

ABORIGINAL HEALTH PLAN



2024-2028



“Healing Place” by Nanii Davies

About the artwork:

Healing Place is a vibrant celebration of the heart and soul of Family Planning Australia (FPA) – a tapestry of community, connection, and the sharing of knowledge, woven together through healing and healthcare.

The FPA team wanted to honor the ancient Aboriginal practice of the smoking ceremony, where gum leaves are burned to cleanse and heal. In Healing Place, the gumtree flowers symbolise this sacred smoke and its spiritual significance.

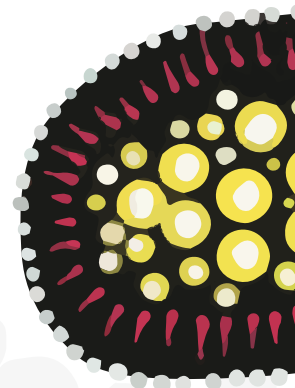
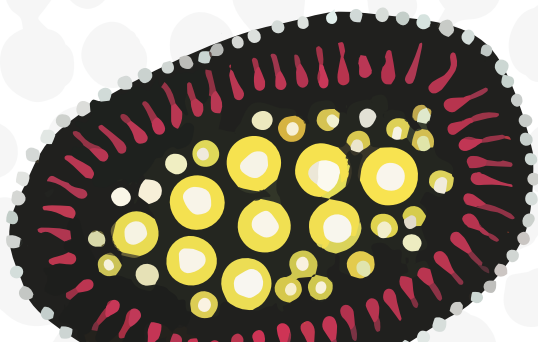
The round campfires represent not only the warmth of togetherness of the FPA workforce, but also the clientele of each FPA clinic – located in Dubbo, Newcastle, Newington, Fairfield, and Penrith. These campfires honor both the medical teams and the communities they serve, highlighting their shared journey in healthcare, education, and collaboration.

The oval campfires represent the vital community connections that the FPA team has nurtured through outreach, education, and culturally safe healthcare practices. These shapes symbolise gatherings beyond the clinic walls – where knowledge is shared, trust is built, and health is approached holistically. Whether it's through workshops, community visits, or one-on-one conversations, these campfires reflect FPA's deep commitment to walking alongside communities with respect, reciprocity, and care. They honour the importance of meeting people where they are, and the healing power that comes from culturally grounded, people-first health partnerships.

The background dotting reflects the Traditional Countries on which each clinic stands, grounding the piece in respect for Country, culture, and the enduring strength of Aboriginal connection to land and community.

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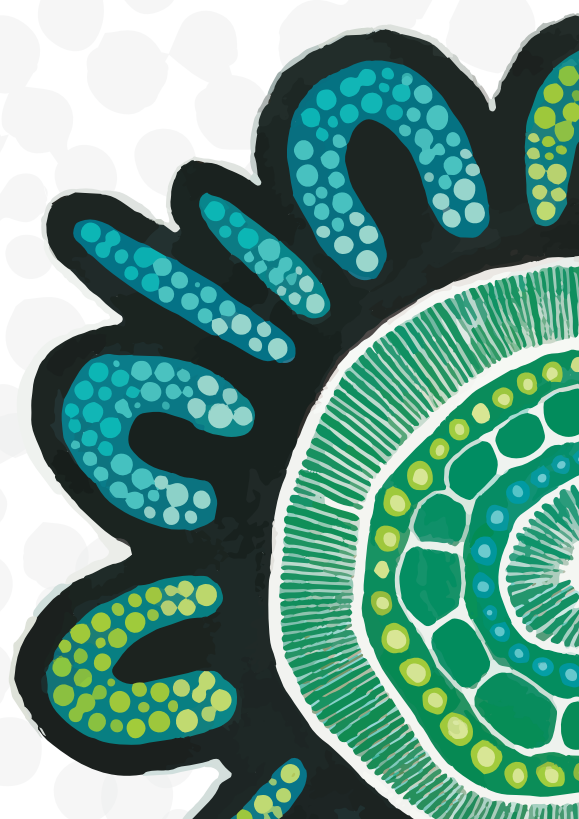


Acknowledgement of Country

In the spirit of reconciliation, Family Planning Australia acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country in which we are located and their connections to land, sea and community.

