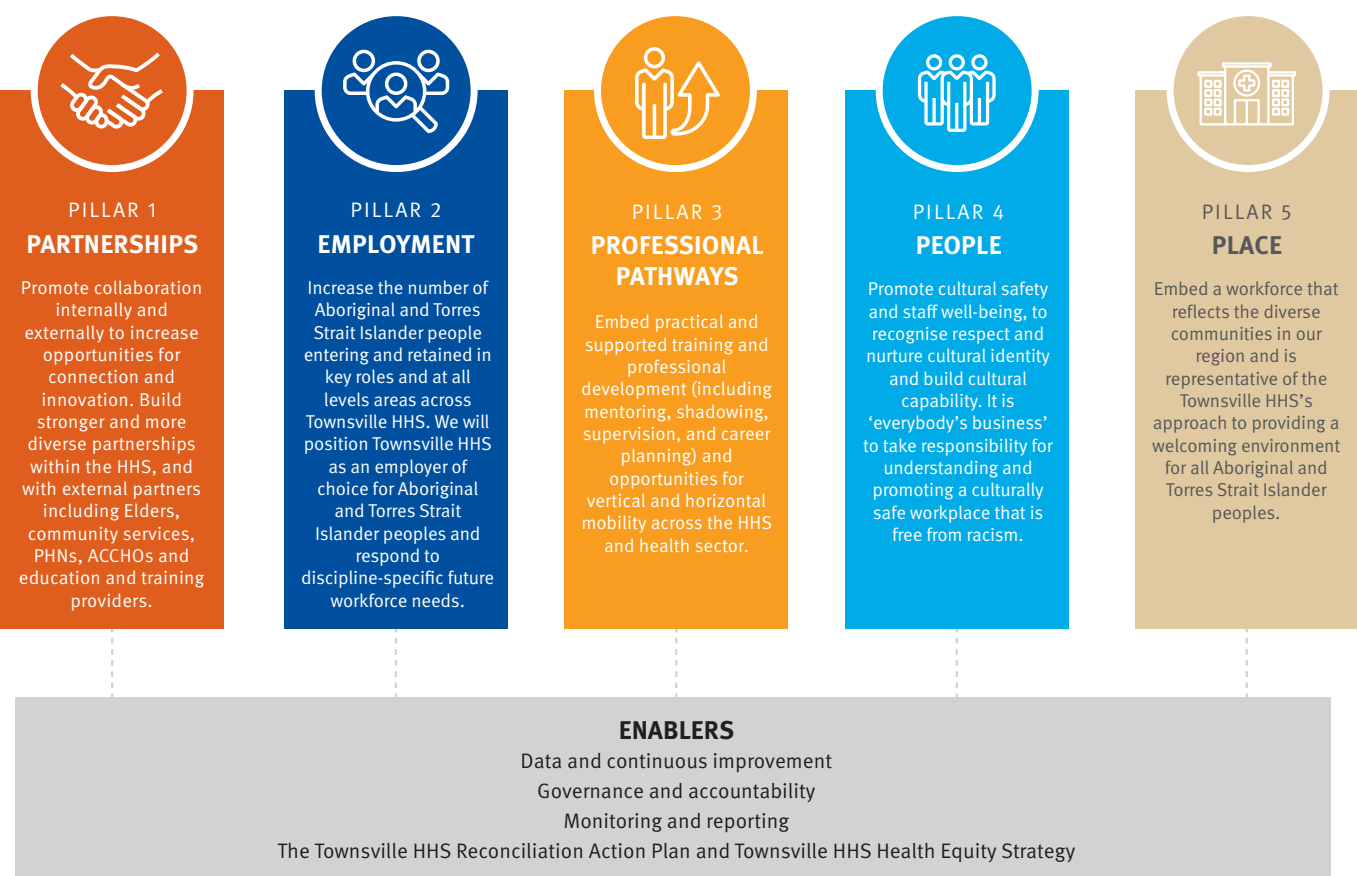


Diagram 1: The five strategic pillars with aims and enablers





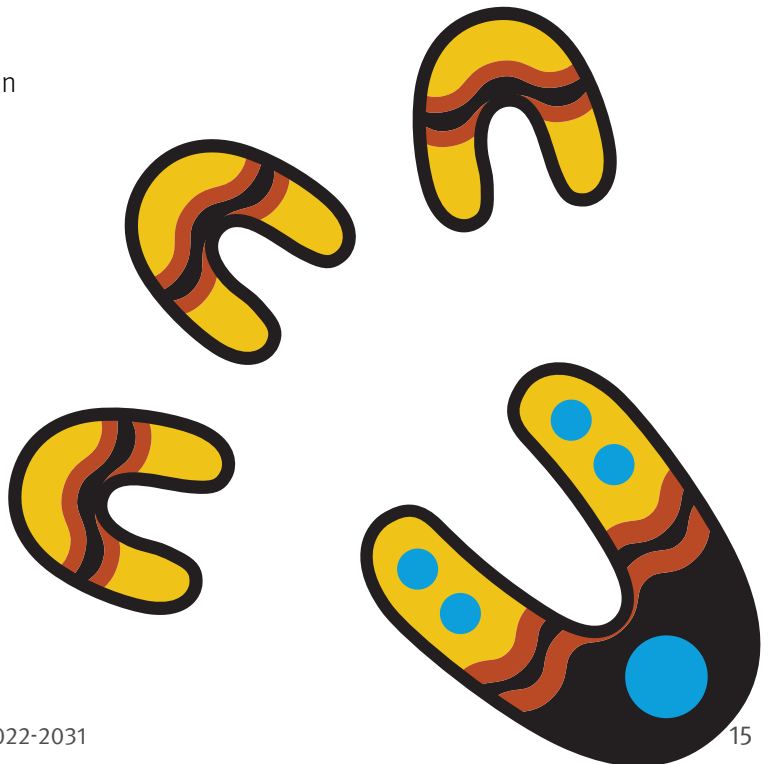
## Implementation timeline

This inaugural Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy has been designed for implementation over a 10-year time frame from 2022 to 2031.

The strategies within the Workforce Strategy have been developed as either short-term or long-term strategies, to reflect the level of effort required for each strategy over the 10-year period. Short-term (or foundational) strategies will be implemented in the early years, and long-term strategies will build in scale and impact over time.

**Short-term Strategies:** Strategies that achieve ‘quick wins’ and early improvements, support the development of success measures and provide the foundation for the implementation of the Workforce Strategy as a whole. The short-term strategies must be actioned within the first 12 to 18 months of the implementation of the Workforce Strategy.

**Long-term Strategies:** Strategies that support the scaling up of activities for the implementation of the Workforce Strategy, which incorporate learnings from the initial implementation period for the Workforce Strategy and continue to build and retain the Townsville HHS’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce with a focus on the future.



# Strategies for action



## STRATEGIC PILLAR 1: Partnerships

**Aim:** Promote collaboration internally and externally to increase opportunities for connection and innovation. Build stronger and more diverse partnerships within the HHS, and with external partners including Elders, community services, PHNs, ACCHOs and education and training providers.

### Objective 1.1: Collaborate with education providers to build the workforce pipeline

Develop partnerships with education and training providers to build a direct link to work experience opportunities and employment at Townsville HHS for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

#### Strategies

- 1.1.1 Collaborate with high schools, VET education providers and Universities such as James Cook University and Central Queensland University to:
  - showcase career opportunities at Townsville HHS through career days and work experience, and by highlighting existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees as role models;
  - understand the pipeline of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the Townsville HHS region and develop shared strategies for supporting greater numbers of students into employment through scholarship opportunities and alternative workforce entry pathways; and
  - expand and enhance traineeship, apprenticeship and placement opportunities across disciplines with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander designed and led initiatives.
- 1.1.2 Evaluate and enhance scholarships programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people such as the Townsville Hospital and Health Service Indigenous Academic Merit Scholarship and prioritise positions based on health need in the Townsville HHS region.
- 1.1.3 Provide innovative and flexible work experience opportunities for students, such as placements during semester breaks, to engage and build relationships between students and Townsville HHS promoting Townsville HHS as an employer of choice.

#### Success measures

- Increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students engaged in traineeships, apprenticeships, work experience and placement opportunities at Townsville HHS across disciplines.
- Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who have completed traineeships, apprenticeships, work experience and scholarship opportunities that subsequently take up positions at Townsville HHS.



