



ABORIGINAL WORKFORCE STRATEGY 2022 - 2025

A supporting component to the Cyrenian House
Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2020 - 2023

MAY • 2023





Acknowledgement of Country

Cyrenian House acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work and play, the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation and pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past, present and emerging.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The Capital 'A' in Australian Aboriginal distinguishes them from other First Nations Peoples. Cyrenian House acknowledges the considerable cultural diversity throughout Western Australia and the term Aboriginal is not intended to imply cultural homogeneity.

The development of this Workforce Strategy was made possible by funding from the WA Primary Health Alliance for the Cyrenian House Workforce Capability Support Project.





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1. Background

IN 2020 THE WA PRIMARY HEALTH ALLIANCE (WAPHA) APPROVED NON-RECURRENT FUNDING FOR CYRENIAN HOUSE TO ENHANCE OUR ABORIGINAL FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE THAT OPERATED OUT OF THE NORTH METRO COMMUNITY ALCOHOL AND DRUG SERVICE (NMCADS).

There were difficulties in recruiting for the position that this additional funding was to support. As a result, Cyrenian House proposed that WAPHA commission a project to build the workforce capacity of the service to deliver culturally secure services to Aboriginal Peoples and Communities.

It was proposed the project would provide resources to progress key workforce elements of the Cyrenian House Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2020 -2023, would engage an Aboriginal cultural consultant/s to advise on the best approaches to workforce and related issues and would facilitate our engagement with key Aboriginal stakeholders and groups who are essential for the successful development of our workforce capacity.

The Workforce Capability Support Project commenced in February 2021.



2. The Workforce Capability Support Project

The project was designed to contribute to the achievement of a number of strategic priorities for Cyrenian House and our services, these include:

- Delivering a service that provides consumer focussed, culturally competent practice and targeted interventions that meet consumer needs.
- Working towards reducing the 8-year life expectancy gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through equitable access to culturally appropriate treatment for alcohol and other drug (AOD) use and co-occurring mental health issues.
- Providing and promoting opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation and employment.
- Ensuring equal access to our facilities, services and information is afforded to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the community.



In addition, some key elements (Actions) of the RAP addressed by the Project included:

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| <p>8. Consult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers and workers for support and advice in the continual improvement of the cultural competency of our service</p> <p>14. Support Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers to engage with their cultures and community</p> <p>19. Increase recruitment and retention of</p> | <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers within our organisation</p> <p>20. Increase employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and workers</p> <p>22. Maintain Opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to actively contribute to our organisation through representation in governance committees</p> |
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THERE WERE THREE INTENDED DELIVERABLES OF THE PROJECT

DELIVERABLE 1.

Development of a
Cyrenian House Aboriginal
Workforce Strategy



DELIVERABLE 3.

Exploration and implementation of
additional initiatives to drive forward
key actions from the RAP.



DELIVERABLE 2.

Establishment of an 'Elders Reference Group' to provide Cyrenian House with cultural advice and support, particularly in regard to the Aboriginal workforce development activities.

This document is the output of Deliverable One. For more information on the Project and the other deliverables, see The Report to WA Primary Health Alliance For Workforce Capability Support Project; for improved cultural security at Cyrenian House. (May 2022)



3. Development of the Cyrenian House Aboriginal Workforce Strategy

The Aboriginal Workforce Strategy is intended to be a working document to support the implementation of the Cyrenian House Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2020 – 2023. Its development was overseen by a Working Group and included:

- review of current best practice
- review of comparable strategies in similar organisation
- review of existing workforce development activities policies and procedures within the organisation.
- engagement of appropriate Aboriginal consultants
- working closely with the Cyrenian House Executive to ensure that the Strategy is well integrated with existing HR and workforce development activities in the organisation.
- exploration and development of innovative approaches such as Aboriginal traineeships in the organisation

Literature Review

To support the development of the Workforce Strategy, a brief literature review was undertaken to provide the Working Group some insight into comparable strategies in similar organisations and current best practice. Texts reviewed included strategy documents, research papers, literature reviews, reports, practice standards and educational materials for employers.

Recommendations for relevant texts were also sought from the Cyrenian House RAP Steering Committee and the WANADA Aboriginal Leadership Coordinator.