We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and we extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our hope and belief is that we can move to a place of equity and justice and work hand-in-hand together.



Introduction

Family Planning Australia (FPA) is proud to introduce our comprehensive Aboriginal Health Plan, aimed at enhancing reproductive and sexual health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and communities in NSW.

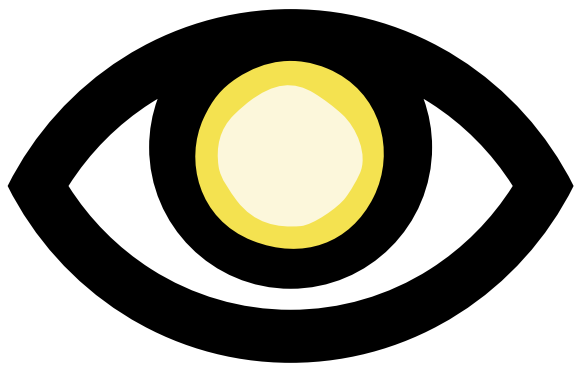
Informed by strategic directions outlined in our 2022-2024 Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan and the NSW Health Aboriginal Health Plan (2013-2023), this initiative is grounded in cultural sensitivity, inclusivity, and community collaboration.

It builds upon the achievements of our previous Innovate Reconciliation Action Plans (2018-2020 and 2022-2024), which focused on enhancing staff cultural competency, strategic direction, engagement, and health promotion services.

The plan proposes tailored and strength-based approaches to improve reproductive and sexual health outcomes among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in NSW.

FPA is committed to listening and working in respectful partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations to achieve practical reconciliation and address health disparities.

At a glance: Aboriginal Health Plan 2024 -2028

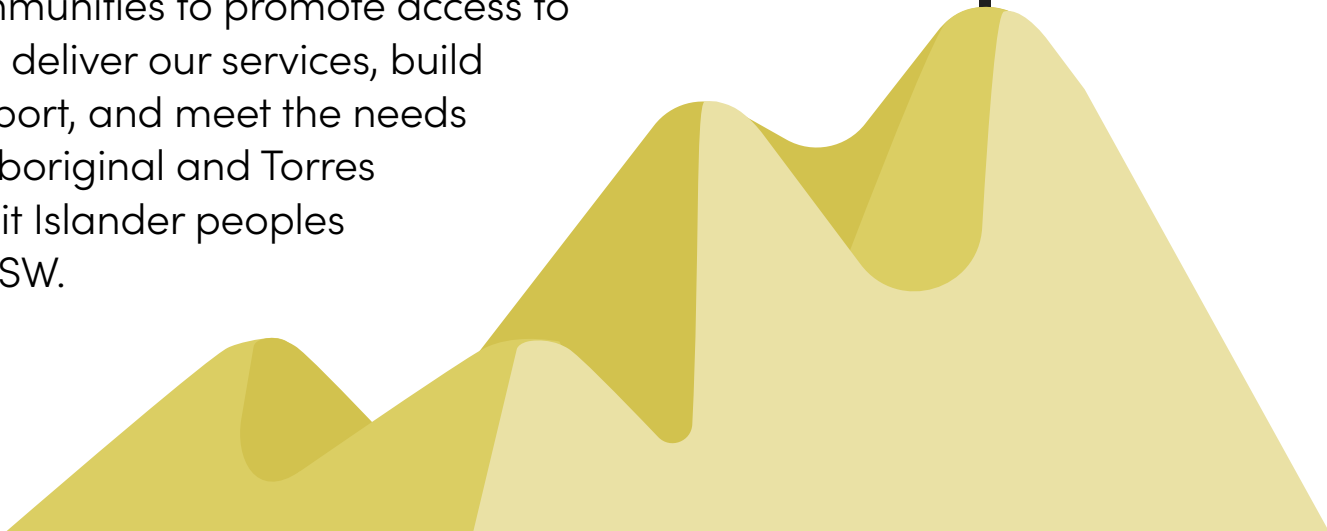


1 Vision

Our vision is for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to have increased access to equitable reproductive and sexual health information and services across NSW.

