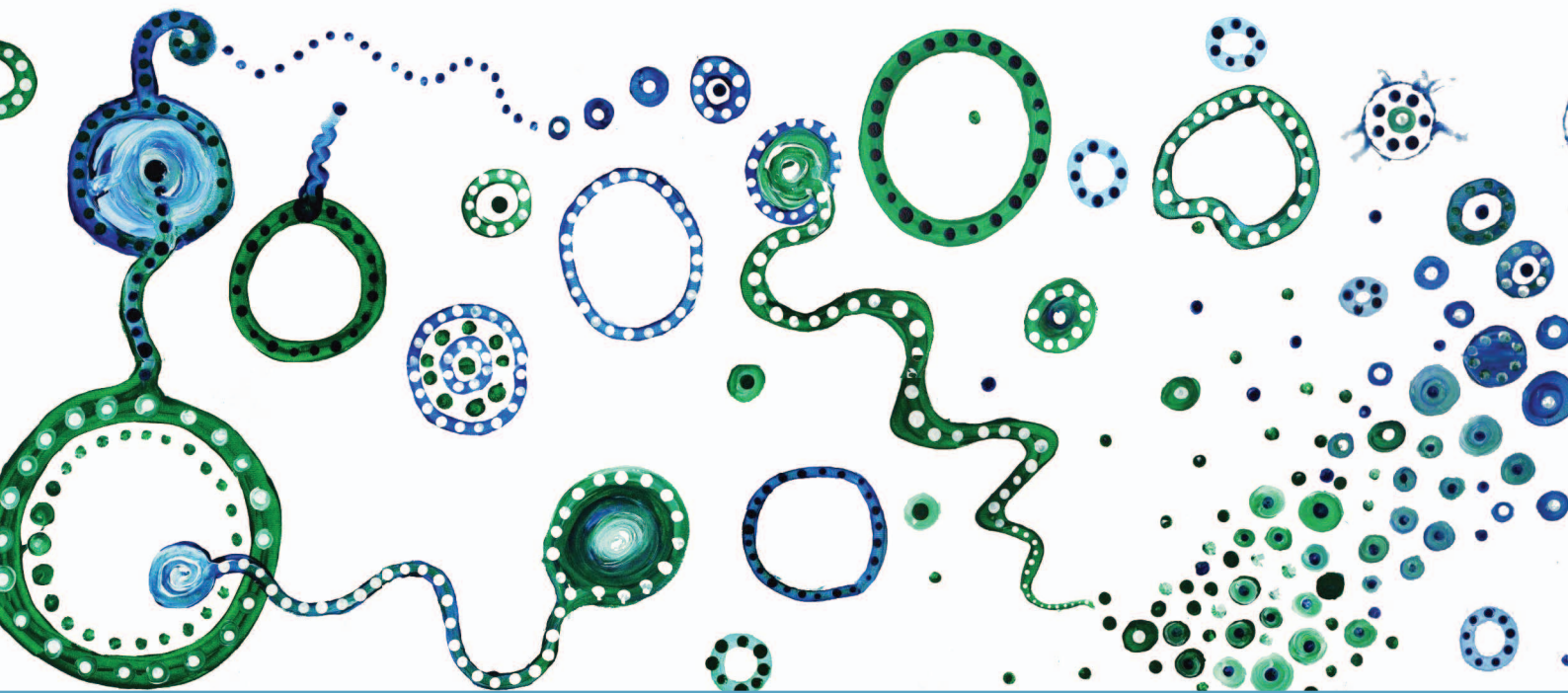




ACI NSW Agency
for Clinical
Innovation

A Framework for working effectively with Aboriginal people





AGENCY FOR CLINICAL INNOVATION

Level 4, Sage Building
67 Albert Avenue
Chatswood NSW 2067

PO Box 699
Chatswood NSW 2057
T +61 2 9464 4666 | F +61 2 9464 4728

E info@aci.health.nsw.gov.au | www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI) acknowledges that we operate and function on the lands of the Cammeraigal people.

We pay our respect to these lands that provide for us.

