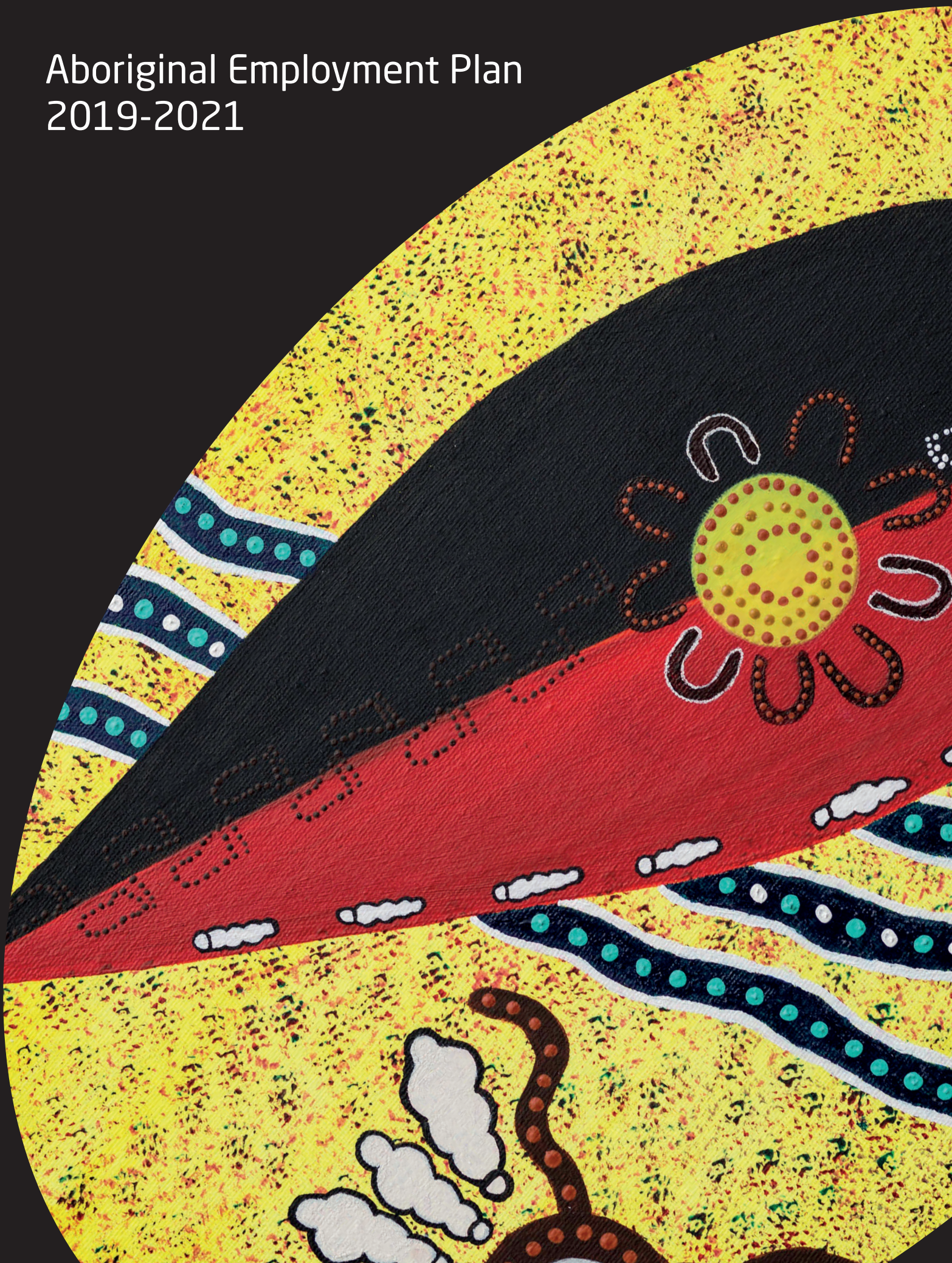


# Aboriginal Employment Plan 2019-2021





# Acknowledgment



Western Health would like to acknowledge the Wurundjeri and the BoonWurrung people of the Kulin nation as traditional owners of the land. Western Health would also like to pay respects to Elders of the land, past, present and future.

We also extend that respect to Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people who visit us from other communities across Australia.

Throughout this document the term Aboriginal is used to refer to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The artwork has been designed by Ms Maddison Irwin and commissioned on behalf of Western Health. Maddison is a Badyidi woman of the Budjari Lands and is employed by WH under an indigenous traineeship program.



