

Hunter New England LHD Aboriginal Workforce Staff Networking Meetings

The establishment and participation of local Aboriginal staff network gatherings has immense effects on wellbeing, safety and support, connection, networking, learning, development, productivity and satisfaction on the career and position held in HNE Health.

Intent of Aboriginal staff networking Meetings

Background & Purpose

- Aboriginal staff networking meetings can be also known as collaborative groups, staff networking meetings, yarning circles, and cultural yarning. It is a gathering of Aboriginal staff that agree to be respectful, confidential, and kind to one another.
- Aboriginal staff networking together occurs across the health district in varied ways and times. Some networking meetings occur at selected times throughout the year and can be held prior to other cultural or CTG meetings occurring to ensure timely conversations and solutions can arise that have emerged from the Aboriginal staff meeting prior. Other ways of networking have been with specific health profession and with specific senior leadership.
- With technology advancing, Aboriginal staff meetings should at times (alternate or each time) consider being offered with virtual connection and across other locations.
- Aboriginal staff networking meetings are not to be used for advocating for individual staff members, to lobby on behalf of professional bodies, provide advice on IR, operational matters or for consultation purposes unless there is agreement on the purpose (i.e., People & Culture Yarns, Workforce/Development Yarns). There are mechanisms and processes for these matters to occur both culturally and professionally which results in safety of all members present.
- The networking meetings can include some debriefing and shared knowledge, experiences and challenges that can be supported by escalation pathways or connecting with a cultural/clinical supervisor, manager or access to the people and culture workforce.
- The networking time can be considered to include a shared lunch/break with one another, weaving/painting/other activity or invite a speaker/s for relevance.
- The primary objective and duty is to turn yarning if needed into specific actions that will enhance the working conditions and experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and encourage cultural transformation throughout the institution, site, or service.
- At all times the HNE Health Values Charter and Code of Conduct is to be adhered to even though the network is self-governed and membership arrangements, terms of reference and leadership is determined by own members.
- At a local or facility level, the decision making on actions raised will be provided by senior management in collaboration with the local Aboriginal staff and other key staff as required.

- HNE People and Culture Aboriginal Workforce Unit is supportive of these Aboriginal Networking meetings and can engage and participate as often as possible or be contacted if required following discussions.
- The support of releasing Aboriginal staff to the networking meeting is a direct commitment of championing diversity and inclusion with diverse groups in HNE Health. Any Aboriginal staff who would like to participate is to speak with their manager and have alternate arrangements confirmed for your absence from the work environment during these network times.
- Aboriginal staff networking times are supported by HNE Management and is integral and invaluable to the Aboriginal workforce having flowing effects to the broader workforce and community. Further reference is within the [Policy Directive PD2023_046. 2.2 Key Priority Area 2: Build cultural understanding and respect Point 2.8.](#) and relevant Closing the Gap targets and Aboriginal Health Plans and Strategies nationally, state and locally.

Roles & Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Co-Chairs/Facilitator/Cultural Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes the dates of the meetings throughout their term as Chairs/Co-Chairs • Manages the agenda and progress of the meeting. • Facilitates orderly and constructive discussions between members on matters. • Ensures that all members have equal opportunity to contribute ideas, opinions, and concerns. • Maintains a positive and constructive atmosphere at meetings by encouraging courtesy, respect, and openness. • Ensures that any action required is appropriately assigned. • Sending calendar invites to the Network, advising details of upcoming meetings.
Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in meeting discussions. • Adhere to Confidentiality, and CORE Values

Guiding Principles

Co-Chairs/Cultural Lead: Opportunities could be built into developing leadership skills and experience by nominating/expressing interest in the Co-Chairs/Cultural Lead position annually. If the number of nominations received exceeds the number of vacancies to be filled, a ballot is to be held to determine the elected.

Members: The Network is a community for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff holding a position within HNE Health. Meetings will be scheduled as best fitting for local purposes. It is recommended that meetings will alternate between online via Microsoft Teams and in person or the offering of both each time.

Guests: Guests may be invited to attend the meeting to contribute information to specific arranged items. Proposed guests will be captured in the agenda ahead of meeting dates.

Confidentiality: Members of the Network may occasionally receive information that is deemed confidential, culturally sensitive, or involving privacy issues. Members understand that it is their duty to protect the confidentiality and privacy of any information disclosed.