## STRATEGIC PILLAR 1: Partnerships

**Aim:** Promote collaboration internally and externally to increase opportunities for connection and innovation. Build stronger and more diverse partnerships within the HHS, and with external partners including Elders, community services, PHNs, ACCHOs and education and training providers.

### Objective 1.2: Improve internal collaboration across Townsville HHS

Foster collaboration between Townsville HHS teams for workforce planning and recruitment of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce with a focus on using data to support decision-making.

#### Strategies

- 1.2.1 Formalise collaborative internal partnerships across the service to promote the growth and development of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce.
- 1.2.2 Improve the systematic collection, distribution and use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce data across Townsville HHS's Service Groups and facilities in collaboration with the Department of Health (refer to the 'Data and Information' section of this document for additional detail).

#### Success measures

- Partnerships are formally established and ongoing between teams to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce initiatives.
- Regular reporting of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce data to the Townsville HHS Strategic Leadership Team.





## STRATEGIC PILLAR 2: Employment

**Aim:** Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people entering and retained in key roles and at all levels areas across Townsville HHS. We will position Townsville HHS as an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to respond to discipline-specific future workforce needs.

### Objective 2.1: Becoming an employer of choice

Develop Townsville HHS's reputation as a culturally safe and responsive employer to attract Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

#### Strategies

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| 2.1.1 | Partner with healthcare organisations in our region such as Primary Health Networks, TAIHS, Alliance Rehabilitation Pty Ltd and other key providers to develop innovative ways to attract and recruit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and enable their professional development.   |
| 2.1.2 | Create and trial a quarterly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Forum and an associated Peer Support Network for 12 months to provide formal connection between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff across the organisation and as a platform for peer support, networking, and information sharing.  |
| 2.1.3 | Co-design an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 'Employee Value Proposition' that outlines the unique set of benefits that employees can expect to receive in return for the skills, capabilities, and experience that they bring to Townsville HHS, and roll out an associated promotional campaign that resonates with current and future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.  |
| 2.1.4 | Continue to roll out campaigns to encourage and improve the confidence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to complete the Equality of Employment Opportunity (EEO) Census Questionnaire. The communications for these campaigns will include a clear emphasis on privacy principles and articulate the benefits of providing information for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and Townsville HHS services. |
| 2.1.5 | Establish an online profile within the Townsville HHS website platform of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff working at Townsville HHS who are relatable and can support the attraction of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce.   |
| 2.1.6 | Review existing annual Staff Excellence Awards and identify new categories to celebrate Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff who drive innovation or better healthcare practice that supports or builds Townsville HHS's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce.   |
| 2.1.7 | Coordinate and host regular Indigenous Workforce Innovation Forums (e.g. annually) to share and showcase innovation in building the capacity and capability of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce.   |

#### Success measures

- Increase in number and percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed.
- Increase in the number of recruitment campaigns targeted toward Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee experience survey.
- Establishment of Terms of Reference that clearly describe the purpose and discussion points for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Forum and Peer Network and the Indigenous Workforce Innovation Forum.



## STRATEGIC PILLAR 2: Employment

**Aim:** Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people entering and retained in key roles and at all levels areas across Townsville HHS. Our aim is to position Townsville HHS as an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to respond to discipline-specific future workforce needs.

### Objective 2.2: Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people entering and retained in the workforce across all levels

Improve existing recruitment practices for both identified and non-identified positions to incorporate best practice standards and to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants with the best opportunity to gain employment.

#### Strategies

- 2.2.1 Undertake a focused review of application, recruitment, and onboarding processes in order to identify specific opportunities to improve accessibility and the experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates.
- 2.2.2 Create affirmative recruitment programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across all occupational groups and create a register of applicants for future positions that become vacant.
- 2.2.3 Evaluate the recruitment and backfilling processes for identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce positions.
- 2.2.4 Evaluate the impact of the Townsville HHS's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and implement new frameworks to elevate and promote their scope of practice in community and acute clinical care settings.
- 2.2.5 Explore opportunities to expand the existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Administration Traineeship Program to provide ongoing employment for trainees who successfully complete the Certificate III in Business Administration.

#### Success measures

- Increase the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples employed in clinical and non-clinical streams.
- Increased number of advertised positions that reference Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific cultural knowledge and expertise.
- Increased rating of onboarding experience with an induction experience measure to be developed within the first year of implementation of the Workforce Strategy.