The literature reviewed was consistent in identifying a number of factors for success in growing and maintaining a strong and sustainable Aboriginal workforce. These factors for success can be group under the following seven principles. The principles do not stand in isolation, but together, create a framework within which to implement the strategy.



Figure1 – Seven Principles identified for the Workforce Strategy

For more detail on the Literature Review see the Workforce Capability Support Project – Literature Review Summary – June 2021

Aboriginal consultants

The Working Group employed a number of strategies to seek out, and engage, an appropriate Aboriginal Consultant to work with on the Workforce Strategy. This included a desktop search and seeking the advice of the RAP Steering Committee, the WANADA Aboriginal Leadership Coordinator and a number of professional contacts. Ultimately Indigenous Workforce Consulting (IWC) were engaged to develop the strategy. They were supported by the Project Manager and worked collaboratively with the Working Group.

IWC engaged with the Working group and participated in a comprehensive planning meeting. Sometime later IWC facilitated a workshop with the Working Group and additional Cyrenian House management. This workshop was designed to lead the team through a culturally secure processes of defining their goals for the Workforce Strategy and identifying barriers, challenges and possibilities.

Following this work some broad workforce strategy content was provided to Cyrenian House to be used to form the basis of the tailored document.

Tailoring the Workforce Strategy

Following the work of IWC, the Working Group reviewed work undertaken to date and a potential framework for the Workforce Strategy drafted.

The draft Workforce Strategy Framework consisted of

1. A CLEAR AIM – BASED ON THE LEARNINGS OF THE IWC WORKSHOP



AIM: The Cyrenian House Workforce Strategy aims to support the implementation of the Cyrenian House RAP, particularly Action Areas:

19. Increase recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers within our organisation, and

20. Increase employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and workers

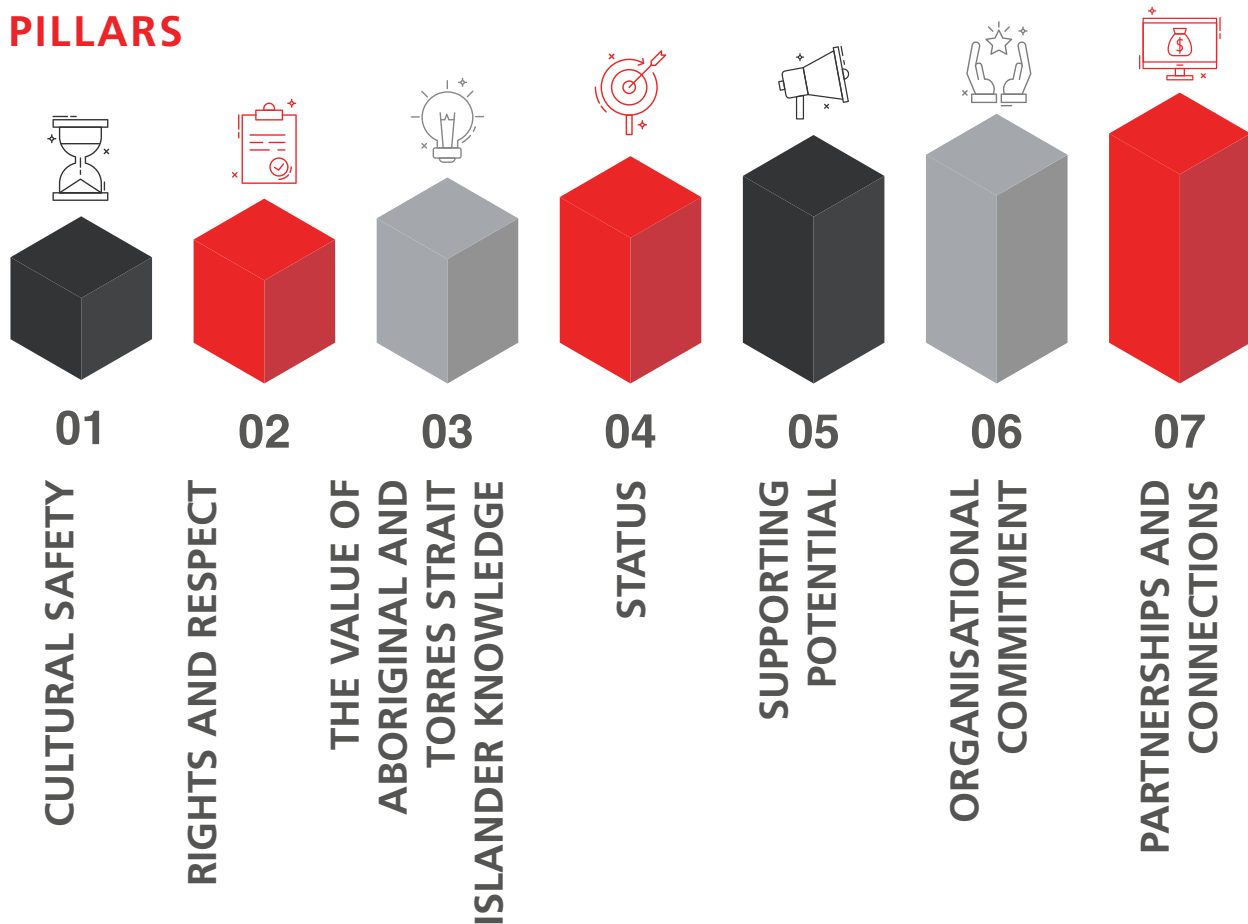
It aims to develop Cyrenian House as an attractive employer for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, increase employment opportunities for Aboriginal people and communities, improve the cultural understanding and capacity of all staff and ultimately improve outcomes for our clients.

