

Aboriginal Health Cultural Safety Plan

2022-2025



Western Health

Western Health acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our sites stand. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

We are committed to the healing of country, working towards equality in health outcomes, and the ongoing journey of reconciliation.

The artwork displayed throughout Western Health's *Aboriginal Health Cultural Safety Plan 2022 - 2025* is a painting by Annette Joy titled *Delgaia*. *Delgaia* means to be good and means to be well in Wemba Wemba. The colours represent Mother Earth:

Yellow - the sun, warmth and freshness

Black/Brown - our people, strong, powerful, safety, warmth and the land

Red - earth, love and strength

Green - growth, nature

Blue - calming, sky and water

Orange - energy, creativeness and self-respect.

The black and white dragonflies symbolise transformation, change and life. In the centre are our people coming together and joining with everyone to be well and safe.

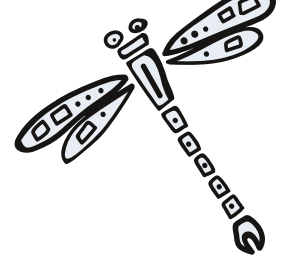
Annette Joy is a Gourmajanyuk and Wergaia woman and we are delighted that she has completed several artworks for Western Health.



your Culture | your Ability | your Identity

We welcome you at Western Health





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Foreword by Chair and CEO

We are delighted to launch our *Aboriginal Health Cultural Safety Plan 2022-2025*.

This plan has been developed in consultation with our staff, stakeholders and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and will guide our actions and priorities over the next four years. We would like to thank and acknowledge all those involved for their invaluable expertise in developing this Plan.

The Plan outlines our commitment to building on the efforts and progress we have made through the successful implementation of our past Aboriginal Health Cultural Safety Plans and Employment Plans. As a health service, we believe that cultural safety is everyone's business.

We committed to joining the Cultural Safety Plan and Employment Plan into one as it better embodies our Strategic Direction - Together, we deliver healthcare of the future.

This Plan articulates how we will attract Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates to our growing health service and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to thrive in their roles.

We recognise that providing meaningful employment has the potential to transform the lives of Aboriginal people, their families and the community. We are also aware that employing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff will support our patients through their health journey. Our goal is for Western Health to be an employer of choice for the Aboriginal community.

Western Health is committed to delivering culturally safe care to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and families.

We look forward to bringing the initiatives in the Plan to life. We encourage all Western Health staff, volunteers, patients, families and communities to embrace this plan and consider the role they can play in ensuring its success.

Robyn Batten, Board Chair
Russell Harrison, Chief Executive



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Western Health Strategic Direction

The *Western Health Strategic Direction 2021-2023* was developed in 2020, during a period of rapid change in how and where care is delivered. At its heart, this strategy reflects the constant commitment to our patients, people and communities. It builds on the achievements of the past, enhances the strengths of Western Health and looks to a bold and promising future. Guided by the **vision** “*Together, we deliver the healthcare of the future*” and **purpose** “*Providing the Best Care for the people of the West, in the right place and at the right time*”, the strategy builds on those imperatives and experiences through five Strategic Directions:

VISION

Together, we deliver the healthcare of the future.

PURPOSE

Providing the Best Care for the people of the West, in the right place and at the right time.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Simple
Sustainable
Connected
Innovative

VALUES

Compassion
Accountability
Respect
Excellence
Safety





01



We partner
with patients
and families

Our patients and families are actively involved in their care and connected to the right services.

02



We care
for our people

Our staff and volunteers are supported, engaged and equipped to embrace a dynamic future.

03



We deliver
services for
the future

Our services are expanding within and beyond hospital walls, advancing high-quality and connected care.

04



We are better
together

Our respectful relationships with our community, system-wide partners and each other drive collaboration and better outcomes.

05



We discover
and learn

Our innovation, research and education inspires and benefits our patients, staff and communities, to deliver a better future.

Our Community

Western Health is the major healthcare provider to one of the fastest growing and most diverse regions of Australia. The catchment population has recently exceeded 1 million people, and the birth rate and movement into this region means that strong growth will continue in the years ahead, projected to approach 1.5 million people by 2036.

While the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in the Western region is relatively small compared to the non-Indigenous population, having a strong and healthy Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community is crucial to the overall health of the region.

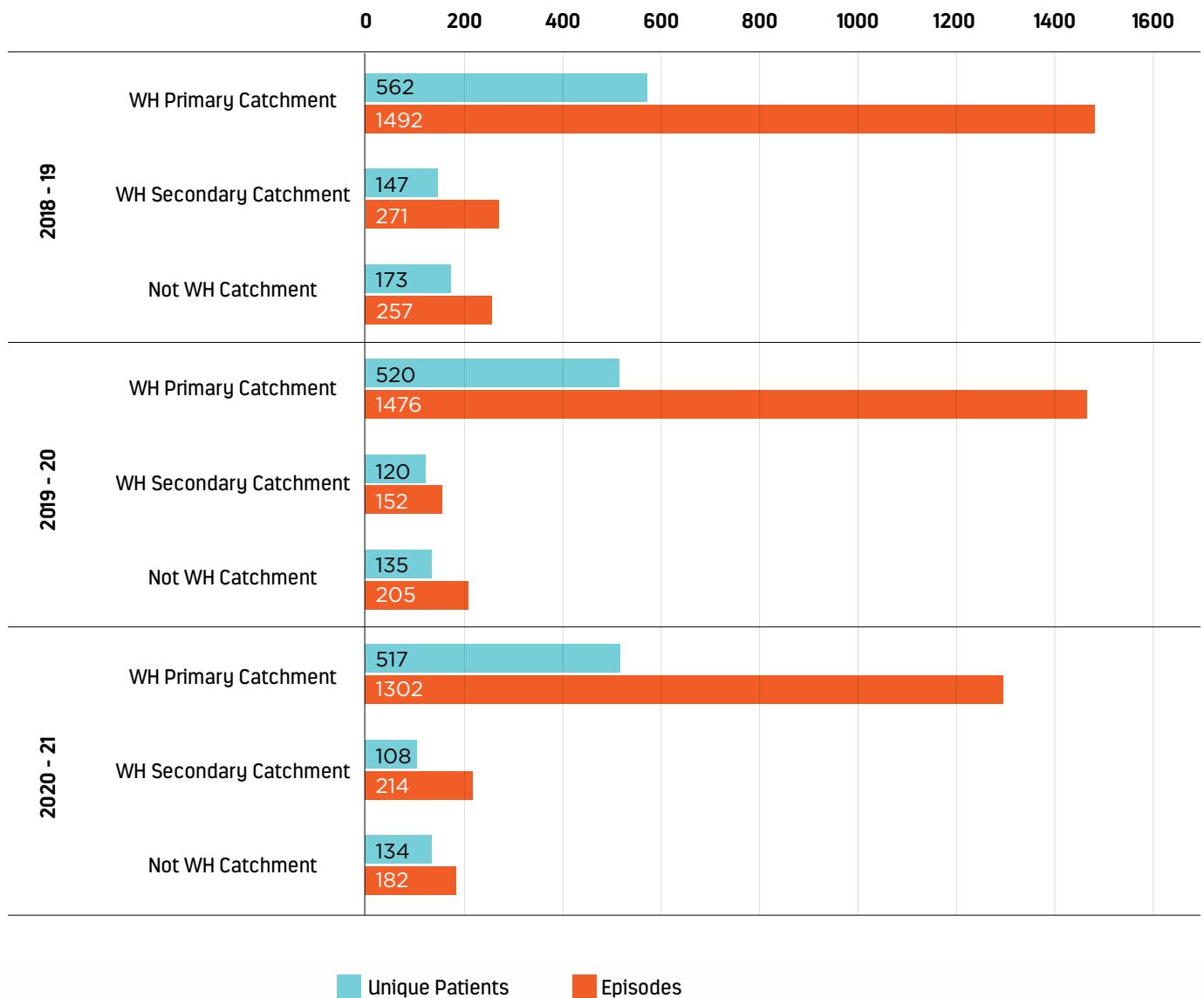
The data shows that in volume, most people who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in our catchment live in Brimbank, Hume, Melton and Wyndham, whereas in Melton and Moorabool they represent a higher proportion of the population compared to Victoria. Of note, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community has grown faster in Western Health LGA's (6.5% per year) compared to the rest of Victoria (4.4% per year), with Melton and Wyndham the fastest growing areas (Table 1).

Local Government Area				2016		2006 to 2016		
	2006	2011	2016	Total Pop.	% of Total	Growth	Growth %	CAGR
Brimbank	567	701	815	194,319	0.4%	248	43.7%	3.7%
Hobsons Bay	310	393	488	88,778	0.5%	178	57.4%	4.6%
Hume	892	1,046	1,461	197,376	0.7%	569	63.8%	5.1%
Macedon Ranges	171	194	297	46,100	0.6%	126	73.7%	5.7%
Maribyrnong	258	322	429	82,288	0.5%	171	66.3%	5.2%
Melton	508	793	1,286	135,443	0.9%	778	153.1%	9.7%
Moonee Valley	324	317	430	116,671	0.4%	106	32.7%	2.9%
Moorabool	176	259	368	31,818	1.2%	192	109.1%	7.7%
Wyndham	702	1,145	1,735	217,122	0.8%	1,033	147.2%	9.5%
Western Health Catchment LGA's	3,908	5,170	7,309	1,109,915	0.7%	3,401	87.0%	6.5%
Other	26,233	32,821	40,479	4,816,709	0.8%	14,246	54.3%	4.4%
Victoria	30,141	37,991	47,788	5,926,624	0.8%	17,647	58.5%	4.7%

Table 1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in Western Health catchment LGA's, 2006 to 2016

Source: Census of Population and Housing Community Profiles 2006, 2011, and 2016, Australian Bureau of Statistics

Figure 2: Western Health inpatients with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander status flagged on their inpatient record, 2018-19 to 2020-21.