2 Goal

To develop strong, meaningful and committed relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities to promote access to and deliver our services, build rapport, and meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in NSW.



3 Strategic actions



Improving reproductive and sexual health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across NSW

01



Enhancing the delivery of our reproductive and sexual health services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities

02

03

Strengthening our current partnerships and exploring new opportunities for collaboration



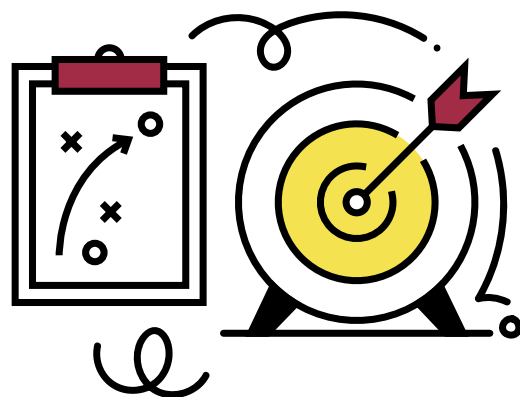
04

Strengthening the capabilities of our workforce to ensure the provision of services prioritises cultural safety and inclusivity



4 Implementation and evaluation

The existing FPA Aboriginal Health Working Group (formerly the Reconciliation Actions Plan working group) is responsible for implementing the Plan, reporting on progress and will monitor progress and oversee evaluation.



Guiding principles for the provision of care to Aboriginal communities

The following guiding principles were developed in collaboration with the FPA Aboriginal Consumer Advisory Group to ensure the work we do with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is done in a culturally appropriate and collaborative way.

FPA commits to:

- 1 Enable the cultural competency of FPA staff, upholding cultural respect and integrity
- 2 Work in collaboration and through partnerships to strengthen services and programs
- 3 Operate from a position of trust and cultural respect
- 4 Be allies for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community
- 5 Ensure participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at all levels
- 6 Empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients in accessing Family Planning Australia services
- 7 Engage with stakeholders and community
- 8 Build rapport with community, individuals and stakeholders
- 9 Ensure evaluation and accountability