2. PRIORITY AREAS TO BE ADDRESSED – BASED ON THE IWC WORKSHOP AND THE INTERNAL REVIEW WORK

PRIORITIES		ATTRACTION AND RECRUITMENT
		WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING
		WORKPLACE CULTURE
		RETENTION AND CAREER PATHWAYS

3. FACTORS FOR SUCCESS/PILLARS FOR ADDRESSING THESE PRIORITY AREAS – BASED ON THE LITERATURE REVIEW.

PILLARS



This draft Framework was presented to the Working Group and further developed in a second Workforce Strategy development workshop. The Working Group also considered approaches to populating the framework into an actionable plan. This second draft and plans for its further development were presented to, and endorsed by, the RAP Steering Committee.

Finalising the Workforce Strategy

Following endorsement by the RAP Steering Committee, it was considered crucial to take a culturally secure and inclusive approach to populating the Aboriginal Workforce Strategy Framework. As such each Cyrenian House site and service team were provided the opportunity to contribute, and strongly encouraged to do so. Teams could run their own session or were offered facilitation support.

Teams demonstrated a great willingness to participate and contributed a breadth of thoughtful, practical and aspirational potential actions for the Strategy.

The resultant suggested actions for the strategy were reviewed by the Management Team and the Aboriginal Workforce Strategy below agreed. This final Workforce Strategy and accompanying Implementation Plan were endorsed by the RAP Steering Committee in September 2022.

Cyrenian House Aboriginal Workforce Strategy – September 2022

1. A CLEAR AIM – BASED ON THE LEARNINGS OF THE IWC WORKSHOP

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It aims to develop Cyrenian House as an attractive employer for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, increase employment opportunities for Aboriginal people and communities, improve the cultural understanding and capacity of all staff and ultimately improve outcomes for our clients

PILLARS	PRIORITY AREAS			
	ATTRACTION AND RECRUITMENT	WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING	WORKPLACE CULTURE	RETENTION AND CAREER PATHWAYS
CULTURAL SAFETY	Promote training and development opportunities as part of the recruitment process.	Provide individualised development support for each Aboriginal worker.	Ensure Cultural Security training for all staff within 12 months of commencement and again every three years.	Develop a culturally secure induction package and process.
	Cyrenian House acknowledges the value of word of mouth promotion in the community and particularly Aboriginal Community. Staff will be requested to share employment opportunities with their networks and consulted regarding potential applicants.	Review Volunteer Addiction Counsellors Program to optimise its cultural safety and security.	Provide training for managers in supporting Aboriginal staff and culturally safe supervision.	Ensure that each new Aboriginal staff member is provided with a formalised mentor in addition to their line manager.