Source: Western Health inpatient dataset 2018-19 to 2020-21, Western Health Performance unit. Prepared by Western Health Strategy and Service Planning unit.

Both the number of unique patients and inpatient episodes reduced in 2019-20 and 2020-21, which is likely a result of changes to the operating environment of public hospitals in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the patients that received inpatient care and identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, the majority resided in the Western Health primary catchment (68%) in 2020-21.

1 The amalgamation between Western Health and Djerriwarrh Health Services commenced in July 2021, therefore analysis of inpatient activity before the amalgamation includes historical Western Health sites only.

Our People

Employing more than 10,000 staff and over 700 volunteers, there is a focus on enabling and supporting the culture and capability of all people across the organisation.

A large proportion of our staff are from the western suburbs, or live locally now, further entrenching Western Health in the communities we serve.

Western Health has a strong philosophy of working with its local community to deliver excellence in patient care. We span a number of municipalities and value our relationships with each local government.

Our growing health service has longstanding relationships with health providers in the western region of Melbourne, as well as strong affiliations with numerous colleges and academic institutions.

At Western Health, we are proud of our achievements to partner with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities. Over the past year, we have successfully commenced a weekly Aboriginal Outpatient Clinic delivered by our General Medicine team in partnership with our Aboriginal Health Unit, Wilim Berrbang. The clinic was shaped by asking Aboriginal patients and external service providers about the barriers and enablers to attending outpatient appointments at Western Health.



Our Services

Western Health is the major public health care provider and one of the largest employers in the rapidly growing and culturally diverse suburbs west of the city of Melbourne.

Western Health is the major public health care provider and one of the largest employers in the rapidly growing and culturally diverse suburbs west of the city of Melbourne. It operates acute hospitals at Sunshine, Footscray, Williamstown and Bacchus Marsh, along with smaller facilities at Melton, Sunbury, Caroline Springs and Williamstown (Hazeldean). The Sunshine Hospital accommodates Joan Kirner Women's and Children's, where maternity and paediatric care are provided to our community, and Yanna Yanna Prevention and Recovery Centre (PARC) service, which supports females who are experiencing a mental health problem and do not require an acute inpatient admission.

There are a number of strategic and capital planning projects underway at Western Health. Over the coming years, the new Footscray Hospital, Point Cook Community Hospital and Melton Hospital will be new locations further extending the network to a total of 14 sites, while Sunbury Day Hospital will undergo capital expansion to become the Sunbury Community Hospital. Additionally, Western Health and the previous Djerriwarrh Health Services formally amalgamated in July 2021 strengthening and integrating the wide range of services and capabilities across the Western Health network.

Western Health provides a comprehensive range of services, ranging from acute tertiary services in areas of emergency medicine, intensive care, medical and surgical services, through to subacute care, community services and specialist ambulatory clinics. This is a combination of hospital and community-based services, in-reach services, services at home, and services across all stages of life from aged care, adult and maternity to care for paediatric patients and newborn babies.

A key outcome of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System is that Western Health will become a designated provider of mental health services in the West from mid-2023. Furthermore, a new acute mental health unit is being developed at the Sunshine Hospital. This new 52-bed facility will provide Sunshine Hospital with an expanded, dedicated mental health area and is expected to be commissioned in May 2023.



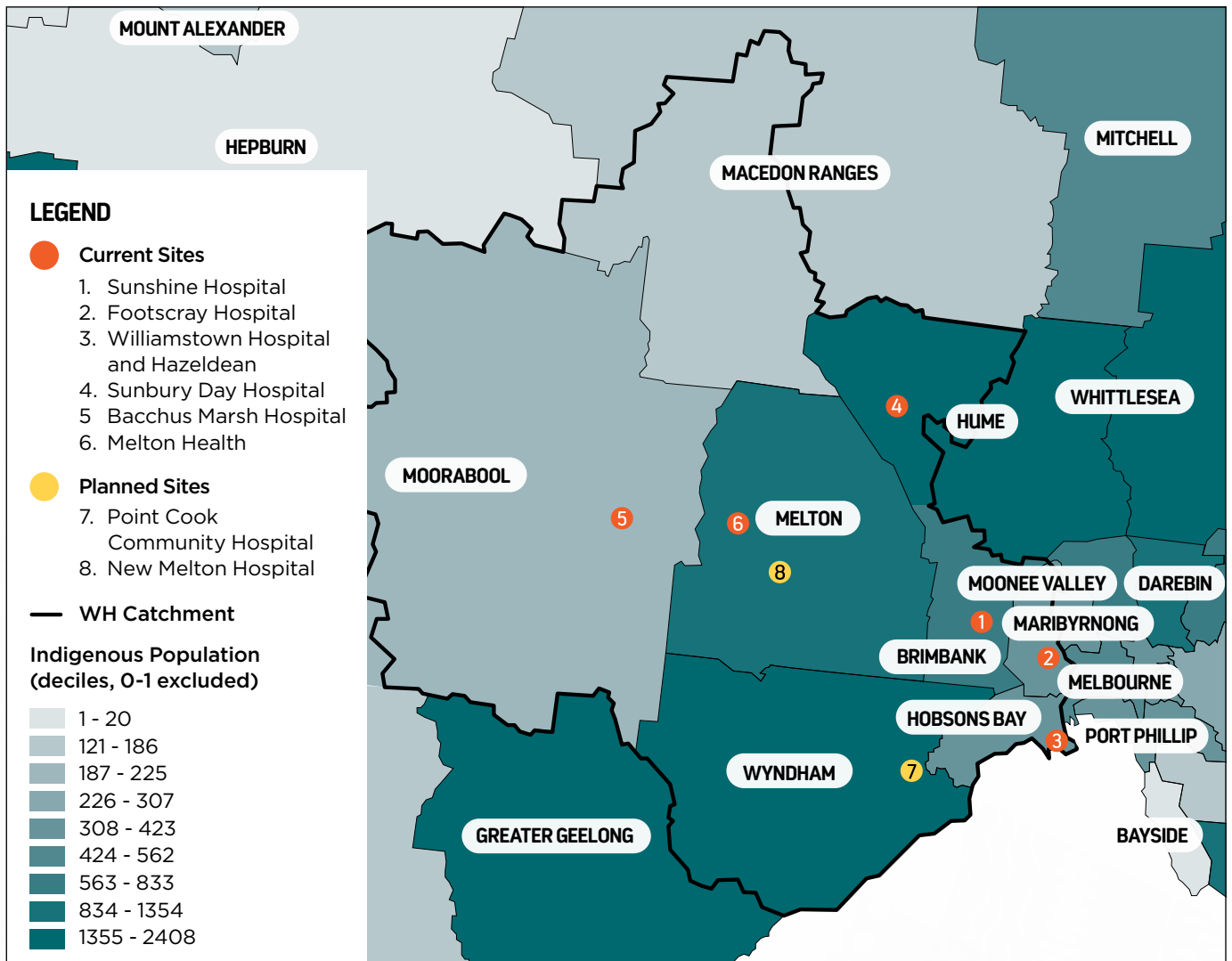


Figure 3: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population in Victoria, 2016

Source: ABS Census data 2016, map prepared by Western Health Strategy and Service Planning unit

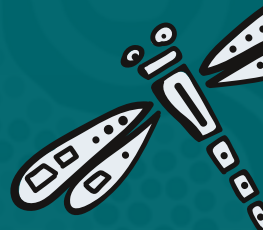




Services Provided

Western Health have dashboards that give timely information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander presentations in the Emergency Department, Inpatients and Outpatients. The data can be analysed in a number of different ways including by –

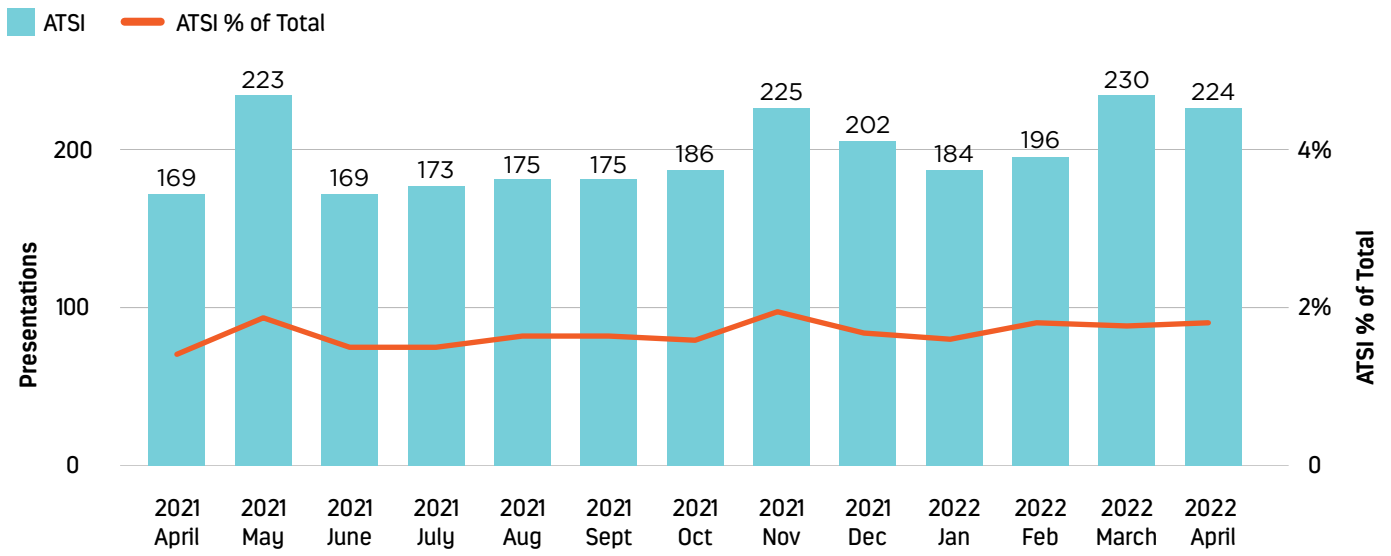
- Western Health site, i.e. Footscray Hospital, SunshineHospital , Williamstown Hospital
- Age group
- Gender
- Triage category
- Care type e.g. acute, mental health, sub-acute
- Division, Department, Unit