## STRATEGIC PILLAR 3: Professional Pathways

**Aim:** Embed practical and supported training and professional development (including mentoring, shadowing, supervision, and career planning) and opportunities for vertical and horizontal mobility across the HHS and health sector.

### Objective 3.1: Formalise career and succession planning

Establish formal processes to promote the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and ensure that cultural knowledge is passed down, along with role and business experience.

#### Strategies

- 3.1.1 Develop an internal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Graduate and Management Staff Rotation Program that offers placements each year, including at least one identified position for an Indigenous graduate.
- 3.1.2 Develop a Staff Shadowing Program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff with the aim to build skillsets, increase corporate knowledge, increase networking and to provide development opportunities for staff and Townsville HHS.
- 3.1.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to record their aspirational goals and interests in the PAD process to support their professional development and learning opportunities.
- 3.1.4 Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical officer pathway focused on cultural mentoring, career advice and professional development of doctors in training, utilising individualised support networks with the aim to increase and retain the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical officers at Townsville HHS.

#### Success measures

- Establishment of a Graduate and Management Staff Rotation Program, Staff Shadowing Program and the career planning register for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.
- Establish permanent ongoing support for the Indigenous Interns Pathway.

### Objective 3.2: Drive a supportive culture

Create a culture that supports the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and embed and promote these practices in line with the ICARE values.

#### Strategies

- 3.2.1 Develop and pilot a mentoring program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees that promotes staff and wellbeing.
- 3.2.2 Facilitate the development of culturally appropriate formal leadership training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and link this training with the existing suite of staff development programs.





## STRATEGIC PILLAR 3: Professional Pathways

**Aim:** Embed practical and supported training and professional development (including mentoring, shadowing, supervision, and career planning) and opportunities for vertical and horizontal mobility across the HHS and health sector.

### Success measures

- Establishment of an internal network of cultural and professional mentors of all staff to provide support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.
- Increase in the completion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership training.

### Objective 3.3: Prioritise learning and development

Develop culturally safe training opportunities and promote learning and professional development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

### Strategies

- 3.3.1 Perform an evaluation of the current training opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. Identify gaps and formalise a suite of structured training opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.
- 3.3.2 Develop processes and opportunities for job shadowing and on-the-job learning across the organisation.
- 3.3.3 Assess the feasibility of a central professional development pool of funds that is accessible to the Townsville HHS's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. The use of the central pool would be overseen by a small group of Townsville HHS executives led by the Executive Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and reported on to the Workforce Advisory Committee and Strategic Leadership Team.

### Success measures

- Number and proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees engaged in training opportunities across Service Groups and Divisions.
- Outcomes of the use of central professional development pool of funds reported to the Workforce Advisory Committee and Strategic Leadership Team.



## STRATEGIC PILLAR 4: People

**Aim:** Promote cultural safety and staff well-being, to recognise respect and nurture cultural identity and build cultural capability. It is 'everybody's business' to take responsibility for understanding and promoting a culturally-safe workplace that is free from racism.

### Objective 4.1: Build cultural safety and celebrate cultural identity

Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees through initiatives to promote cultural safety as 'everybody's business' across all levels and roles, and to recognise, respect and nurture cultural identity.

#### Strategies

- 4.1.1 Encourage active participation and continuous learning for all staff in regard to promoting cultural safety by including these activities as a component of Performance and Career Development Plans.
- 4.1.2 Evaluate the workplace policy for Townsville HHS's zero-tolerance approach to racial discrimination and identify opportunities for improvement including data points to collect, analyse and monitor.
- 4.1.3 Encourage all staff to celebrate significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates and events.
- 4.1.4 Evaluate the Cultural Practice Program to develop a targeted contemporary evidence-based program that builds cultural capability of staff across Townsville HHS and supports staff to provide culturally appropriate care in community and home-based settings.

#### Success measures

- Identification of trends based on data collection and analysis regarding racial discrimination in the workplace and actionable activities for improvement.
- Increased use of additional paid leave for selected cultural days.
- Submission of outcomes of the evaluation of the Cultural Practice Program, including actionable options for improvement, to the Strategic Leadership Team.