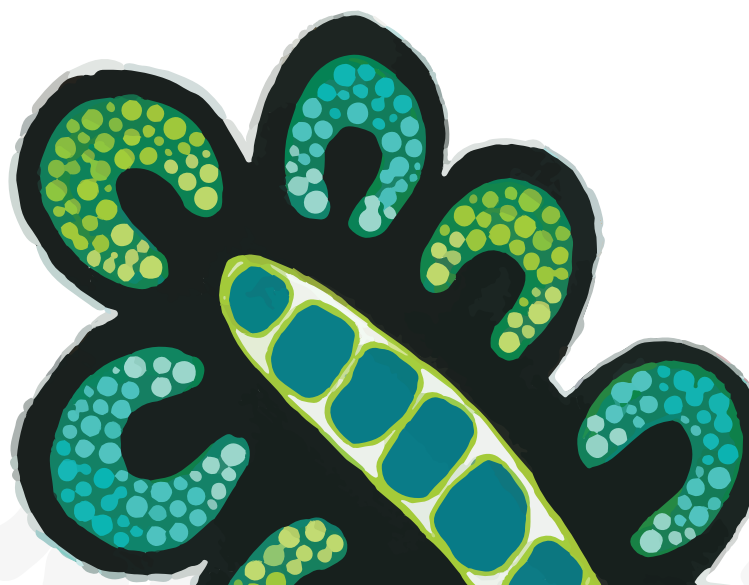
Developing the plan

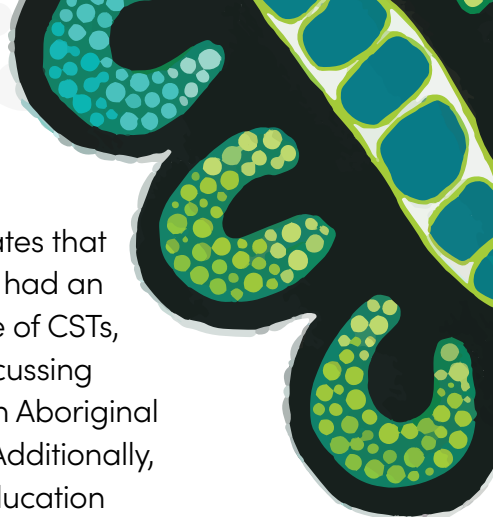
This plan was developed by the FPA Reconciliation Action Plan working group, in consultation with the FPA Aboriginal Consumer Advisory Group and FPA Aboriginal staff. The plan is underpinned by the FPA Reconciliation Action Plan 2022-2024, NSW Health Aboriginal Health Plan 2013-2023, and the NSW Aboriginal STI and BBV Framework 2016-2021. Implementation of the strategies contained within this plan are dependent on collaboration between FPA and key partners such as Aboriginal Medical Services and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations.

Our work with Aboriginal communities

Improving reproductive and sexual health outcomes within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is embedded within the FPA Strategic Plan and forms a priority area within our core business. Our engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is based on cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity and cultural safety.

At present, 7% of our clients across all clinics identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Our Dubbo clinic has a particular focus on this priority population group with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people representing 22% of our clients at that site.





We provide community education, professional development, resource development and other support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across NSW. We collaborate closely with various Aboriginal Medical Services, enhancing clinical services, health promotion activities, and education and training packages by value adding to the existing strengths within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. These activities are driven by our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan which provides strategic direction on our contribution to positive reproductive and sexual health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at both a community and organisational level.

Our work in focus: Health promotion

Choice and Control: Yarning about cervical screening tests

The Choice and Control: Yarning About Cervical Screening Tests project, delivered from July 2022 to June 2023, aimed to increase Cervical Screening Test (CST) education and participation rates amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women aged 25–74 in key areas of Western NSW Local Health District (WNSWLHD).

Funded by the Cancer Institute NSW (CINSW), the project was informed by community consultations and was focused within WNSWLHD, an area with a high proportion of Aboriginal women with low screening rates. The project successfully delivered two webinars for Aboriginal Health Workers (AHWs) on the importance of cervical screening including the introduction of self-collection, and the facilitation of 12 community education sessions with 89 women in Dubbo, Nyngan, Cobar, Brewarrina, Walgett and Greater Walgett Shire.

Evaluation data indicates that all webinar attendees had an increase in knowledge of CSTs, and confidence in discussing cervical screening with Aboriginal women post session. Additionally, 100% of community education participants reported greater knowledge about cervical screening after the session, and 94% reported feeling more comfortable having a CST after the session. Of the 89 participants, 11 were due for a CST and all were supported to access cervical screening appointments by FPA Outreach clinicians. Throughout the project, 23 services in WNSWLHD were engaged to support delivery and 1,270 Yarning About Cervical Screening Test resources were distributed to Aboriginal women in the area.

Overall, the project was successfully implemented, meeting all short-term outcomes including increasing knowledge of cervical screening amongst Aboriginal women. This project provides a structure to sustainably offer ongoing cervical screening community education to Aboriginal women across other areas of NSW as well as building the capacity of AHWs in supporting women in their cervical screening journey.

Related RAP Actions

Action 1: Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations

Action 11: Increase our engagement with rural and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to promote the importance of Cervical Screening Tests with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

Our Reconciliation journey

FPA has been engaged with the development and implementation of a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) since 2014. We have implemented and delivered two RAPs, most recently the 2022–2024 Innovate plan. This was developed to further advance our commitment to reconciliation and ensure we are an inclusive employer for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

As a result of this process, the organisation has achieved significant milestones of change including the introduction of organisation-wide Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training for all staff, the development of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and Retention Strategy, implementation of the Aboriginal Health Impact Statement in health promotion projects, establishment of outreach clinics in Western New South Wales (NSW), and the addition of Supplier Diversity into our Purchasing Procedure to encourage the procurement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander goods and services.