We acknowledge and pay respect to the ancestors that walked and managed these lands for many generations.

We acknowledge and recognise all Aboriginal people who have come from their own Country and who have now come to call this Country home.

We acknowledge elders who are the knowledge holders, teachers and pioneers.

We acknowledge the youth who are the hope for a brighter future and who will be future leaders.

We acknowledge and pay our respect to Aboriginal people who have gone before us and recognise their contribution to Aboriginal people and community.





FOREWORD

The Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI) believes in better health for all, and acknowledges the significant health disparities between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in NSW.

We are keen to make a difference and to build meaningful sustainable initiatives in partnership with Aboriginal communities, to close this gap.

The *Framework for working effectively with Aboriginal people* outlines the first steps we will take to foster respect and understanding within our organisation. It outlines the training we will provide about the needs of Aboriginal communities, and guidance on how we can start working with Aboriginal communities.

Implementing this Framework and achieving its vision will involve all parts of our organisation. I'd encourage everyone within ACI, our staff and our Board to take this opportunity to increase their knowledge and understanding, and to gain confidence in working respectfully and effectively with Aboriginal people and communities.

We commend Raylene Gordon for leading development of this Framework, and the members of the working group and staff for their contribution to its development.

Together we can build a strong culture and trusting and effective relationships that will lay the foundation for our future work, to improve Aboriginal health and ensure the well-being of generations to come

Professor Brian McCaughan
ACI Board Chair

Dr Nigel Lyons
ACI Chief Executive



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GLOSSARY

ACI	Agency for Clinical Innovation
ACCHS	Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services
AH&MRC	Aboriginal Health & Medical Research Council
CCAP	Chronic Care for Aboriginal People
NAIDOC	National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee



AIM

Strategic objective

This framework is to be used as a tool to support ACI in achieving its strategic objective:

To develop a culture within ACI which demonstrates respect for the needs and priorities of Aboriginal people and other priority populations in all ACI projects and activities

It aims to support ACI staff to have the knowledge and skills to work effectively with Aboriginal people and communities in achieving this goal. The executive at ACI have endorsed this framework and are committed to leading a genuine approach to achieve positive, sustainable outcomes with Aboriginal communities.

The ACI has a state-wide remit. This Framework has been developed with the intention to provide an overarching model for working with Aboriginal communities. However it is acknowledged that each Aboriginal community will have its own process and protocols for engaging and working with ACI staff.



Photograph: NSW Ministry of Health



KEY COMPONENTS

1. Commitment to working with Aboriginal communities

ACI staff including the executive and the board affirm their commitment to the NSW Health Statement of Commitment (2010). The Statement acknowledges regret over past practices and policies which have impacted on the social and emotional well-being of Aboriginal people, and reaffirms commitment to continue to deliver sustainable health outcomes and

contribute to closing the health gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

The Statement of Commitment has been amended to reflect its use as an affirmation of the original commitment, and key actions for implementation of the strategic objective at ACI.

We acknowledge that we are located on the lands of the Cammeraigal people. The Cammeraigal people are the traditional custodians of this land and are part of the greater Eora Nation. We pay our respects to past, present and future ancestors of the Aboriginal nations.

This Statement of Commitment is an acknowledgment of regret over past practices and policies which have impacted on the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal people and their health.

We recognise Aboriginal people as the First Nations People of Australia and the traditional owners and custodians of land. Aboriginal people have lived here for over 60,000 years and are recognised as being the oldest living continuous culture of the world, with unique cultures, languages and spiritual relationships to the land and seas. We are strongly committed to improving the physical, cultural, spiritual and family wellbeing of Aboriginal people in this State.

On behalf of the *Agency for Clinical Innovation*, we are **Sorry** for the pain and loss placed on the lives of Aboriginal people who have been dislocated from their culture, displaced from their homelands and watched their children being taken away.

We will make this commitment on this day, _____ to continue to:

- Uphold and apply cultural protocols such as 'Welcome to Country' or 'Acknowledgment of Country';
- Acknowledge and respect Aboriginal cultural identity, practices and beliefs by working in partnership with Aboriginal people and communities;
- Use the Aboriginal Health Impact Statement and other agreed consultation protocols when developing, implementing and reviewing programs as they relate to Aboriginal people; and
- Implement agreed actions that support delivery of services and programs to Aboriginal people in NSW.