PILLARS	PRIORITY AREAS			
	ATTRACTION AND RECRUITMENT	WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING	WORKPLACE CULTURE	RETENTION AND CAREER PATHWAYS
CULTURAL SAFETY	Ensure job advertisements use culturally safe language and signal the Cyrenian House commitment to cultural security.	Review the organisation's Induction Training to improve and optimise it's cultural safety and security.	Ensure the Cyrenian House website demonstrates our commitment to cultural security.	Provide culturally safe and secure supervision to Aboriginal staff.
	Utilise alternate methods of recruitment and selection where relevant. For example, less formal interviews and more extensive discussions with previous employers.		Ensure that the Cyrenian House Strategy Plan, including mission and values appropriately reflect a commitment to Aboriginal staff and consumers.	Review organisational policies and procedures to ensure cultural safety and security.
			Ensure that all job advertisements and JDFs contain a requirement for staff to work in a culturally secure way with other Aboriginal staff and Aboriginal consumers.	
			Include experience and testimonials from Aboriginal staff and consumers on the Cyrenian House website.	
			Aboriginal language training to be provided to all teams at least every three years.	
RIGHTS AND RESPECT	Promote the availability of cultural leave when advertising positions.			Provide for Cultural Leave in the EBA
				Ensure that the unique cultural and family pressures and expectations that can be placed on Aboriginal staff are reflected in our approach to managing and supporting these staff.
				Find ways to ensure that Aboriginal outreach workers can feel connected to their service and other members of their teams.

PILLARS	PRIORITY AREAS			
	ATTRACTION AND RECRUITMENT	WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING	WORKPLACE CULTURE	RETENTION AND CAREER PATHWAYS
THE VALUE OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER KNOWLEDGE	Consult existing Aboriginal workers on employment and development strategies.	Build relationships with RTOs that are Aboriginal focussed and led, these include Marr Mooditj in Perth, and Wunan and KAMS in the Kimberley.	Ensure that the value of pursuing linkages and partnerships with Aboriginal organisations and communities is demonstrated via the allocation of sufficient time and effort to do this work well.	
	Create new Aboriginal specific (50d) positions in the organisation when funding allows for this.		Actively engage with relevant Aboriginal organisations and groups in the development and operation of our services.	
			Where appropriate partner with Aboriginal organisations during tender processes in order to jointly provide services with these organisations.	
			Where appropriate partner with Aboriginal organisations during tender processes in order to jointly provide services with these organisations.	
			Establish a 'Cultural Development Worker' position and employ a respected and experienced Aboriginal person into the role to work across teams to support the cultural security of our services and workplaces.	
STATUS			Conduct an acknowledgement of Country at the start of every meeting.	
			Display Acknowledgement of Country art and plaques at all sites.	

PILLARS	PRIORITY AREAS			
	ATTRACTION AND RECRUITMENT	WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING	WORKPLACE CULTURE	RETENTION AND CAREER PATHWAYS
SUPPORTING POTENTIAL	Promote Cyrenian House and our employment opportunities at career expos and with universities, TAFE's and other training organisations that provide training for Aboriginal people.	Ensure clear and comprehensive professional development plans are in place for Aboriginal staff consistent with development needs and longer-term career goals.		Supervisors and managers to ensure career goals are discussed with Aboriginal staff during Performance Appraisals and opportunistically at other times.
		Implement placements for trainees to support the development of potential future Aboriginal staff.		Identify and support the development of potential future Aboriginal staff by engaging proactively with Aboriginal consumers who show potential during the later stages of their treatment.
		Promote resources such as StudyAssist to support Aboriginal staff, or potential future staff, to engage in further study.		
ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT	Ensure that funding submissions and tender offers include the employment of Aboriginal staff in new services.	Implement a target quota of Aboriginal participants in the Volunteer Addiction Counsellors Program each year.	Ensure that our senior staff, particularly managers and coordinators, are champions for cultural security and the value of Aboriginal workers in their teams.	
	Examine the possibility of converting some existing positions to 50d positions when the opportunity arises (ie when vacant).	Ensure Volunteer Addiction Counsellors Program is well-promoted to potential Aboriginal participants. This includes targeting promotion to Marr Mooditj students.	Actively demonstrate respect for the history, culture, language, knowledge, customs, beliefs and values of Aboriginal people. Include the need for this respect in our Code of Conduct.	
PARTNERSHIPS & CONNECTION	Support site visits to our services by Marr Mooditj students.	Continue to support and resource the Marr Mooditj – Cyrenian House Scholarship Program.	Each Cyrenian House site will develop connections with local Aboriginal groups and organisations.	Provide opportunity for secondments to and from Aboriginal partner organisations.