Notable RAP achievements

Development of numerous strategies including:

- Aboriginal Cultural Protocol Policy
- Aboriginal Employment and Retention Strategy
- Aboriginal cultural learning strategy
 - › Increased spending with Aboriginal Supply Nation Certified businesses
 - › Implementation of mandatory all-staff online Aboriginal Cultural Competency training
 - › Implementation of identifying question during staff onboarding and orientation
 - › Creation of orientation module exploring our work with Aboriginal communities within Moodle
 - › Development of Aboriginal Cultural Days of Significance Calendar
 - › Establishment of outreach clinics in Western NSW
 - › Completion of Choice and Control cervical screening community education project
 - › Completion of Aboriginal Health Worker cervical screening training project

The successful implementation of the FPA Reconciliation Action Plans has not only marked a significant milestone in our commitment to collaborating effectively with Aboriginal communities but has also laid a robust platform for our ongoing initiatives. Through our RAPs, we have worked toward a more inclusive and culturally sensitive work ethos, recognising the unique experiences and perspectives of Aboriginal communities. This has, in turn, strengthened our commitment to a holistic model of care that respects cultural diversity and emphasises community well-being.

The lessons learned and successes achieved through these efforts will now play a pivotal role in shaping the development and implementation of this Aboriginal Health Action Plan. This plan will further refine our strategies, ensuring that our services align seamlessly with the cultural and healthcare lived experiences of the Aboriginal community, sustaining our partnerships and promoting reproductive and sexual health equity.

Health from a healing lens

With reference to the NSW Aboriginal Health Plan 2013–2023, Aboriginal health is defined as not just the physical wellbeing of an individual but refers to the social, emotional and cultural wellbeing of the whole community in which each individual is able to achieve their full potential as a human being, thereby bringing about the total wellbeing of their community.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, factors such as cultural identity, family and kinship, Country and caring for Country, knowledge and beliefs systems, traditional healing practices, language, participation in cultural activities and access to significant sites are also key determinants of health and wellbeing (AIHW and NIAA 2020).

These factors are interrelated and combine to affect the health of individuals and broader communities.

Taking this into account, this plan is designed with an approach that goes beyond merely addressing physical reproductive and sexual health issues. Recognising that Aboriginal health is tied to social, emotional, and cultural wellbeing, our strategies extend to encompass broader aspects such as cultural identity, knowledge and beliefs and participation in cultural activities.

Closing the gap

FPA acknowledges that despite decades of investment by governments in programs to address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage, Australia has not closed the gap on some key health measures, including reproductive and sexual health outcomes. In July 2020, the Australian Governments and the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations endorsed the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. The agreement encompasses 17 targets to measure progress in various outcome areas and determinants.

The insights taken from this national initiative play a crucial role in informing the development of this plan. By aligning our strategies with the principles outlined in the National Agreement, we aim to contribute effectively to closing the reproductive and sexual health gap and promoting the overall well-being of Aboriginal communities.

Strengths based approaches

FPA is committed to employing strengths-based approaches in its engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across NSW. Central to this commitment is the recognition of Elders and community members as important leaders and expert knowledge holders, who we listen to and learn from through shared experiences and stories.

Grounded in cultural sensitivity and inclusivity, FPA's initiatives extend beyond addressing reproductive and sexual health issues or disparities. Instead, they encompass a value adding approach that aligns with the social, emotional, and cultural aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Through reciprocal engagement and partnership, FPA seeks to enhance the vital work already underway within these communities, focusing on strengths rather than deficits.

FPA aims to build upon the solid foundations laid by community-driven initiatives, ultimately empowering Aboriginal communities to continue to thrive and flourish in all facets of life.

Demographic and health profile of Aboriginal communities within NSW

At a population level, Aboriginal people experience poorer health outcomes than non-Aboriginal people (Australian Bureau of Statistics), which is attributed to a range of economic, social and political factors, including the impacts of colonisation and past government policies and practices and other social determinants of health.

With reference to the NSW Aboriginal Health Plan (2013–2023), more Aboriginal people live in NSW than in any other Australian state or territory. Data obtained from the ABS 2021 Census of Population and Housing indicates that 278,000 people identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, representing 3.4% of the NSW population. 51.8% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in NSW were aged under 25 years, and in 2021, the NSW Local Government Area (LGA) with the most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was the Central Coast, followed by Blacktown and Lake Macquarie.

A summary of key Aboriginal reproductive and sexual health outcomes is detailed on the following page.

Contraception use

With reference to Coombe (2020), the current evidence base suggests that patterns of contraceptive use differ between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.