# CEO MESSAGE

*It is a pleasure to launch the new Aboriginal Employment strategy 2019-2021, for Western Health*

This strategy is a key commitment to workplace diversity. As we all know, a diverse workplace has many benefits. It better reflects the society we live in and it better places us to innovate and adapt to meet the changing needs of the people we serve. But most importantly, a diverse workplace will understand and deliver better patient outcomes for our indigenous community.

In line with its vision and organisational values, Western Health is committed to maintaining a positive work environment that is safe and supports employee health and wellbeing. This Aboriginal employment strategy will engage, participate and collaborate with our Aboriginal community and other supporting agencies to develop a culturally safe workplace.

Our strategy will progress WH's commitment to be a diverse, inclusive and culturally safe employer of choice and we will also invest in training and development so more Aboriginal employees occupy diverse roles across the health service. It also brings us closer to "Closing the Gap".

'Closing the Gap' aims to reduce Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage with respect to life expectancy, child mortality and employment. The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2013-2023 is aimed at progressing strategies and actions that improve health outcomes and prevent and address systemic racism and discrimination in the health system.

While this Aboriginal employment strategy has a focus on developing our internal workforce, the initiatives closely complement the work being led by the WH Aboriginal Health Unit to increase the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal people using WH medical services and facilities.

The Australian health sector is the largest employer of Aboriginal people and, with future demand expected to grow; there is an opportunity to increase the Aboriginal workforce and attract more Aboriginal people into a variety of roles and disciplines across Western Health.

Increasing Aboriginal employment not only improves health and wellbeing, it is also a key driver for improving access to quality and culturally appropriate health services for the Aboriginal community.

A workplace that attracts and nurtures Aboriginal employees will benefit future generations and strengthen the resilience of First Peoples. It ensures cultural perspectives become embedded in all aspects of our organisation over time. This will challenge each one of us to grow from being culturally capable in 2019 to being culturally proficient by 2021.

Russell Harrison  
Chief Executive  
Western Health

# CONTEXT AND VISION

The Aboriginal workforce in the Western Health catchment area is a small population however they are skilled, responsive and resilient people. Connecting with our local Aboriginal workforce is an investment in the future health safety and wellbeing of our indigenous community and its patients.

Western Health (WH) is proud to be part of the Victorian government initiative to drive major system reform which will provide opportunities to engage and employ Aboriginal people as part of our workforce, enable and develop careers in public health across allied and support services.

Supporting Aboriginal people to achieve career and educational goals provides a platform for economic growth for them as individuals, their families and our community through improved health information and understanding, of the public health system and inevitably resulting in better patient outcomes.

Aboriginal employees are central to the provision of culturally responsive health services for patients which in turn deliver better experiences and outcomes for our Aboriginal community.

The healthcare and social assistance industry is the fastest growing sector in Victoria, predicted to have 480,000 employees by 2022. Growth in our sector demands a plan of how we might attract and retain Aboriginal employees to our health service.

WH will focus our plans to include the young Aboriginal population in our catchment area and will provide an opportunity for us to;

- Create a pipeline of employment to respond to our growing workforce shortage in the areas of nursing especially and respond to the Victorian government system reforms
- Meet the complex service and health needs of our community members
- Contribute to stronger community relationships and delivery of better patient outcomes for Aboriginal people





# CONTEXT AND VISION



Connectivity and partnerships with our University secondary and TAFE sector providers is critical within our approach to workforce planning for Aboriginal employment. To promote professional careers and or pathways from traineeships and cadetships, education and training will become a platform for success in educational goals for our Aboriginal people and consideration of broader career goals and pathways within the health sector.

Western Health must work with the different levels of education providers to further develop training and education that is responsive to current individual and community complexities and meets the future healthcare sector need for culturally strong and safe employees.

Within the Aboriginal community we see large numbers, not in secure or ongoing employment. By sourcing and valuing the skills and knowledge of this group and supporting them in employment, further education and training, opportunities can be afforded to them.

Additionally we move further toward 'Closing the Gap' for Aboriginal people in respect to employment, education, health wellbeing and safe outcomes for them, their families and our community.

The number of Aboriginal staff at Western Health has increased from 11 in 2015 to 30 at the start of 2019. The formation of a Western Suburbs Employer, Aboriginal Employment Pipeline Committee has supported and provided oversight to a number of Aboriginal employment Partnerships and Programs.