Emergency Department Presentations

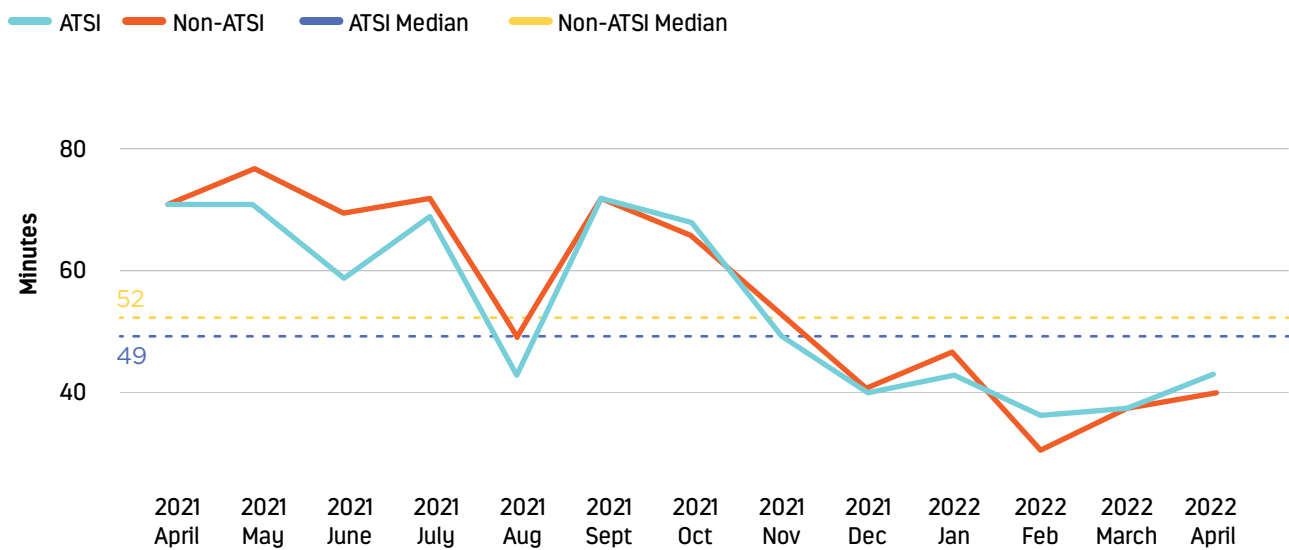
This graph outlines Emergency Department presentations stratified for Aboriginal and non-Indigenous patients. Aboriginal patients make up, on average, 1.6% of all patients seen in the Emergency Departments at Western Health.

ED Presentations



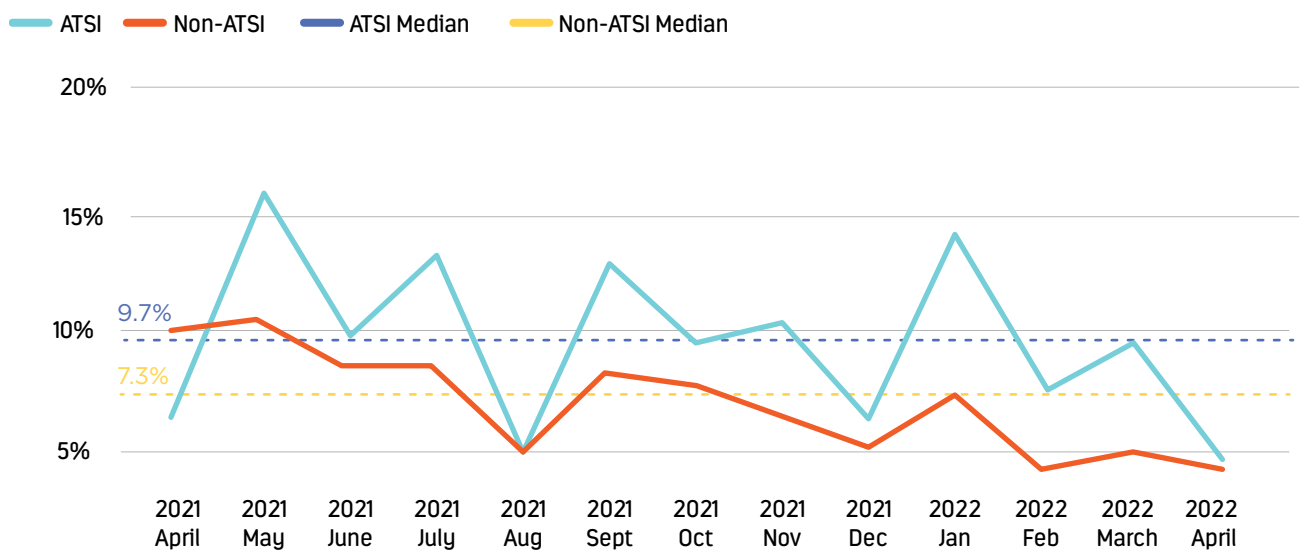
The median time before being first seen for the period outlined, is 59 minutes for Aboriginal patients and 65 minutes for non-Indigenous patients. This means that Aboriginal patients are seen in a slightly shorter time than non-Indigenous patients when they present to our Emergency Departments.

First Seen

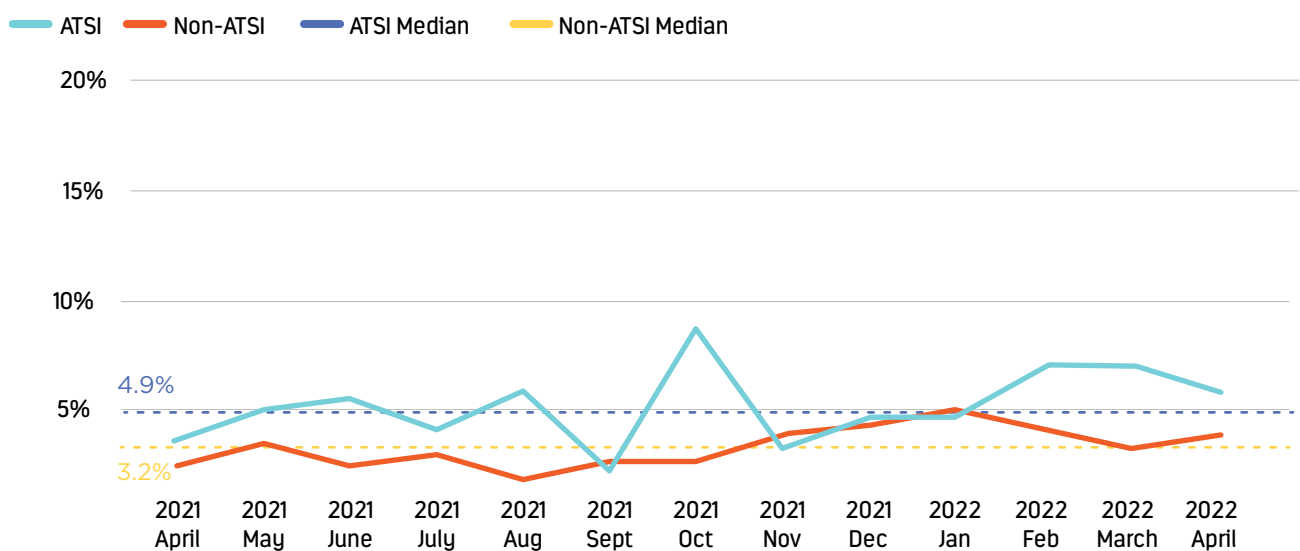


Aboriginal patients leave our Emergency Departments without treatment or after treatment has started but is not complete at consistently higher rates than non-Indigenous patients. The median is 10.1% for Aboriginal patients as compared to 7.6% for non-Indigenous patients leaving without treatment. Up to 8.7% (non-Indigenous 2.8%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients left after treatment started in October 2021 to a low of 3.1% (non-Indigenous 3.8%) in November 2021.