There is, however, limited data on the contraceptive use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Data collected in the 2012–13 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey suggests less than half of participants were using contraception at the time of the survey (49%; the Australian national average was 67% in 2015).

Teenage fertility

The Australian teenage fertility rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women is 4.6 times higher (48.3 live births/1,000 women) than the average Australian rate of 10.5 live births/1,000. With reference to the Australian Children's Right Report 2017, particular groups are more likely to become young parents, including young people living in rural and remote areas, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and those from low socioeconomic backgrounds.



Sexually transmissible infections

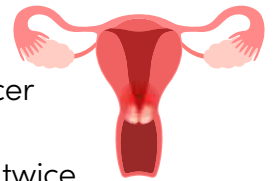
In 2021, STI notification rates remained higher among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people than among non-Indigenous people. Chlamydia notification rates were more than three times as high and gonorrhoea was more than five times as high. Infectious syphilis notification rates amongst both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males and females were three and 24 times as high their non-Indigenous gender equivalents, respectively. (King et al. 2022).

The infectious syphilis notification rate in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples was more than three times as high as among non-Indigenous people in major cities, increasing to more than six times as high in regional areas and 77 times as high in remote areas.



Cervical cancer

The incidence of cervical cancer in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women is more than twice that of non-Indigenous women, and mortality is 4 times higher (Diaz et al., 2020). In addition, the five-year survival rate for cervical cancer is lower in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (56% compared with non-Indigenous women 72%) (AIHW, 2018).



Policy context

As part of quality improvement processes and accreditation requirements, this plan's strategies have been developed to closely align to key National and NSW Aboriginal health strategies.

National policies

- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2021-2031
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Blood Borne Viruses and Sexually Transmissible Infections Strategy 2018-2022
- National Agreement on Closing the Gap (2020)

NSW policies

- NSW Aboriginal Health Plan (2013-2023)

Our work in focus: Clinical partnerships

Increasing access to reproductive and sexual health services in regional and rural areas

Since 2020-21, we have been working on two major projects to improve access to reproductive and sexual health services in regional and rural NSW.

SEARCH (Sustaining Equitable Access to Reproductive Choices)

In July 2021, FPA received funding from the NSW Ministry of Health to trial a new service model through the SEARCH Project. This supports the delivery of community-based surgical and medical termination of pregnancy services and best practice long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) for women who experience barriers to safe and affordable services in regional NSW.

We currently have 22 established partners across five Local Health Districts, with partnerships established with a diverse range of services including Yamba Doctors, the Royal Flying Doctor Service and Narromine Shire Family Medical Centre. Our SEARCH project manager is continuing to develop new partnerships with organisations scheduled to come online during early 2024.

FPA hosted a GP Women's Health Forum in Dubbo, with 14 GPs attending the Women's Health update, and receiving information about the SEARCH project. In addition, the SEARCH project attended the Rural Doctors Network (RDN) GP Refresher Conference in Port Macquarie. This enabled us to connect with over 100 rural GPs and explore partnership opportunities with them. It has also fostered a strengthening of our partnership with RDN which will build more visibility for SEARCH.

Partnership with Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service for Women's Wellbeing

The Commonwealth grant to expand the provision of reproductive and sexual health services in Brewarrina Aboriginal Medical Service (BAMS) and Walgett Aboriginal Medical Services (WAMS) has been extended for a further twelve months. Over the last twelve months, FPA has provided outreach services to BAMS and WAMS on a fortnightly basis. This has resulted in 382 episodes of care provided on-site at WAMS or BAMS. Additionally, we have conducted results follow up phone calls, liaised between clinics, and provided clients with telehealth appointments or follow-up when necessary to ensure quality care delivery for the clients who access services at BAMS and WAMS.

Education and training has continued and local clinicians have received education in responding to clinical deterioration, LARC assessment, insertion and removal, and cervical screening. One doctor and two nurses employed by WAMS and BAMS were enrolled in the FPA National Certificate in Reproductive and Sexual Health for Doctors and Reproductive and Sexual Health – Clinical Accreditation Program courses respectively.