These include a Graduate Nurse Program specifically for Aboriginal people, a traineeship program established with secondary schools in the West, a relationship with AFL Sportsready to align employment opportunities at Western Health with candidates, and a relationship with Kangan Institute to align candidates and education opportunities. In addition, personalised recruitment support has been introduced for Aboriginal applicants to Western Health positions.

# Strategic Element One

**Grow the Aboriginal workforce within Western Health and extend the capacity of that workforce to meet the health and family needs of the local community.**

How success will be demonstrated;  
Western Health is;

- Resourced to develop and implement an aboriginal workforce development sustainability plan
- Skilled workforce that meets the needs and aspirations of their community
- Equipped and educated to become an employer of choice for Aboriginal people



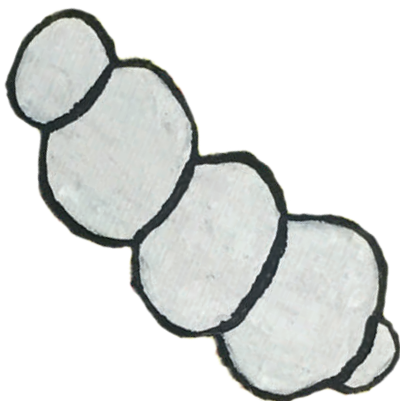


## Action

## Timing By

## Lead & Partners

- |   |           |   |
|---|-----------|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide a clear direction with resources and pathways for the local Aboriginal community that details development and implementation of WH organisational Aboriginal workforce sustainability plans</li></ul> | June 2021 | Liaise with WH Workforce Planning group to create workplace understanding, collection and distribution of Aboriginal employment initiatives and include new workforce opportunities for Aboriginal people |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Resource WH to develop and implement specific marketing, orientation and induction programs to support Aboriginal employee recruitment and retention</li></ul>  | June 2020 | P&C Business Partners, Recruitment Team and Workplace Strategy and Wellbeing Team   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish and support a Community of Practice for Aboriginal employees to provide peer support, shared learning, mentoring and cultural safety</li></ul>  | June 2021 | Director Workplace Strategy and Wellbeing   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify specific positions annually across all disciplines within Establishment guidelines, that are allocated for Aboriginal appointments</li></ul>   | June 2020 | Executive and Divisional Directors nominate position(s) to be filled by Aboriginal people   |





# Strategic Element Two

**Meet the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal people through increased career pathways across all areas of Western Health.**

How success will be demonstrated:

- Aboriginal people employed and retained in Western Health
- Aboriginal people are represented in roles and professions within Western Health
- Aboriginal people determine their career pathways within the health sector and at Western Health
- Western Health are committed to providing support and assistance for Aboriginal people to pursue their desired career development
- Employment pathways are eventually designed by our own established Aboriginal workforce to further grow and strengthen our workforce and the health service



## Action

## Timing By

## Lead & Partners

- | Action   | Timing<br>By | Lead &<br>Partners  |
|--|--------------|---|
| • Deliver a marketing campaign to attract Aboriginal people to the breadth of careers in Western Health.   | October 2020 | Manager, People Culture Operations and WFP  |
| • Develop a WH School based traineeship program for secondary schools within our catchment area to make applications annually.   | March 2021   | Director Workplace Strategy and Wellbeing   |
| • Develop a specific employment ready entry level program with selected Aboriginal employment agencies to receive applications for advertised roles.   | June 2020    | Director Workplace Strategy and Wellbeing   |
| • Develop a targeted recruitment campaign for Aboriginal people to enter priority workforce roles including, nursing and midwifery, medicine, family violence, family support, child protection and drug and alcohol support.                | October 2020 | Manager, People Culture Operations and WFP  |
| • Design and resource workforce wellbeing programs that specifically address aboriginal needs including debriefing, culturally appropriate counselling support, peer development and culturally safe development is dynamic and sustainable. | October 2020 | Director Workplace Strategy and Wellbeing and Manager Aboriginal Health Policy and Planning |



# Strategic Element Three



**Ensure that Western Suburbs employers, education providers, WH and our local Aboriginal community work together to enable leadership development that addresses the employment and cultural needs of the Aboriginal workforce.**

How success will be demonstrated:

- Internal and external education and training providers are responsive to and establish relationships to partner together with chosen local community Elders and WH
- Increased numbers participating in accredited training
- WH Aboriginal employees are co designing culturally appropriate course content and delivery
- Aboriginal practice leadership is developed and integrated at all levels and is central to WH workforce design and reform
- Aboriginal people lead Western Health development of responses to government reform and compliance in order to achieve the greatest outcome for the local aboriginal community
- Western Health has representation at DHHS to ensure that our local aboriginal community are engaged and included to ensure we address current and future aboriginal workforce development needs
- Build a sustainable employer group who work together to provide employment opportunities across industries in the Western Suburbs of Melbourne.