Left without treatment



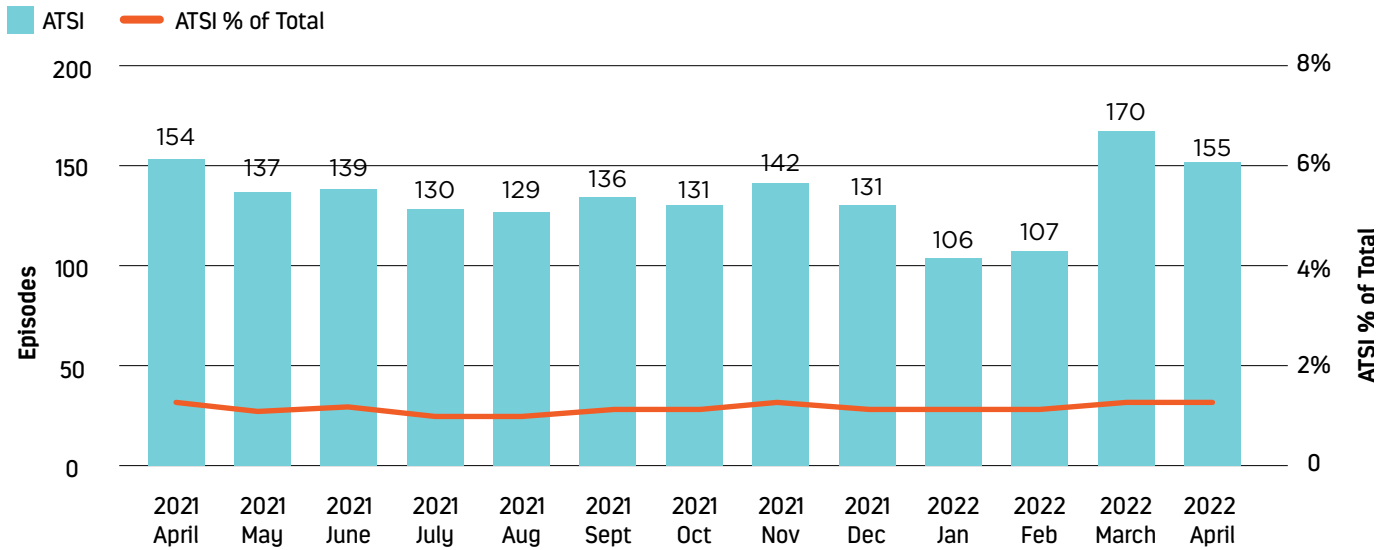
Left after treatment started



Inpatient Presentations

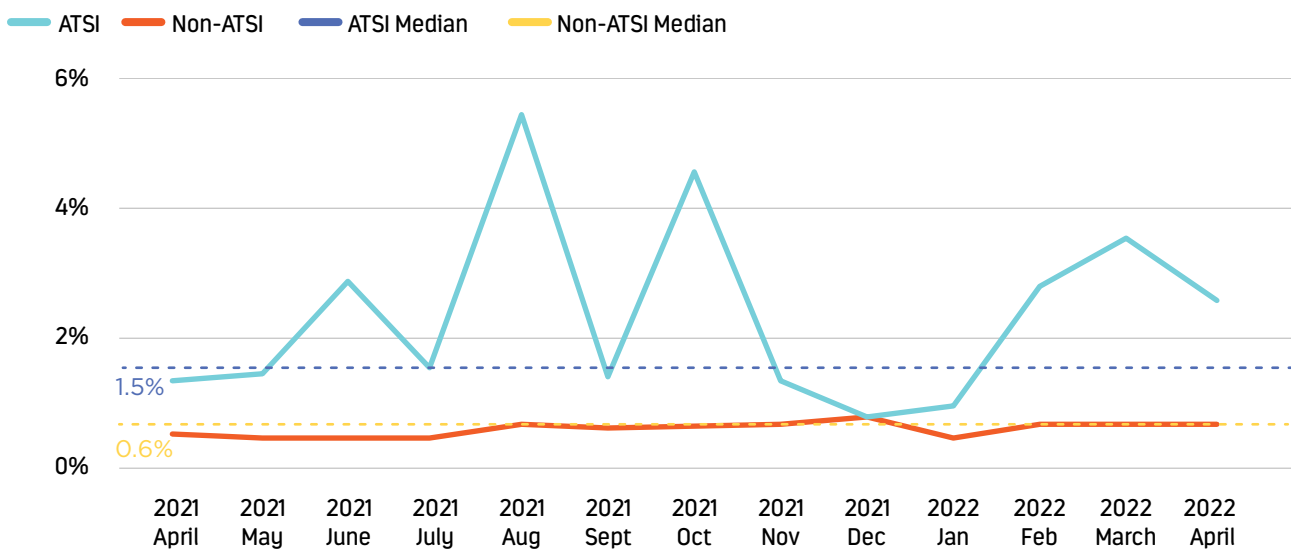
On average, 1.3% of inpatients at Western Health identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

Inpatients

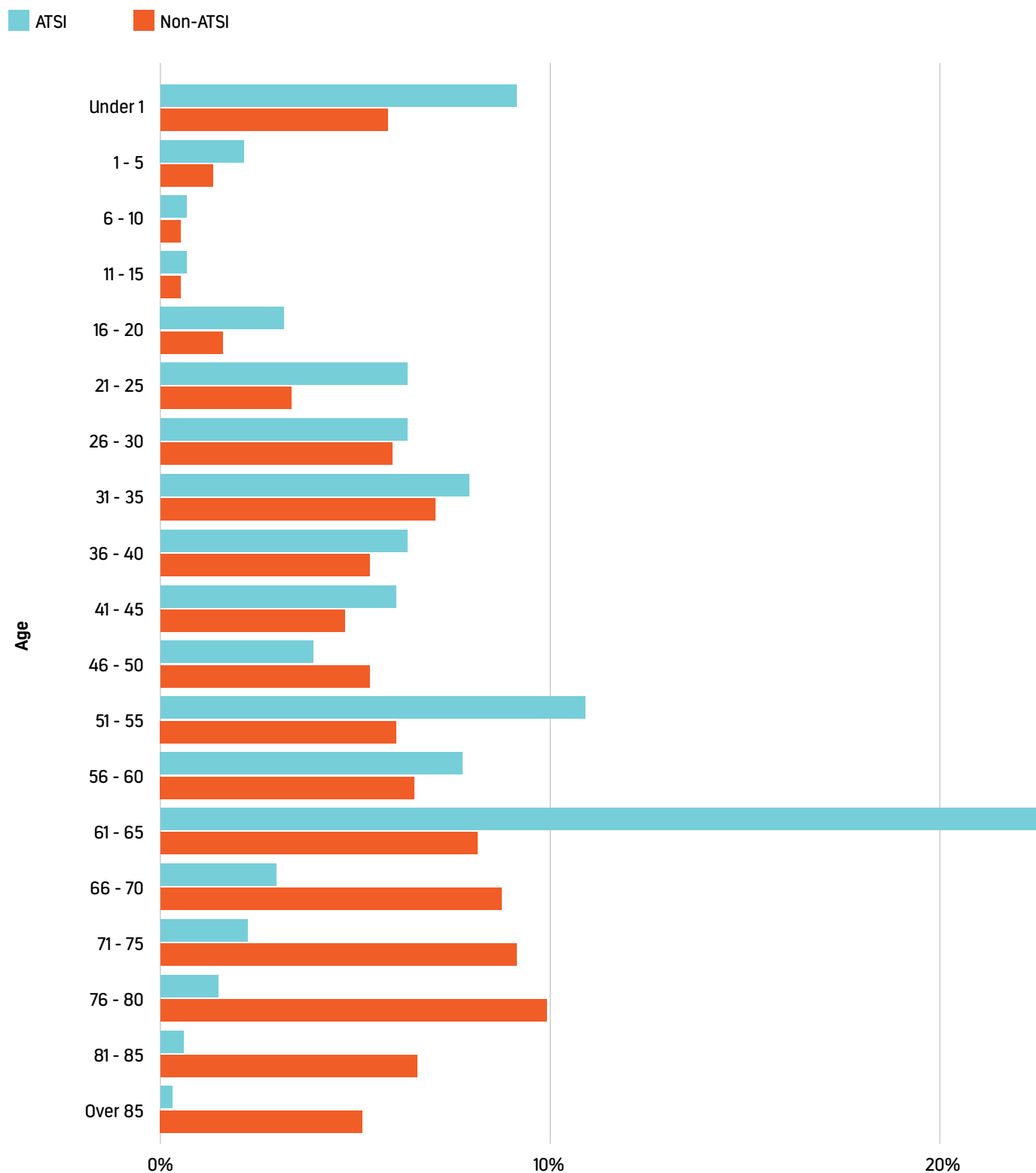


A median of 1.5% of Aboriginal people left against medical advice during their inpatient stay, compared to 0.6% of non-Indigenous people.

Left against medical advice %



Aboriginal patients, compared to non-Indigenous patients, are more likely to be under 1 year of age which reflects the young population and the success of the Galinjera Maternity program. Patients tend to also be in the 61-65 age bracket but less in the older age brackets, perhaps reflecting the well-documented reduced life expectancy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