Implementation Plan



It is acknowledged that while some of the actions below are reasonably straightforward to implement, others will require phased activity including research and discovery, consultation with Aboriginal staff, amendments to existing policy and procedure, communication to staff and, in some cases, staff training. The positions identified below are responsible for each action and will work inclusively with the RAP Committee and Aboriginal staff to ensure the best outcomes.

1. ATTRACTION AND RECRUITMENT		RESPONSIBILITY	IMPLEMENTATION DATE
1a	Promote training and development opportunities as part of the recruitment process.	Human Resources (HR) with support from relevant General Manager (GM)	30th September 2023
1b	Cyrenian House acknowledges the value of word of mouth promotion in the community and particularly Aboriginal Community. Staff will be requested to share employment opportunities with their networks and consulted regarding potential applicants.	Relevant GM	30th September 2023
1c	Ensure job advertisements use culturally safe language and signal the Cyrenian House commitment to cultural security.	HR with support from relevant GM	30th September 2023
1d	Utilise alternate methods of recruitment and selection where relevant. For example, less formal interviews and more extensive discussions with previous employers.	Relevant GM	31st October 2023
1e	Promote the availability of cultural leave when advertising positions.	HR with support from relevant GM	30th September 2023
1f	Consult existing Aboriginal workers on employment and development strategies.	HR	31st October 2023
1g	Create new Aboriginal specific (50d) positions in the organisation when funding allows for this.	Relevant GM	30th September 2023
1h	Promote Cyrenian House and our employment opportunities at career expos and with universities, TAFEs and other training organisations that provide training for Aboriginal people.	Relevant GMs and Chief Operating Officer (COO)	30th November 2023
1i	Ensure that funding submissions and tender offers include the employment of Aboriginal staff in new services.	COO	30th September 2023
1j	Examine the possibility of converting some existing positions to 50d positions when the opportunity arises (ie when vacant).	Relevant GM	31st October 2023
1k	Support site visits to our services by Marr Mooditj students.	General Manager of Non-Residential Services (GM NRS)	30th September 2023

2. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING		RESPONSIBILITY	IMPLEMENTATION DATE
2a	Provide individualised development support for each Aboriginal worker.	Relevant Service Manager (SM)	30th November 2023
2b	Review Volunteer Addiction Counsellors Program to optimise its cultural safety and security.	COO GM NRS, Volunteer Program Manager	31st January 2024
2c	Review the organisation's Induction Training to improve and optimise it's cultural safety and security.	COO, GMs	28th February 2023
2d	Build relationships with RTOs that are Aboriginal focussed and led, these include Marr Mooditj in Perth, and Wunan and KAMS in the Kimberley.	COO, GM NRS	
2e	Ensure clear and comprehensive professional development plans are in place for Aboriginal staff consistent with development needs and longer-term career goals.	Relevant SM	31st December 2023
2f	Implement placements for trainees to support the development of potential future Aboriginal staff.	HR, Relevant GMs	30th September 2023
2g	Promote resources such as StudyAssist to support Aboriginal staff, or potential future staff, to engage in further study.	HR	30th September 2023
2h	Implement a target quota of Aboriginal participants in the Volunteer Addiction Counsellors Program each year.	GM NRS	31st January 2023
2i	Ensure Volunteer Addiction Counsellors Program is well-promoted to potential Aboriginal participants. This includes targeting promotion to Marr Mooditj students.	GM NRS	31st January 2023
2j	Continue to support and resource the Marr Mooditj – Cyrenian House Scholarship Program.	Chief Executive Officer (CEO), COO	30th September 2023