## STRATEGIC PILLAR 5: Place

**Aim:** Embed a workforce that reflects the diverse communities in our region and is representative of Townsville HHS's approach to providing a welcoming environment for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

### Objective 5.1: Collaborate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across the region

Develop local connections to country, Traditional Custodians and Elders to build a welcoming environment for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

#### Strategies

- 5.1.1 Build on existing partnerships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders including consumers, Elders and Traditional Custodians to understand areas for improvement and collaboration opportunities for building the workforce.
- 5.1.2 Embrace the diversity of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities by accessing existing bodies such as ATSICAC, Aboriginal consumer group bodies and other groups within Townsville HHS to discuss initiatives for building the workforce.
- 5.1.3 Promote awareness of the Workforce Strategy and progress toward objectives through targeted marketing campaigns and communications within Townsville HHS and the broader community.

#### Success measures

- Trial a quarterly meeting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.
- Establishment of a biannual communications to Townsville HHS and broader community of the Workforce Strategy, initiatives, and opportunities.

### Objective 5.2: Develop Operational Goals for Service Groups and teams

Create accountability for service groups and teams by developing operational goals that monitor and report on progress on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce employment targets.

#### Strategies

- 5.2.1 Embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce matters as a standing agenda item on the Workforce Advisory Committee. All service groups and divisions are to report on progress toward targets and to provide updates on activities and initiatives being developed and implemented.
- 5.2.2 Create data capture and management processes to track and monitor employment targets including the overarching employment target of six per cent.

#### Success measures

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce measures and progress reported to the Workforce Advisory Committee by Service Groups and Divisions.
- Develop and track progress toward Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce targets for Townsville HHS's Service Groups, Divisions and facilities (toward the six per cent overarching target).



# Key enablers

## Data and information

A critical enabler for the implementation of the Workforce Strategy is the availability, accuracy and reliability of data and information to inform decision-making for workforce planning, monitoring and evaluation, and continuous quality improvement. Data and information provide the evidence to support the strategies within the Workforce Strategy, as well as the measurement of outcomes.

Immediate improvement to data quality and availability regarding the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce is required to enable the automated linkage of data sets and analysis of this data to generate workforce insights. This will require support from and coordination with the Queensland Department of Health.

### Strategies

1. Formally raise the issue of the lack of data quality and availability regarding the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce with the Queensland Department of Health. The lack of quality data acts as a barrier to workforce planning, decision-making and reporting regarding the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and must be addressed.
2. Create a systematic approach and best practice guidelines for the establishment, collection, recording, usage, definitions and interpretation of data about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce at Townsville HHS.
3. Enhance reporting systems to enable the collection of data regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in greater granularity, and data regarding prospective employees, employee experience and retention.
4. Improve the distribution, understanding and use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce data across the Townsville HHS's service groups and facilities.
5. Establish regular reporting of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce data to the Townsville HHS Workforce Advisory Committee and Strategic Leadership Team.

## Governance and Accountability

This Workforce Strategy provides a strategic framework that brings together a range of objectives for building and supporting Townsville HHS's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce. The implementation stage is of critical importance, and successful implementation will depend on investment in and accountability for the Workforce Strategy across all levels of leadership and the workforce.

Clear governance and accountability for the strategies in this document is critical to ensure that there is commitment to and maintained enthusiasm for implementation of the Workforce Strategy. This can be achieved through clear and ongoing alignment with the Townsville HHS's broader organisational strategy.

Accountability will be embedded through reporting via Townsville HHS's existing governance bodies. The Townsville HHS Workforce Advisory Committee will have overarching responsibility for the Workforce Strategy and will report on progress on a biannual basis to the Townsville HHS Strategic Leadership Team and Board.

## Monitoring and Reporting

Implementation of the Workforce Strategy will require continuous monitoring to assess progress toward fulfilling the commitments in this document. The success measures outlined in this document form the basis for monitoring and reporting on each of the objectives under the five pillars.

Determining what will be reported on a biannual basis to the Townsville HHS Strategic Leadership Team and Board will be a critical first step in the development of an implementation plan for the Workforce Strategy.

It is recommended that the format, frequency and schedule of reporting on the Workforce Strategy be formally documented. We will monitor and report on our progress to the commitments in this Workforce Strategy and will use the success measures outlined in this document to examine our success.

