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# Metro South Allied Health Deadly Career Pathway

Initiative Type

Education and Training

Status

Deliver

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<https://test.clinicalexcellence.qld.gov.au/improvement-exchange/metro-south-allied-health-deadly-career-pathway>

## Summary

The Allied Health Deadly Pathway, a program within Metro South Health (MSH) is designed to transform workforce opportunities for allied health professionals who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Our pathway is more than just a project; it's a commitment to reshaping the landscape of healthcare by fostering inclusion and representation.

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Through targeted recruitment efforts and comprehensive support systems, our pathway is actively creating routes for individuals to thrive in clinical and leadership roles within MSH. This is about creating a healthcare environment where cultural understanding and excellence are intrinsic to every aspect of our work. Together, we can build a future where all voices are heard, and everyone can contribute to a healthier, more equitable society. The pathway has been crafted through collaboration with both internal and external stakeholders, leveraging existing and emerging programs to align and embed them into current and future allied health services. It was developed to pinpoint and define various entry points at different career stages, mirroring the successful framework of the MSH Nursing Deadly Pathway. To operationalise our strategic plan effectively, several key components have been integrated into the pathway: The Deadly Start Program, Indigenous Cadetship Program, New Graduate Program, and Allied Health First Nations in Leadership. The Deadly Start Program is the entry point for the pathway. This program is operated on a statewide level through Metro North HHS. Various entities offer support for the traineeship program, including regular check-ins conducted by Metro North Health Service Deadly Starts team, online forums by MSH Diversity and Inclusion Team, and mentoring support from the MSH First Nations Directorate and external organisations. The Cadetship Program targets Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Allied Health university students, providing them with paid work-placement opportunities during their studies. The program aims to foster a culturally sensitive workplace and promote MSH as an attractive employer. Similarly, the First Nations Graduate Pathway offers culturally safe entry-to-practice opportunities for new graduates. To support the retention and career progression of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander professionals within the allied health workforce, MSH has implemented Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Workforce in Leadership program. This initiative aims to provide career development, advancement, and cultural support while improving understanding and implementation of culturally safe practices in the workplace. Through strategies such as improved identification accuracy, mentoring and support, flexible work arrangements, and non-standard recruitment methods, MSH is actively working towards creating a diverse and inclusive workforce reflective of the community it serves.

## Key dates

Jan 2022

## Implementation sites

Metro South Hospital and Health Service

## Partnerships

The Office of the Chief Allied Health Officer

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## Key Contacts

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## Aim

Our aim is to design and implement the Allied Health Deadly Pathway within Metro South Health (MSH) as a transformative initiative dedicated to enhancing workforce opportunities for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Allied Health Professionals. Through this program, we strive to not only address the disparities in workforce representation but also to foster a healthcare environment that prioritises inclusion and cultural responsiveness.

## Benefits

Career development and cultural support through the MSH Allied Health Deadly Career Pathway to enable a diverse and inclusive workforce reflective of the community we serve.

## Background

Local challenges such as insufficient levels of workforce Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation in Metro South pose obstacles to creating a diverse and inclusive environment. Research underscores the vital connection between workforce diversity and community well-being

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(Meyer et al., 2020), affirming the importance of initiatives like ours in promoting economic and social empowerment within the community. At MSH Allied Health, we are dedicated to ensuring cultural safety and appropriateness across our workforce, with a clear focus on increasing Indigenous representation across all professions. Aligned with national and state health priorities such as Closing the Gap and Making Tracks, our Pathway is a crucial component of efforts to improve health outcomes for Indigenous Queenslanders by 2033. It stands as a cornerstone of the Metro South Health Equity Strategy 2022 - 2025, driving tangible progress towards a more equitable and culturally responsive healthcare system.

## Evaluation and Results

Evaluation of implementation success has been undertaken for the Cadetship component of the Pathway. These results were obtained through survey results from the participants and feedback from professional and operational managers.

**Retention - Employment Status** A 2022 cadet has secured ongoing employment in MSH. One cadet has completed her second year. All four 2023 cadets are continuing into 2024. Possible improvements in future: Investigate options for ongoing recruitment possibilities onto new graduate pathways. Investigate rotations across HHS for broad exposure to Queensland Health opportunities. There is a need for embedding rotations across cadetships.

**Reaction - Microsoft Teams Survey** Four out of four Cadets completed the survey. Overall, very positive response. Possible improvements in future: Ensuring established experience of cultural safety for cadets.

**Process - Budget** Sites initially endorsed the trial but did not commit to self-fund cadets. The EDAH cost centre funded some positions to enable the project to continue. Possible improvements in future: Centralised funding from the newly established Metro North Cadetship Program to fund positions for 2024.

**Process - Cultural Support** No designated cultural support built into cadetships. Cadets placed in teams with identified staff had additional support. Opportunities identified through feedback from cadets included regular meet ups with other cadets and appointed cultural mentors. Possible improvements in future: Statewide project officers are invested in supporting this. Conversations have been had with the MSH Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health to support cultural mentorship.

## Lessons Learnt

Overall, the experience was positive for the Metro South Cadets however there are areas for potential improvement:

- **Clarification of cultural support:** While most cadets felt supported culturally, there were suggestions for improvement, such as regular meetups, yarning circles, and appointed Indigenous support persons.
- **Clarity in roles and contacts:** Some cadets expressed confusion or feeling overwhelmed by the number of people overseeing the cadetships and changes in roles. Providing clearer communication channels and designated points of contact could alleviate this issue.
- **Facilitating connections:** Suggestions were made to facilitate early connections among cadets and with liaisons to foster a supportive network and reduce feelings of isolation.

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By addressing these points and implementing suggested improvements, the cadetship program hopes to become even more enriching and supportive for 2024 participants.

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