3. WORKPLACE CULTURE		RESPONSIBILITY	IMPLEMENTATION DATE
3a	Ensure Cultural Security training for all staff within 12 months of commencement and again every three years.	HR	30th September 2023
3b	Provide training for managers in supporting Aboriginal staff and culturally safe supervision.	HR	31st December 2023
3c	Ensure the Cyrenian House website demonstrates our commitment to cultural security.	Manager Strategic Projects, Policy and Communications (MSPPC)	28th February 2023

3. WORKPLACE CULTURE		RESPONSIBILITY	IMPLEMENTATION DATE
3d	Ensure that the Cyrenian House Strategic Plan, including mission and values appropriately reflect a commitment to Aboriginal staff and consumers.	CEO	28th February 2024
3e	Ensure that all job advertisements and JDFs contain a requirement for staff to work in a culturally secure way.	HR	30th September 2023
3f	Include experience and testimonials from Aboriginal staff and consumers on the Cyrenian House website.	MSPPC	28th February 2024
3g	Aboriginal language training to be provided to all teams at least every three years.	HR	30th September 2023
3h	Ensure that the value of pursuing linkages and partnerships with Aboriginal organisations and communities is demonstrated via the allocation of sufficient time and effort to do this work well.	Executive and GMs	30th September 2023
3i	Actively engage with relevant Aboriginal organisations and groups in the development and operation of our services.	COO, GMs and SMs	30th September 2023
3j	Where appropriate partner with Aboriginal organisations during tender processes in order to jointly provide services with these organisations.	COO	30th September 2023
3k	Ensure we recognise and value the contributions of Aboriginal staff beyond traditional measurements of 'outputs'.	Executive, GMs, HR	30th November 2023
3l	Establish a 'Cultural Development Worker' and employ a respected and experienced Aboriginal person into the role to work across teams to support the cultural security of our services and workplaces.	Executive	31st January 2024
3m	Conduct an acknowledgement of Country at the start of every meeting.	All	30th September 2023
3n	Display Acknowledgement of Country art and plaques at all sites.	MSPPC	30th September 2023
3o	Ensure that our senior staff, particularly managers and coordinators, are champions for cultural security and the value of Aboriginal workers in their teams.	Executive, GMs, SMs	31st October 2023
3p	Actively demonstrate respect for the history, culture, language, knowledge, customs, beliefs and values of Aboriginal people. Include the need for this respect in our Code of Conduct.	COO, HR	30th November 2023
3q	Each Cyrenian House site will develop connections with local Aboriginal groups and organisations.	SMs with support and endorsement from the relevant GM.	31st January 2024

4. RETENTION AND CAREER PATHWAYS		RESPONSIBILITY	IMPLEMENTATION DATE
4a	Ensure that each new Aboriginal staff member is provided with a formalised mentor in addition to their line manager.	GMs, SMs HR	31st March 2024
4b	Provide culturally safe and secure supervision to Aboriginal staff.	HR, GMs, SMs	31st January 2024
4c	Review organisational policies and procedures to ensure cultural safety and security.	COO, GMs, MSPPC	31st March 2024
4d	Provide for Cultural Leave in the revised conditions of employment	Chief Financial Officer (CFO), HR	30th September 2023
4e	Ensure that the unique cultural and family pressures and expectations that can be placed on Aboriginal staff are reflected in our approach to managing and supporting these staff.	GMs, SMs with support from HR	31st January 2024
4f	Find ways to ensure that Aboriginal outreach workers can feel connected to their service and other members of their teams.	SM in consultation with Aboriginal Outreach Staff	28th February 2024
4g	Supervisors and managers to ensure career goals are discussed with Aboriginal staff during Performance Appraisals and opportunistically at other times.	SMs with support HR	30th November 2023
4h	Identify and support the development of potential future Aboriginal staff by engaging proactively with Aboriginal consumers who show potential during the later stages of their treatment.	SMs with support of GMs	31st October 2023
4i	Provide opportunity for secondments to and from Aboriginal partner organisations.	GMs	31st October 2023

Implementation of the Workforce Strategy will be overseen by the Cyrenian House Chief Operating Officer (head of operations), the Chief Financial Officer (also Head of HR) and the Cyrenian House RAP Committee. Outputs and outcomes of its implementation will be captured in the Cyrenian House reporting on the RAP.

The Cyrenian House Aboriginal Workforce Strategy will be reviewed in line with the review of the Cyrenian House Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2020 - 2023.