For the Agency for Clinical Innovation, this Statement of Commitment means building respectful working relationships with Aboriginal communities to deliver sustainable health outcomes and contribute to closing the health gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.



2. Principles for working with Aboriginal communities

This framework has been developed and will be implemented in a way that is respectful to Aboriginal people and communities. ACI will adopt the following principles that are based on those identified in the *NSW Aboriginal Health Plan 2013-2023* (see box).

Implementation of the Framework will support all ACI staff to have an understanding of the practical application of these principles in dealing with Aboriginal communities.

1. Trust and cultural respect;
2. Recognition of the cultural values and traditions of Aboriginal communities;
3. Holistic approaches to the health of Aboriginal people;
4. The valuable and unique role of Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services;
5. The participation of Aboriginal people at all levels of Health service delivery and management;
6. Partnerships with Aboriginal communities through Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) and the Aboriginal Health & Medical Research Council of New South Wales (AH&MRC);
7. Recognition of the contribution the health system can make to the social determinants of Health.



Girls attending NAIDOC Week celebrations at Penrith. Photographer: Sue Wildman.



3. Key strategies for working with Aboriginal communities

Leadership

The ACI board and executive will lead the organisation to achieve a culture within ACI which demonstrates respect for the needs and priorities of Aboriginal people and other priority populations in all ACI projects and activities. ACI staff will:

- Actively model expected attitudes and behaviors;
- Recognise and acknowledge traditional ownership at official gatherings;
- Ensure the ACI environment is respectful and inviting for Aboriginal people; and
- Communicate the importance of culturally significant events such as National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC).

Equity

ACI will develop a process for consultation and engagement with Aboriginal communities to ensure program, policy design and delivery meets the needs of Aboriginal communities. Activities will include:

- Ensuring ACI structures and processes engage appropriate Aboriginal stakeholders in decisions relating to Aboriginal people;
- Developing appropriate program resources to meet the needs of Aboriginal people;
- Development of Aboriginal specific projects in network activities; and
- An annual forum will be held to share experiences across portfolios using examples of effective work with Aboriginal communities.

Capacity

All ACI staff will develop the capability to deliver culturally sensitive, respectful and inclusive services to Aboriginal peoples by:

- Participating in Cultural Respect Training;
- Exploring opportunities to develop a greater understanding and appreciation of cultural knowledge.

Relationships

ACI staff will work collaboratively with other agencies and organisations to achieve long term change, in partnership with Aboriginal communities.



4. Resources and support for staff working with Aboriginal communities

[Aboriginal Workforce Strategic Framework 2011-2015](#). This Strategic Framework focuses on addressing health workforce skill gaps as well as supporting the economic and social wellbeing of Aboriginal people.

[NSW Aboriginal Health Plan 2013-2023](#). This Plan sets the framework using six key strategic directions to close the gap in Aboriginal health outcomes, by spreading responsibility for achieving health equity for Aboriginal people in NSW, across all NSW Health operations.

[NSW Aboriginal Health Impact Statement and Guidelines](#). The Statement and Guidelines is to ensure the needs and interests of Aboriginal people are embedded into the development, implementation and evaluation of all NSW Health initiatives.

[Respecting the Difference: An Aboriginal Cultural Training Framework for NSW Health](#). This Framework will assist increasing cultural competencies and therefore promote greater understanding of the processes and protocols for delivering health services to Aboriginal people. See also [Respecting the Difference Cultural Training Course](#).

[Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Origin – Recording of Information of Patients and Clients](#). This policy directive outlines the requirements for collecting and recording accurate information on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status of all clients of public health services in NSW.

[Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples – Preferred Terminology to be Used](#). “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples” should always be printed in full and terms such as “ATSI” should not be used.

[Welcome to Country Protocols Policy](#). Recognition of Aboriginal peoples’ unique position in the history and culture of NSW.