## Action

## Timing By

## Lead & Partners

- |  |            |  |
|--|------------|--|
| • Initiate conversations within the local Aboriginal community to implement Aboriginal workforce leadership development models                       | March 2020 | Director Workplace Strategy and Wellbeing and Local Aboriginal community Elders, Manager Aboriginal Health Policy and Planning |
| • Initiate conversation and development of leadership models in education at secondary schools within our catchment areas                            | March 2020 | Director Workplace Strategy and Wellbeing Designated WH catchment area secondary schools and Careers teachers                  |
| • Develop contacts within a local Aboriginal Leadership network that is led and supported by WH Aboriginal employees                                 | March 2020 | Director Workplace Strategy and Wellbeing  |
| • Grow the WH Mentor Program with selection of culturally appropriate Mentors for current Aboriginal employee leadership and development opportunity | June 2020  | Director Workplace Strategy and Wellbeing  |
| • Ensure WH is a culturally safe environment through whole of service accredited education awareness in Aboriginal cultural safety principles        | June 2021  | Manager Aboriginal Health Policy and Planning with Director Workplace Strategy and Wellbeing                                   |
| • Regenerate employer network committed to enabling indigenous employment opportunities across all industries in Western Suburbs                     | June 2020  | Director Workplace Strategy and Wellbeing  |

## **Governance, monitoring and reporting**

The governance, monitoring and reporting of the strategy is critical for achieving the intended outcomes. The overall accountability for the employment plan sits with the Executive Director People Culture and Communications with progress and reporting monitored and delivered against outcomes by the Director Workplace Strategy and Wellbeing.

## **Partnership and Cooperation**

There is currently a significant amount of work and collaboration within a number of public health services, Departments of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Education and Training (DET), Victorian Council of Community Services (VCOSS) and several leading Victorian Aboriginal organisations who are working together to support the development of self-determination and employment opportunities within the local Aboriginal communities and across the health sector.

The Victorian government has set a long term commitment to our Aboriginal community through the 10 year strategies of Korin Korin, Balit Djak, Balit Murrup, Wungurilwil Gaggapduir and Dhelk Dja in order to respond to government reforms and workforce development priorities, WH is committed to successful outcomes within these frameworks.

Workforce investment to meet Aboriginal community needs has been a focus of ongoing WH workplace planning initiatives and will continue within this new planned approach.