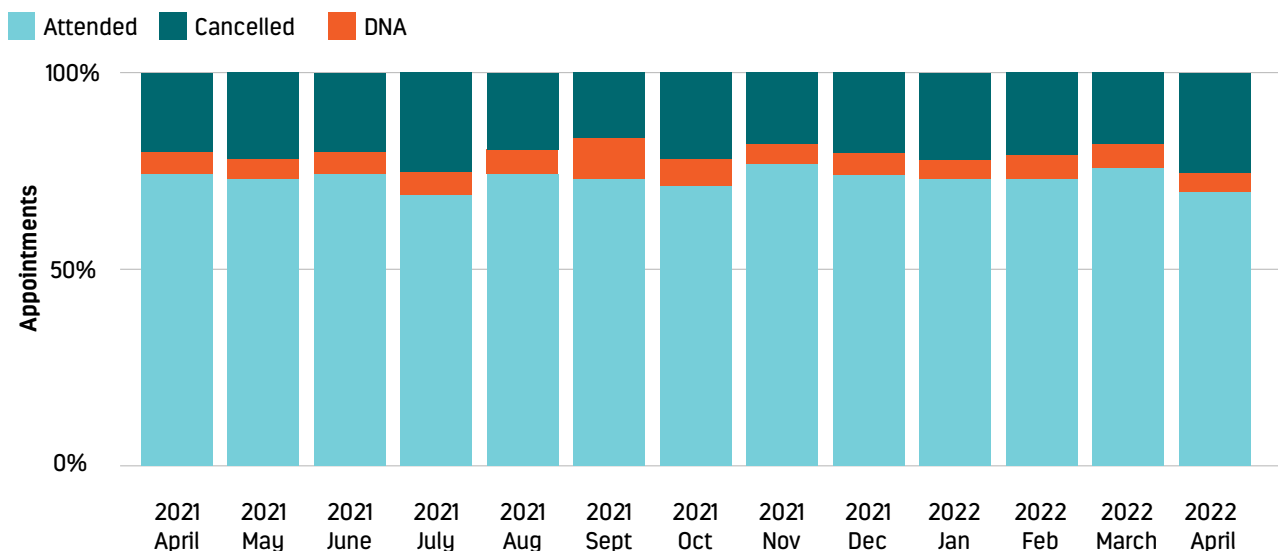


Outpatient appointments

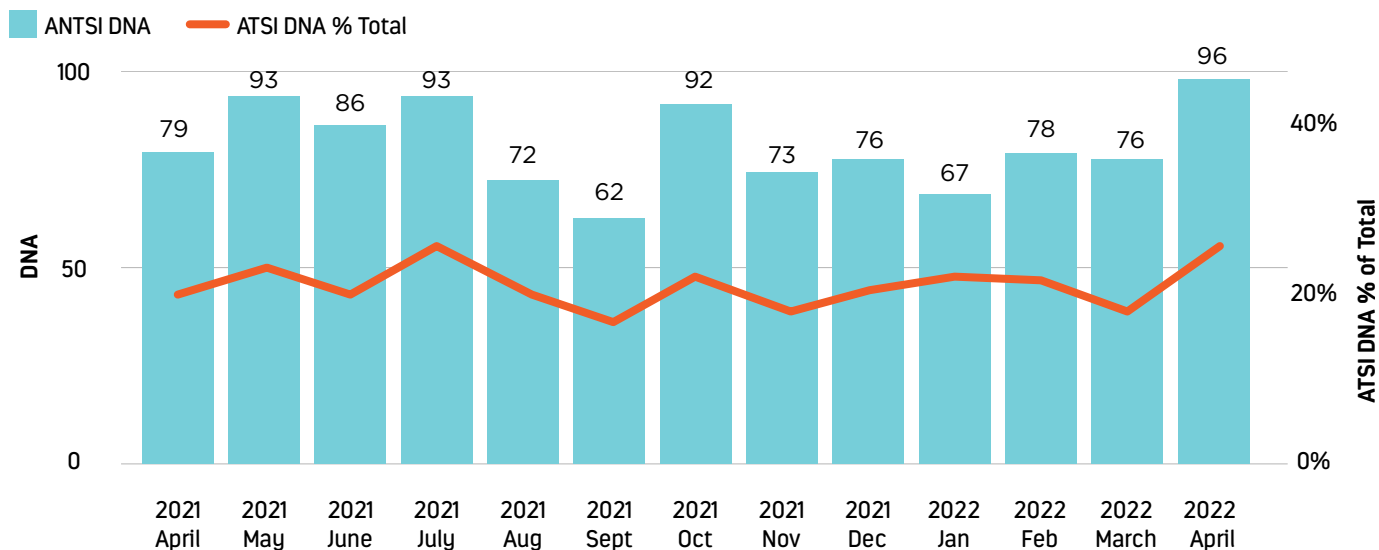
1.27% of all scheduled outpatient appointments are for the Aboriginal community.

On average, 18.31% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients do not attend their outpatient appointments. This high did not attend (DNA) rate is being partly addressed through the commencement of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Clinic, a culturally responsive general medical outpatient service.

ATSI attendance



DNA





Brolgas in the Night Sky, Annette Joy

Cultural Safety – Definition

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety is defined as an environment that is safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people where there is no challenge or denial of their identity and experience (William 2008). Cultural safety means creating environments where people feel safe – where there is no challenge to their identity, and where their needs can be met.

Culturally safe health care practices contribute to improved health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. De Silva et. al. 2021 (reference) identified elements of culturally safe care constitutes culturally health care practice:



The findings of this review have important implications for policy and practice.

Korin Korin Balit Djak (2017) acknowledges and prioritises the importance of applying a cultural determinant approach as an effective way to improve the social determinants of health, wellbeing and safety. The plan recognises that cultural factors can positively impact on the lives of Aboriginal people. This includes language, spirituality and connection to country, to family and to community. Cultural determinants utilise strength-based approach, and recognise the importance of self-determination.

The Department of Health has developed an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety framework. It moves beyond cultural awareness by placing a strong importance on reflecting on how one's own beliefs, values and behaviours impact on the safety of others. The framework is for mainstream organisations to take responsibilities to create culturally safe services and workplaces and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and clients, who have a right to culturally safe workplaces and services.

The cultural safety framework is supported by an agreed set of guiding principles. These are: leadership, self-determination, human rights approach, support and sustainability, culturally-safe systems, ongoing learning, accountability and transparency, respect and trust. There is a cultural safety continuum reflective tool that describes the four stages of competency in cultural safety as:



01

Unaware

unconsciously incompetent

02

Emerging

consciously incompetent

03

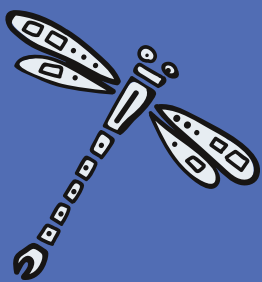
Capable

consciously competent

04

Proficient

unconsciously competent
and open to continual
learning and improvement



Proficiency





Achieved when individuals and organisations commit to improving their knowledge of cultural safety and changing their attitudes, beliefs and behaviours

Our Journey

Western Health’s activities are guided by our Patient First model. The model has 5 focus areas which have been adapted from Safer Care Victoria’s “Partnering in Health” framework to align with our Best Care Framework:



The *Aboriginal Health Cultural Safety Plan 2019-21* had 4 objectives, whereby Western Health would:

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| <p>01</p>  | <p>02</p>  | <p>03</p>  | <p>04</p>  |
| <p>Improve communication and create a safe and welcoming environment.</p> | <p>Have a culturally reflective workforce including our volunteers</p> | <p>Have evidence of Aboriginal health quality improvement, planning and research</p> | <p>Improve access to culturally appropriate services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people</p> |

Despite many competing priorities and the challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, Western Health’s Aboriginal Health Steering Committee and leadership team showed commitment to implementing these objectives towards closing the health gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people compared to non-Indigenous Australians.



The Aboriginal Health Cultural Safety Plan 2019-21

– Our Achievements and Activities

The *Aboriginal Health Cultural Safety Plan 2019-21* had 19 priority actions, all of which has been either fully implemented or commenced and substantially progressed.

Examples of actions which have been implemented are:

- Review membership of the Steering Committee and invite other key communities and stakeholders as required.
- Provision of a room in the birthing suite that is welcoming and culturally sensitive for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.
- Flag Poles fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags at each hospital site.
- Enhance communication of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety initiatives for internal and external stakeholders including posting news and events. Provide updates for Western Health Staff via 'Weekly Wrap'. Utilise opportunities to enhance social media presence.
- Western Health developed Aboriginal communication and branding that is in place across Western Health and includes Aboriginal languages, cultural safety practices into relevant pages of the intranet and internet.

- Cultural Safety Audit Tool progressively utilised in clinical departments at all Western Health sites. Review of the physical environment and Reflections of how each unit works with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and families.
- Reviewed the content of the Western Health Aboriginal Cultural Awareness online training.
- Employees at Western Health participate in Aboriginal Cultural Awareness online training Programs.
- Evaluate and refresh the Western Health Aboriginal Employment Plan.
- Review Western Health policies and procedures and update to reflect the NSQHS Version 2 Guidelines.
- Utilised opportunities to significantly expand and enhance Aboriginal Health Unit resources to enhance services.
- Development of a Western Health email signature incorporating an Acknowledgement to Country, Inclusion statement and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags.
- The Western Health Foundation supported the purchase of Welcome Packs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inpatients, containing a bathroom comfort kit, notebook and pen and information leaflets.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander bassinette blankets, knitted by Western Health volunteers, are given to families with a baby in the Special Care Nursery and patients at End of Life. All maternity families receive a knitted baby beanie in the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander flag colours.
- A dedicated culturally safe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Outpatient Clinic commenced in April 2021, informed by a research project carried out by Deakin University. "Barriers and Enablers to attending hospital appointments: Informing a new one-stop service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients".
- An Acknowledgement of Country is included in all meeting agenda templates and at the start of all education sessions held at Western Health.

Other significant achievements extending on the scope of the Plan have been:

- Approval of a Business Case to substantially increase the resources dedicated to Wilim Berrbang, which was funded by a Cultural Safety Grant. This expanded the reach of the service provided to Aboriginal patients of Western Health.

Development of *Aboriginal Health Cultural Safety Plan 2022 – 2025*

Karabena Consulting, a 100% Indigenous-owned and operated research-based consulting, training, publishing and coaching business, carried out the community, staff and stakeholder consultation to inform Western Health's *Cultural Safety Plan 2022 - 2025*.

Karabena Consulting Trust (KCT) co-designed the project with staff at Western Health. The work was led by Western Health's Aboriginal Health Steering Committee demonstrating a commitment to self-determination, appropriate project governance and ultimately cultural safety.