*Baby checkup at an Aboriginal Medical Centre.
Photograph: Adrian Cook, NSW Ministry of Health*



5. Implementation

Implementation of the framework will be phased to ensure the approach is consistent with the principles previously outlined.

Executive Support

The ACI Executive has endorsed the framework and is committed to supporting staff through its ongoing implementation.

Formation of a Working Group

A Working Group has been established from interested staff at ACI to support the ongoing development and implementation of the framework. The working group is responsible for driving the activity of the framework, monitoring implementation and reporting back to portfolios and executive.

Cultural Leadership

Cultural leadership can be used by organisations to inform their practices and approaches to meeting the needs of Aboriginal people through core business, staff, procedures and programs. ACI will explore options and opportunities for input from Aboriginal Elders and cultural leaders.

Embedding Cultural Leadership in an organisation demonstrates a commitment to developing a respect for Aboriginal culture by acknowledging the role of Elders and Leaders in Aboriginal communities and provides credibility in decision making processes relating to Aboriginal issues. It applies the traditional concept of Aboriginal Elders as Leaders in their communities in

a contemporary setting and allows Aboriginal people to provide leadership in relation to Aboriginal cultural protocols and processes.

Plan

Implementation plan attached (see Appendix).



Lake Cargelligo Elder. Photographer: Chris Lynch



6. Evaluation

Evaluation of the impact of the strategy will be undertaken. It is anticipated that this would include the following:

- Staff Surveys;
- Network surveys.



A volunteer planting the Sea of Hands in Sydney, November 2007. Photographer: Priscilla Brice-Weller for ANTaR



APPENDIX

A Framework for working effectively with Aboriginal people: Implementation plan

Phase 1	Task	Responsibility	Due
1.1	Finalise Framework	ACI Chronic Care for Aboriginal People (CCAP) team	September 2013
1.2	Develop a draft Implementation Plan	CCAP team	September 2013
1.3	Develop key messages for the Framework: • Leadership • Capacity • Equity • Relationships	Working group	September 2013
1.4	Endorse Framework and key messages	Executive	October 2013
1.5	Present Framework at Staff Forum	Chief Executive	October 2013
1.6	Directors hold internal portfolio discussions about how they would use the framework and provide feedback to the working group	Directors	November and December 2013
1.7	Collate and analyse feedback from portfolios and update the implementation plan	Working group	December 2013
1.8	Develop a Guide for integrating the Framework into ACI portfolios	Working group	January 2014
1.9	Develop a communication plan including the Executive and working group act as advocates for the Framework	Working group	Ongoing
Phase 2	Task	Responsibility	Due
2.1	Launch the Framework and commitment statement	Chief Executive	February 2014
	Annual forum to workshop the Framework principles	Working group	Before June 2014
2.2	Hold portfolio specific workshops to discuss integrating the Framework within existing work	Directors	February to June 2014
2.3	Portfolios develop a portfolio specific action/integration plan	Directors	Before June 2014
2.4	Review plans and provide feedback	Working group	Before June 2014
2.5	Directors report to Executive on progress of portfolio specific plans	Directors/Executive	Ongoing
2.6	Develop a process with executive to monitor ongoing implementation of framework strategies	Working group	Before June 2014
2.7	Progress implementation of the supporting strategies from the framework, including: • Cultural Respect Training • Welcome to Country Protocol • Aboriginal Health Impact Statement • Aboriginal Identification Policy	Working group	Ongoing
2.8	Organise informal debriefing sessions for staff with access to cultural advice and expertise	Working group	Ongoing
Phase 3	Task	Responsibility	Due
3.1	Review learnings from portfolios' first attempt at using the Framework to support work in their portfolios	Working group and Executive	Before June 2014
3.2	Write up process used by portfolios to consult, engage, governance, Aboriginal representation	Working group	Before June 2014
3.3	Develop ACI protocol for appropriate consultation with Aboriginal communities	Working group	Before June 2014
Phase 4	Task	Responsibility	Due
4.1	Review the Framework and implementation process	Working group and Executive	July 2014





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