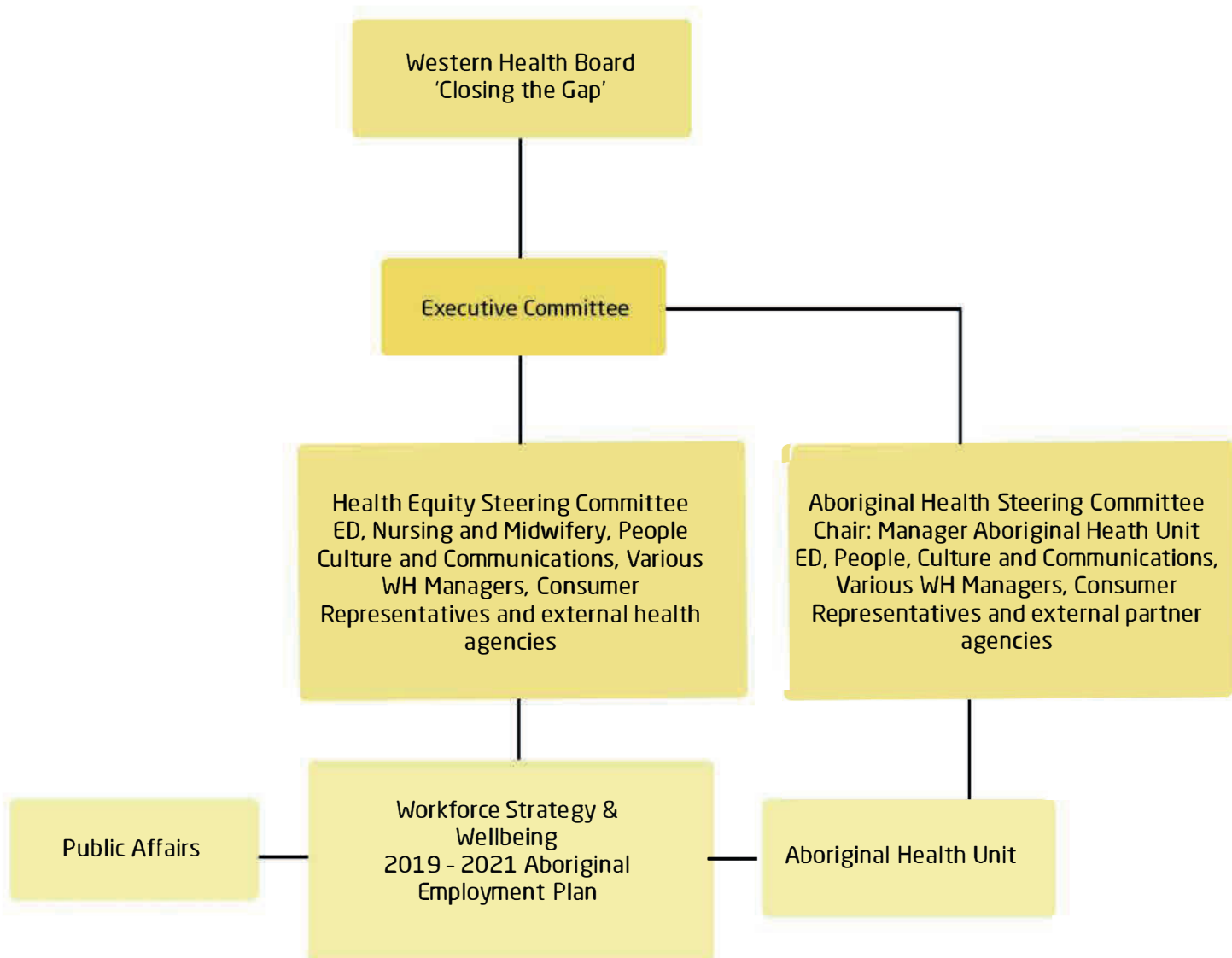
Long term success will require prioritisation for WH to develop a qualified, skilled and recognised Aboriginal workforce with rewarding careers at all levels in our health service. This three year plan continues the journey toward achieving our Aboriginal employment goals at Western Health.

Western Health is committed to continuing the collaboration with current and future partners and in particular, strengthening the ties to our local Aboriginal community.





Figure 2: Operational governance, monitoring and reporting for the strategy



# Acknowledgment

Maddison Irwin



## Close The Gap

*"The traditional story behind this artwork is to firstly recognise the owners of the land in which Western Health is residing on; The Wurundjeri Tribe and The BoonWurrung Tribe.*

*The centre of this piece translates the meaning of Wurundjeri, as Wurun means Eucalyptus tree or the Manna Gum and Djeri means witchetty grub which is depicted thought out this piece. Before white fellas came the yam plant was commonly cultivated by the Boon Wurrung people among other foods and sea life.*

*Secondly this artwork is to signify the change and commitment that Western Health has to bringing cultural awareness and safety within the hospitals it represents.*

*The flag is to represent all indigenous people (Aboriginal as well as Torres Strait Islander) who Western Health recognises and would like to welcome all to join this journey. The steps in the manna gum are to signify people from all walks of life to join the journey of 'Closing the Gap' and by sitting together we improve and develop ideas to support Indigenous people to find their career within the health sector and succeed.*

*The running water depicts the water which flows through the land of both tribes as well as the hospitals represented by Western Health in which it is creating a connection between all.*

*The signature at the top right hand corner states C.D.M and the reasoning is to acknowledge my ancestors before me. Caroline Aboriginal who was the first descendant we have acknowledged among my family. She is from the Budjari lands as well as my grandmother Dixie Hearn. I am Maddison Irwin and we are Badyidi women. Our names are what form C.D.M" Maddison Irwin.*





Artist Maddison Irwin

People, Culture and Communications  
Western Health

Leonie Hall  
Director Workplace Strategy and Wellbeing