Aboriginal community members, partner organisations and staff in the Western Health catchment area were engaged to inform the development of the Plan.

Four targeted groups were targeted for this work:

- 01 General Western Health staff
- 02 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff
- 03 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and their families
- 04 Aboriginal Health staff

The surveys were advertised on the Western Health intranet and other social media channels. We incentivised the engagement of staff in the survey through investing in a piece of Wathaurong Glass as a prize for people who could enter the draw as a result of completing a survey.

At the end of the staff surveys, there was an option for respondents to take part in a phone interview to further elaborate on their views and experiences of cultural safety at Western Health. This approach reaped over 400 completed staff surveys.

A roundtable discussion was conducted virtually with a selection of external partners of Western Health, including members of the Aboriginal Health Steering Committee. The latter committee also met with a member of the KCT during the consultation process to get a progress report and to have another opportunity to provide feedback.



Our Cultural Safety Commitments and Performance Indicators



Strategic Direction 01 - WE PARTNER WITH PATIENTS AND FAMILIES

Actions to be Implemented	Timelines	Success Indicators	Responsibility
Culturally safe practices in health care			
Embed 'Strengthening Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework' into family and children service design.	June 2023	Western Health policies and procedures reflect the "Strengthening Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework".	Wilim Berrbang Strengthening Hospital Responses to Family Violence and Child Safeguarding Project Lead
Engagement with partner agencies to facilitate integration of cultural determinants of health and well-being across the life course e.g. cultural healing, returning to country for palliative care patients.	2022- 2025	Develop and maintain a register of cultural well-being services offered to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	Wilim Berrbang
Provide an annual review of feedback, incidents and complaints regarding breaches to cultural safety captured on Western Health's risk management system/s.	2022- 2025	Feedback is reviewed annually and informs planning.	Director Best Care Operations Manager, Wilim Berrbang
Contribute to Closing the Gap through a range of initiatives that improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people			
Improved post-discharge connection to services through a Journey Walker (Aboriginal Care Coordinator) position.	December 2022	Employment of a Journey Walker.	Wilim Berrbang ACE team
Provide support and content for an online directory of services, events and employment in the west.	2022 - 2025	Deadly Western Connections is sustainable and thriving.	Wilim Berrbang
Increased Aboriginal Health Liaison Officer (AHLO) services across Western Health sites	December 2022	AHLO services are embedded at the Footscray Hospital as well as the Sunshine Hospital sites.	Manager, Wilim Berrbang
Work with the mental health service team in the recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health practitioners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers who are supported to access training in mental health.	December 2023	Recruitment of Aboriginal mental health practitioner for mental health services.	Manager, Wilim Berrbang Service Development and Operations Manager - Mental Health
Consideration of a focused Cultural Safety Sub-Plan for Melton Community Health Services looking at current gaps and actions to be implemented with timelines and responsibilities allocated.	December 2022	Tailored plan for strengthening culturally safe practices within community health at Western Health.	Executive Sponsor Director Community Health, Bacchus Marsh/ Melton
Commitment to developing an on-call after hours telephone service to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients.	June 2023	An on-call after-hours AHLO service is operational.	Manager, Wilim Berrbang



Strategic Direction 02 - WE CARE FOR OUR PEOPLE

Actions to be Implemented	Timelines	Success Indicators	Responsibility
Improve support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and volunteers.			
Establish a community of practice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at Western Health so they can provide meaningful input into areas such as recruitment, retention, organisational policy, cultural events and cultural support.	March 2023	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff have a strong voice at Western Health and change is enabled.	Executive Sponsor People, Culture and Communications Wilim Berrbang
Develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Welcome Kit.	March 2023	A staff Welcome Kit is available to all identified staff on commencement at Western Health.	Wilim Berrbang
Encourage and support all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to participate in NAIDOC Week events - including NAIDOC march, NAIDOC Ball and NAIDOC flag raising ceremony.	June 2023	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are supported to attend NAIDOC Week events.	People, Culture and Communications Wilim Berrbang
Establish a culturally safe Employee Assistance Program (EAP) pathway for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.	March 2023	A pathway for Aboriginal EAP is established.	People, Culture and Communications
Increase staff and volunteer knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and successes through the provision of meaningful learning opportunities			
Mandatory face-to-face cultural safety training for the Board, Executive and Senior Leadership Group.	June 2023	The existing and new Board and Executive members participate in the training.	Board Executive Senior Leadership Group.
Mandatory staff participation in online cultural awareness training for all staff and volunteers.	December 2022	90% of new staff complete the WeLearn cultural awareness training.	People, Culture and Communications
Develop a cultural learning strategy including developing a range of flexible learning modalities to cater for the diverse roles and programs within Western Health.	December 2023	A cultural learning strategy is developed and clearly communicated.	People, Culture and Communications Wilim Berrbang
Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment and retention			
Review Western Health's recruitment and selection framework from an Aboriginal employment perspective to make it more inclusive for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	June 2023	Western Health's recruitment and selection framework is reviewed.	People, Culture and Communications
Employ a dedicated Aboriginal Employment Coordinator (identified position) or agency. Connect all new staff from the commencement of their employment and provide mentoring during the staff probation period. Build relationships with Aboriginal candidates who apply and establish a "talent" data base of potential candidates. Provide support to Aboriginal staff and volunteers to develop a career development plan, including leadership opportunities. The position or agency will focus on attracting Aboriginal candidates to Western Health, retaining and developing Aboriginal staff and, building relationships with external community stakeholders to support attracting, retaining and developing Aboriginal staff.	June 2023	Employment of a dedicated Aboriginal Employment Coordinator (identified position) or agency who is successfully engaging with potential and current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.	People, Culture and Communications

Actions to be Implemented	Timelines	Success Indicators	Responsibility
Continue partnerships with universities to assist the recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff into health professional roles	2022 - 2025	There is a pathway for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to access health professional roles through universities.	Executive sponsor People, Culture and Communications
Continue to support school visits and career pathways that increases the number of school-based traineeships at Western Health.	2022 - 2025	School-based traineeships are successfully retaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.	People, Culture and Communications
Discovery and learning opportunities			
Develop and facilitate a program of Aboriginal health champions incorporating specialised training and support.	2023 - 2024	A health champion's program is developed and rolled-out.	Manager, Wilim Berrbang
Ongoing training for staff on "Asking the Indigenous identifying question"	June 2023	"Asking the Question" is audited to inform training strategies.	Wilim Berrbang People, Culture and Communications



Strategic Direction 03 - WE DELIVER SERVICES FOR THE FUTURE

Actions to be Implemented	Timelines	Success Indicators	Responsibility
Ensure that the environments at Western Health are culturally safe and welcoming for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people			
Cultural safety review of the palliative care environment, processes and procedures for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	June 2023	A minimum of one room in palliative care displays elements that make it culturally welcoming to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patient and families.	Wilim Berrbang Palliative Care NUM & HOU
Scope the development of a Patient Lounge at the Sunshine Hospital entrance as part of a Welcome Hub that is culturally safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	December 2023	A culturally safe Patient Lounge at the Sunshine Hospital entrance as part of a Welcome Hub is investigated.	Director, Capital Development Wilim Berrbang
Cultural safety audit tool completed in partnership with clinical departments	2022 - 2025	Recommendations and support for staff to make changes within clinical areas.	Wilim Berrbang
Clear identification of AHLO staff within the hospital environment through an optional uniform.	December 2022	A uniform is designed by Wilim Berrbang staff.	Wilim Berrbang
Embed cultural safety into all new capital projects.	2022 - 2025	All new capital projects at Western Health embed cultural safety at all stages of planning and implementation.	Executive Director of Strategy and Partnerships Manager, Wilim Berrbang
Develop and maintain mutually beneficial and purposeful partnerships with Aboriginal controlled organisations			
Support the establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led and run health service in Melbourne's West and explore opportunities to integrate these with Western Health facilities.	2022 - 2023	Opportunities are explored to create connections between an Aboriginal health service and Western Health facilities.	Executive Director of Strategy and Partnerships Manager, Wilim Berrbang



Strategic Direction 04 - WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER

Actions to be Implemented	Timelines	Success Indicators	Responsibility
Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members are involved in the design, delivery and evaluation of services.			
Contribute to the Culturally Safe Consumer Participation guideline to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander requirements are included.	June 2023	Culturally Safe Consumer Participation guideline developed	Manager, Diversity and Inclusion, Manager Wilim Berrbang
Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community have opportunities to 'have a say' within Western Health through consumer participation.	June 2023	Western Health Board receive updates and recommendations from the Aboriginal Health Steering Committee	Manager, Diversity and Inclusion, Manager Wilim Berrbang
Ensure the voices of Traditional Owners and Elders are central in decision making and governance.			
Ensure the voices of Traditional Owners and Elders are central in decision making and governance.	June 2024	Opportunity in place for the Board and Executive to hear directly from Elders and the Aboriginal Community	CEO Executive Sponsor
Promote cultural safety through our sphere of influence.			
Information on Western Health's commitment to cultural safety and resources on culturally responsive and inclusive practice to be included on the intranet and social media channels to provide statements of support and raise awareness around culturally significant dates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	2022 - 2025	Information about Western Health's commitment to cultural safety and culturally significant dates is readily accessible.	People, Culture and Communications
Patient and staff stories reflecting the theme of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety.	2022 - 2025	Patient and staff stories are recorded and publicised.	Wilim Berrbang People, Culture and Communications
Ensure ongoing celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, achievements and strengths.			
Plan, coordinate and facilitate a culturally significant event that celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples each year.	2022 - 2025	Events are recognised across Western Health.	Wilim Berrbang