## Next steps

The next steps required to proceed toward the implementation of this Workforce Strategy are to:

1. Validate and confirm the mapping of the strategies to the time horizons as outlined under each Strategic Pillar
2. Confirm clear lines of organisational responsibility and accountability for the execution of the Workforce Strategy across all levels of leadership and workforce
3. Determine data governance and decision-making arrangements and implement data improvement activities (as outlined in the 'Data and Information') that will be required to support the delivery of the strategies identified in this document
4. Outline an approach and / or methodology for the development and implementation of those success measures for the Workforce Strategy that are not yet able to be measured
5. Develop an implementation plan for this Workforce Strategy
6. Define interim and final review activities for this Workforce Strategy.



# Glossary

<b>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs)</b>	An ACCHO is a primary healthcare service initiated and operated by the local Aboriginal community to deliver holistic, comprehensive, and culturally appropriate healthcare to the community which controls it, through a locally elected Board of Management. The National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) is the national peak body for all ACCHOs.
<b>Apprenticeship</b>	An apprenticeship provides a nationally recognised qualification and on-the-job experience. It combines time at work with training and can be completed full-time, part time or during school years. Apprenticeships are available to anyone of working age, regardless of their level of education.
<b>Australian Indigenous Doctors Association (AIDA)</b>	A not-for-profit, member-based, professional association supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical students and doctors.
<b>College Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives (CATSINAM)</b>	The peak advocacy body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives in Australia.
<b>Cultural safety</b>	Cultural safety is determined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, families and communities. Culturally safe practise is the ongoing critical reflection of health practitioner knowledge, skills, attitudes, practising behaviours and power differentials in delivering safe, accessible and responsive healthcare free of racism. <sup>1</sup>
<b>Employee Value Proposition</b>	Defines the unique set of benefits that an employee receives in return for the skills, capabilities, and experience they bring to an organisation, and it encompasses the central reasons that people are proud and motivated to work for the organisation.
<b>Health equity</b>	The absence of unfair and avoidable or remediable differences in health among population groups defined socially, economically, demographically or geographically. <sup>2</sup>
<b>Identified position</b>	A job where the employer identifies that it is to be filled by a person with a particular attribute, such as race. <sup>3</sup>
<b>Indigenous General Practice Registrars Network (IGPRN)</b>	A network for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander GP registrars to provide professional and cultural support to one another.
<b>Placement</b>	The process of connecting the selected person and the employer in order to establish an ongoing employment relationship.
<b>The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP)</b>	The voice of general practitioners (GPs) throughout Australia. It sets the standards for education and practice and advocates for better health and wellbeing for all Australians. The RACGP supports members to be involved in all areas of care, including aged care, mental health, preventative care and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health.
<b>Traineeship</b>	A combination of paid work and off-the-job training (college) that if successfully completed, will gain the participant a recognised qualification. This qualification will enhance the participant's career and give them the opportunity to continue through to either apprenticeship (trade qualification) or diploma level.
<b>Workforce Pipeline</b>	A pool of candidates who are qualified and prepared to fill relevant roles within the organisation as soon as they fall vacant. A pipeline of both active and passive candidates helps in perceptive and proactive workforce planning.

<sup>1</sup> AHPRA. 2020. National Scheme's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Cultural Safety Strategy. Accessible here [Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency - National Scheme's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Cultural Safety Strategy \(ahpra.gov.au\)](https://www.ahpra.gov.au/National-Scheme's-Aboriginal-and-Torres-Strait-Islander-Health-and-Cultural-Safety-Strategy.aspx)

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organisation. 2021. Social determinants of health. Accessible here: [www.who.int/health-topics/social-determinants-of-health#tab=tab\\_3](https://www.who.int/health-topics/social-determinants-of-health#tab=tab_3)

<sup>3</sup> Queensland Human Rights Commission. 2019. Identified Positions. Accessible here: [www.qhrc.qld.gov.au/your-responsibilities/for-employers/recruitment/identified-positions#:~:text=The%20term%20'identified%20position'%20is,particular%20attribute%2C%20such%20as%20race.](https://www.qhrc.qld.gov.au/your-responsibilities/for-employers/recruitment/identified-positions#:~:text=The%20term%20'identified%20position'%20is,particular%20attribute%2C%20such%20as%20race.)







Townsville Hospital and Health Service

# **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2022-2031**