Strategic Direction 05 - WE DISCOVER AND LEARN

Actions to be Implemented	Timelines	Success Indicators	Responsibility
Ensure that data informs our practice with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients			
Develop key goals, targets and milestones data for cultural training and cultural engagement. Provide regular monitoring and reporting to the Aboriginal Health Steering Committee and Divisional Directors.	June 2023	Performance is monitored and outcomes are clearly reported to key groups.	Manager, Wilim Berrbang People, Culture and Communications Business Intelligence
Annual publication and explanation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service use data, co-designed with service users, and that supports the understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander usage patterns in mental health, ED, inpatient, outpatient services and facilities and by the LGA's within Western Health catchment areas.	June 2023	Performance is monitored and outcomes are clearly reported to key groups.	Business Intelligence Executive Sponsor Manager, Wilim Berrbang People, Culture and Communications
Commitment to the inclusion of Torres Strait Islander people in Western Health catchment commencing with data collection.	June 2023	Collect data on the number of Torres Strait Islander people using Western Health services.	Manager, Wilim Berrbang
Annual report to Executive on number of staff who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and their role (e.g. clinician, manager)	2022 - 2025	Performance is monitored and reported on.	People, Culture and Communications
Develop a comprehensive research plan that drives improvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patient options and outcomes.	2022 - 2025	A research plan is developed and implemented	Manager, Wilim Berrbang Chair in Nursing, Western Health Partnership
Implementation of Cultural Safety Plan 2022 - 2025			
Provide 6 monthly reports on the progress on the Cultural Safety Plan implementation to the Western Health Executive and the Board Quality and Safety Committee.	2022 - 2025	Western Health Cultural Safety Plan implementation is reported to the Executive and Board.	Manager, Wilim Berrbang Executive Sponsor
Provide quarterly reports on the progress on the Cultural Safety Plan implementation to the Western Health Aboriginal Health Steering Committee.	2022 - 2025	Western Health Cultural safety Plan implementation is reported to the Aboriginal Health Steering Committee.	Manager, Wilim Berrbang
Consider a dedicated identified position supporting strategic planning in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and oversight of the Cultural Safety Plan 2022 - 2025.	December 2022	The Cultural Safety Plan 2022 - 2025 is successfully supported and implemented.	Executive Sponsor

Objectives



OBJECTIVE 1

Western Health will ensure culturally safe practices in health care, including environments that are culturally safe and welcoming, and contribute to closing the gap through initiatives to support the health and well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Key Objectives

- Increased AHLO services across Western Health sites
- Improved post-discharge connection to services through a Journey Walker position.
- Cultural safety audit tool completed in partnership with clinical departments.
- Integration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health services across Western Health sites
- Feedback mechanisms are in place and feedback is reviewed and acted on.
- An on-call after hours AHLO telephone service

OBJECTIVE 2

Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment and retention and staff support.

Key Objectives

- Establish a Community of Practice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff so they can provide meaningful input to Western Health.
- Employ a dedicated Aboriginal Employment Coordinator or agency.
- Develop a Staff Welcome Kit.
- Establish a culturally safe Employee Assistance pathway.

OBJECTIVE 3

Increase staff knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and successes through meaningful learning opportunities.

Key Objectives

- Develop a cultural learning strategy including developing a range of flexible learning modalities to cater for diverse roles and programs within Western Health.
- Develop and facilitate a program of Aboriginal health champions.
- Celebrate culturally significant events, such as NAIDOC Week.

OBJECTIVE 4

Western Health practices will be informed by data, quality improvement and research.

Key Objectives

- Embed cultural safety into all new capital projects.
- Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community have opportunities to 'have a say' within Western Health through consumer participation.
- Develop a comprehensive research plan that drives improvement in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander options and outcomes.
- Annual publication and explanation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service use data.
- Ensure that our policies and procedures support Cultural Safety.

EVALUATING AND REPORTING

Measuring and evaluation on the progress and success of this plan will occur through a variety of reporting mechanisms via:

- Western Health Board and Executive
- Western Health Aboriginal Steering Committee
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community

Patient Stories

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Outpatient Clinic

Ronnie is a 58 year Aboriginal man who has multiple admissions to Western Health for cardiac related care.

In addition he has a range of other health issues including diabetes, respiratory problems and cancer surgeries. Attendance at hospital appointments has been inconsistent because it is difficult for him to get to the hospital as he works part-time and has kinship care of two of his grandchildren. He was apprehensive about a referral to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Outpatient Clinic as he has so many appointments already. He is keen on the idea though of being able to get his heart properly checked out and a long appointment after he has dropped the children at school. He also knows the AHLO as he has met them during previous admissions and feels comfortable with them.

The clinic staff call Ronnie the day before his appointment and ask if he would like to be picked up in a wheelchair at the main entrance. Ronnie is happy with this as it can be difficult for him to walk too far.

Ronnie comes along and has a blood test along with a cardiac ultrasound before seeing the cardiologist.

He also checks in with a Diabetes Nurse Educator and the pharmacist at the clinic discusses his medications.

The clinic staff are able to talk with Ronnie about a community based program locally that supports Aboriginal people with chronic health conditions and organise a referral.

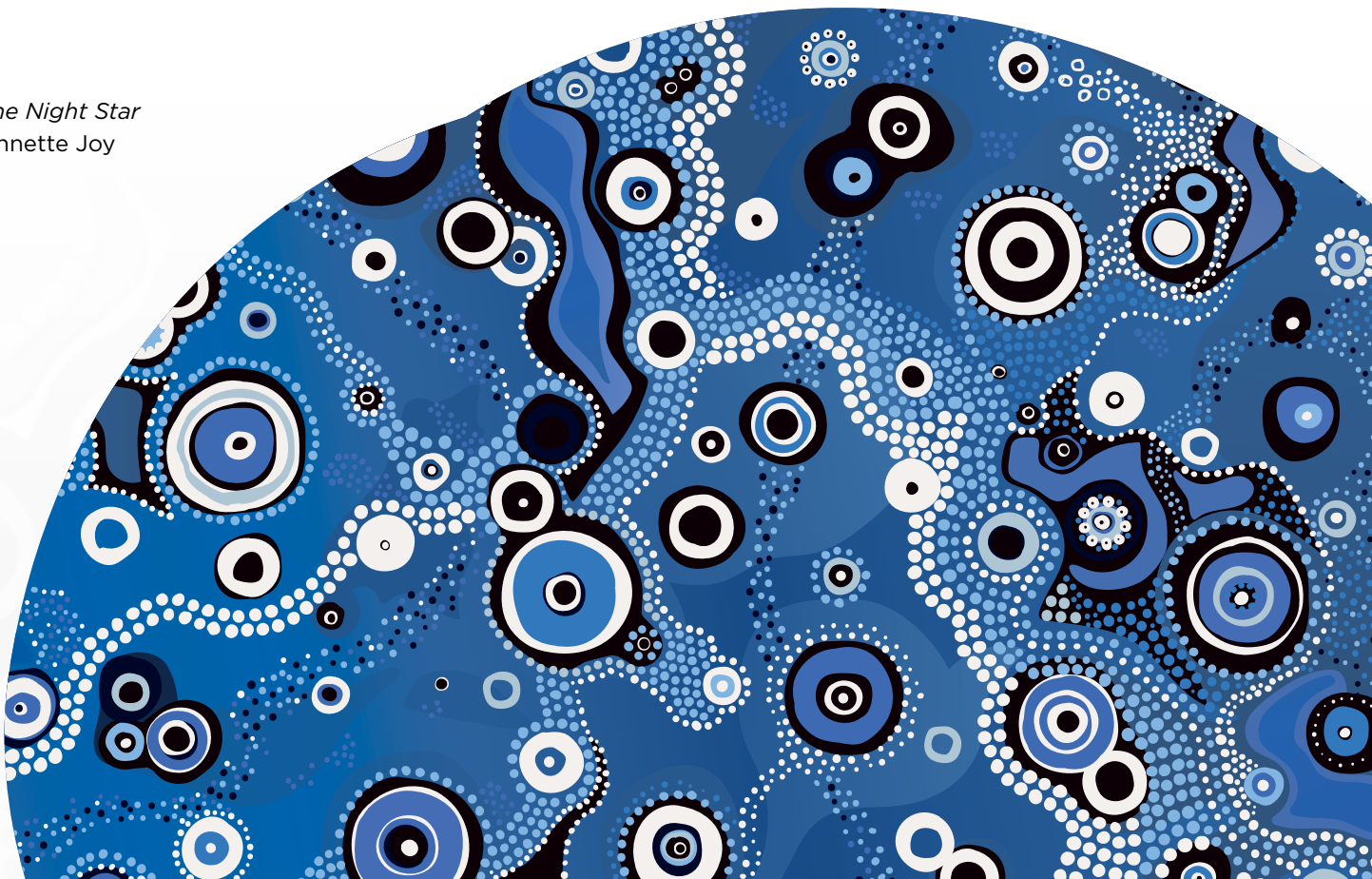
Lunch is provided as well as a no-cost car park exit ticket.

Ronnie is keen to come again and is booked for a follow up appointment with a General Medicine doctor to look into his respiratory issues and the possibility of home oxygen.

Once discharged, and with Ronnie's consent, the clinic nurse sends all the medical notes and test results from his appointments to his GP in order to continue Ronnie's care in the community.

**This story is a compilation but represents many of the issues faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients that present to Western Health.*

The Night Star
Annette Joy



Welcome Packs

When Sophie* and her partner, found their world had turned upside down with the sudden arrival of their premature twin girls. The couple were transferred to Western Health's Joan Kirner Women and Children's, from regional Victoria to receive the necessary level of medical care for mum and babies. With no time to prepare for the sudden stay in hospital and away from their support network, the family who identify as Aboriginal welcomed the support they have received from Western Health's Wilim Berrbang team.

Wilim Berrbang offers cultural support and assistance to patients at Western Health who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. As part of the program Sophie received a Welcome Pack with essential items to assist them with their unexpected admission.

All Australian products using native ingredients, the culturally safe welcome kits are funded by The Western Health Foundation and include essentials such as; body wash, shampoo, conditioner, dental kit, shaving set, eye mask, ear plugs and notebook and pen as well as information about the work of the Wilim Berrbang team and further support services and information.

"There was a lot of thought and consideration to put together items that reflected what patients needed for their stay in hospital," said Tanya Druce, Manager of Aboriginal Health, Policy and Planning. "We asked our Western Health Aboriginal community what they would want during an inpatient stay and that helped us decide what would go into the packs." "The Welcome Packs add to our efforts to touch base in a meaningful way with every inpatient at Western Health who identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander," said Ms Druce.

The team have also coordinated a group of volunteer's hand knitting beanies and bassinette blankets for babies born at Joan Kirner Women and Children's, particularly through the Galinjera Maternity Program. The beanies and blankets are specifically for babies whose families identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and are knitted in the colours of the corresponding flags.

"Because I wasn't prepared to come to hospital, the toiletries in the Welcome Pack were really handy. The Wilim Berrbang staff gave me the Welcome Pack as well as two beanies knitted in the Aboriginal flag colours - red, yellow and black. They are so adorable and they were the perfect size," said Sophie.

"It helps staff to recognise that the girls' are Aboriginal and it is a connection to our culture for the babies. The girls are doing really well and we are looking forward to going home soon."

**name changed to protect the patient's identity and privacy*



"The Welcome Packs add to our efforts to touch base in a meaningful way with every inpatient at Western Health who identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander,"



Ashleigh Vandenberg

Journey Walker

A new Journey Walker role at Western Health is supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, families and carers to improve health care outcomes and facilitate community care options.

Stepping into the first of its kind position for the health service is nurse and proud Wiradjuri woman, Ashleigh Vandenberg, who previously worked in the COVID wards and as a surgical nurse at Northern Health.

In her new role, which is also known as the Aboriginal Care Coordinator, Ashleigh will work within the Advice Coordination Expertise (ACE) Team inpatient team and Wilim Berrbang, Western Health's Aboriginal Health Unit, to create the most appropriate care plan for each patient.

Providing a positive and culturally safe experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients boosts their confidence and trust in the health service, and in turn, results in better health outcomes.

"The care and support provided is led by the patients, and the Journey Walker role highlights the importance of self-determination for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, giving them the opportunity to make their own healthcare choices and decisions," Ashleigh said.

One of the immediate benefits of having a Journey Walker is the extra time it allows with patients and their families, providing an opportunity to explain the importance of various models of care.

"For some of our patients, it can be working with them to trust the health service, and sometimes it's about encouraging them to stay for the duration of their care," she said.

"Engaging with the patient's family and ensuring they are on board with the care plan is particularly important, as their opinions or concerns are highly valued by the patient and the health care team," Ashleigh explains.

In the future, Ashleigh would like to see Journey Walker roles in Emergency Departments, which is often where the patient journey begins.

Ashleigh said one of the reasons that health services ask patients about their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity, whether in the Emergency Departments or other settings, was to ensure more people can access services like the Journey Walker and other culturally appropriate care.

The Journey Walker role is one of the ways that Western Health and the team at Wilim Berrbang are working to improve the health of Indigenous Australians residing in the western suburbs.

Western Health is an official signatory to the National Close the Gap Statement of Intent. It is committed to equality of health access and outcomes and ensuring an equitable voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

If you would like to contact the Journey Walker please make an EMR referral via ACE team and select Journey Walker Care coordinator, or contact Ashleigh Vandenberg on: 0481 141 443.



Research Fellow in Aboriginal Health

Western Health at the forefront of Indigenous-led research

A new dedicated role at Western Health will drive Indigenous-led research to improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients.

Through targeted and meaningful research, the new Research Fellow supports the health service's commitment to making health equitable for all by 'closing the gap' in health outcomes and life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous Australians.

Dr Kunal Dhiman was appointed the Research Fellow in Aboriginal Health in March 2022, as part of the Western Health Partnership between the health service and Deakin University.

Western Health has an important role to play in improving the health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who currently have a 10-year-lower life expectancy and 2.3 times the burden of disease compared to non-Indigenous Australians.

Dr Dhiman will use his research capabilities and strengths in relationship building to support the health service to provide care that is culturally sensitive, safe and welcoming to our First Nation peoples.

Dr Dhiman began his career as a pharmacist, before completing a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Neuroscience, focusing on early diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease.

In his previous roles he mentored Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders research candidates, including as a SOAR Peer Advisor at Edith Cowen University, where he had the opportunity to provide peer support to research students from a range of diverse cultures and backgrounds.

He also worked in the Aboriginal Tutorial and Mentoring Program (ATMP), which supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students by developing their self-directed academic learning.

"I really enjoy helping people and developing strong relationships with people from different cultures and ethnicities. When you step into someone else's shoes, you gain an understanding of their needs, culture and background and only then can you understand how to deliver a culturally sensitive service, as well as built trust."

Part of his role will involve contributing to the Western Health Partnership research programs, publishing in high quality research journals and developing relationships with research, community, industry and government to enhance research outcomes.

“I really enjoy helping people and developing strong relationships with people from different cultures and ethnicities. When you step into someone else’s shoes, you gain an understanding of their needs, culture and background and only then can you understand how to deliver a culturally sensitive service, as well as built trust.”



Dr Kunal Dhiman



Among his current projects are: supporting the analysis of a patient cultural safety survey and assessing the effectiveness of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Outpatient Clinic.

“A role like this that is embedded in the hospital is incredibly important. It really helps us ensure that our research can be taken from the bench to the bedside by ensuring it is relevant to the needs of the healthcare workers and patients.”

“My aim in this role is to ensure that I can make a positive difference to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community by contributing to existing research, designing new projects and publishing our work in high quality journals.”

Tanya Druce, Manager Aboriginal Health, Policy and Planning said this was an exciting role for Wilim Berrbang (Aboriginal Health Unit), Western Health and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the West.

“It ensures that Western Health is at the forefront of Indigenous-led research tackling health issues experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with the aim of improving health outcomes and closing the gap on health mortality and morbidity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.”

Glossary

Aboriginal	Throughout this document, the term Aboriginal is used to refer to all Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It is inclusive of people in Victoria who identify as Indigenous Australian, and Koori.
Community	A collective of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
Communities	Defined language groups or regional groups that reflect the diversity within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population. A specific community may be referred to.
Cultural Awareness	A basic understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, peoples and cultures. There is no common accepted practice to reflect cultural awareness, and the actions taken depend on the individual and their knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. Generally accepted as a necessary first step and a foundation for further development, but not sufficient for sustained behaviour change.
Culturally reflective workforce	Reflecting on one's own cultural norms and beliefs, and how these impacts on others from a different cultural and spiritual background. Cultural safety does not propose that people become experts on other cultures, but rather it places an emphasis on understanding.
Cultural respect	The recognition, protection and continued advancement of the inherent rights, cultures and traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Cultural respect is about shared respect. It is achieved when the health system is a safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and cultural differences are respected. It is a commitment to the principle that the design, model of care and provision of services offered by the Australian healthcare system will not knowingly compromise the legitimate cultural rights, practices, values and expectations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The goal of cultural respect is to uphold the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to maintain, protect and develop their culture, and achieve equitable health outcomes.
Cultural safety	Identifies that health consumers are safest when health professionals have considered power relations, cultural differences and patients' rights. Part of this process requires health professionals to examine their own realities, beliefs and attitudes. Cultural safety is defined not by the health professional but by the health consumer's experience – the individual's experience of the care they are given, and their ability to access services and to raise concerns. The essential features of cultural safety are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An understanding of one's culture • An acknowledgement of difference, and a requirement that caregivers are actively mindful and respectful of difference(s) • Informed by the theory of power relations; any attempt to depoliticise cultural safety is to miss the point • An appreciation of the historical context of colonisation, the practices of racism at individual and institutional levels, and their impact on First Nations people's living and wellbeing, in both the present and the past • Presence or absence is determined by the experience of the recipient of care and not defined by the caregiver.
Self-determination	Aboriginal staff, people and communities have meaningful leadership and decision-making roles, and are involved in designing, delivering and evaluating Aboriginal health, wellbeing and safety policies, programs and initiatives.

Appendix

The six actions in the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards that focus specifically on meeting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Standard	Action
Partnering with Consumers	2.13 The health service organisation works in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to meet their healthcare needs
Clinical Governance for Health Service Organisations	<p>1.2 The governing body ensures that the organisation's safety and quality priorities address the specific health needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people</p> <p>1.4 The health service organisation implements and monitors targeted strategies to meet the organisation's safety and quality priorities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people</p> <p>1.21 The health service organisation has strategies to improve the cultural awareness and cultural competency of the workforce to meet the needs of its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients</p> <p>1.33 The health service organisation demonstrates a welcoming environment that recognises the importance of the cultural beliefs and practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people</p>
Comprehensive Care	5.8 The health service organisation has processes to routinely ask patients if they identify as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin, and to record this information



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Western Health