The Walgett and Brewarrina communities were badly affected by flooding in late 2022. The townships became completely cut-off and inaccessible for our outreach service providers for eight weeks. During this time our regional clinics continued to provide much needed care to clients via telehealth. FPA sent packs of supplies to the Aboriginal Medical Services (AMSs) to support the community during the hardship. This included mosquito nets for prams, mosquito repellent and itch relief cream. This goodwill gesture spoke to the value we place in the partnership and demonstrating support to the Aboriginal communities in the Walgett and Brewarrina townships and surrounds.

Despite the closure during the flooding, the partnership has been maintained and service provision has continued to both communities.

What we will do:

Strategic action plan

FPA is committed to action against the following 4 strategic actions over the next 5 years.

1

Improving reproductive and sexual health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across NSW

With a dedicated focus on improving reproductive and sexual health outcomes, we are committed to positively impacting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across NSW. We aim to increase our focus on factors that influence reproductive and sexual health outcomes of Aboriginal communities and implement targeted initiatives and resources to address these.

Related guiding principles: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9

Actions	Performance Indicator
1.1 Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to improve their RSH through health promotion, health literacy and early intervention strategies	• Health promotion projects implemented and evaluated
1.2 Create avenues for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and communities to initiate and participate in local activities aimed at promoting their RSH	• Community informed, co-designed programs implemented and evaluated
1.3 Increase cervical screening opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women of screening age	• Cervical screening health promotion and outreach programs implemented and evaluated
1.4 Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander client numbers across all FPA clinics	• 10% of all FPA clients identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander by 2028 • Identify and implement strategies to increase Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients
1.5 Strengthen monitoring and evaluation of key RSH trends within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities	• Data/evidence collected and reported on

2 Enhancing the delivery of reproductive and sexual health services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities

As an organisation, we have a deep respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures, and histories, as well as their lands and waters on which our organisation operates. Our goal is to ensure we can offer tailored, respectful and culturally safe reproductive and sexual health services, health promotion programs, education and resources to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in NSW.

Related guiding principles: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

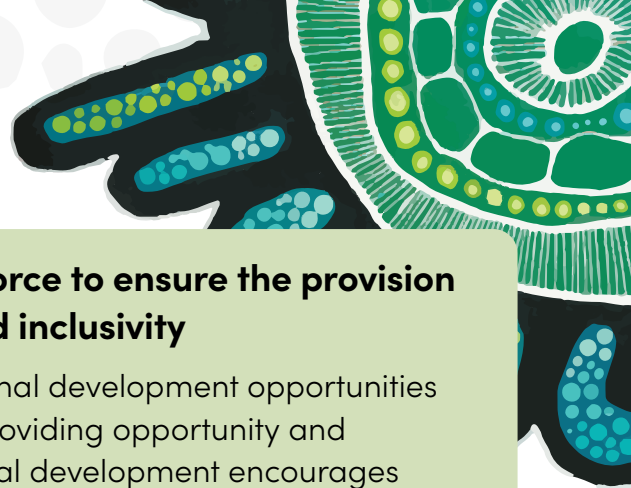
Actions	Performance Indicator
2.1 Continue and expand outreach clinical partnerships with Aboriginal Medical Services	New outreach partnerships created and existing partnerships maintained where appropriate
2.2 Continue implementing targeted health promotion programs in metropolitan, rural and remote areas of NSW	Evidenced-based, community informed health promotion programs and activities delivered
2.3 Strengthen participation of Aboriginal consumers in co-design and clinical governance decision making	Aboriginal consumer representative recruited
2.4 Develop a digital resource hub focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander information and resources	Aboriginal digital resource hub developed and launched
2.5 Expand partnering with Aboriginal health consumers to improve their experience of FPA care	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation established on Consumer Volunteer Representatives.
2.6 Explore new outreach clinic partnerships with Aboriginal community-controlled healthcare organisations through the SEARCH project	New SEARCH outreach clinic partnerships established in line with project model
2.7 Explore opportunities to deliver training to Aboriginal Health Workers in targeted locations of NSW	- Locations identified and proposal made for LHD funding - Yarning about Sexuality course delivered in identified locations

3 Strengthening our current partnerships and exploring new opportunities for collaboration

Strong, meaningful and committed partnerships are essential to promote access to our vital reproductive and sexual health services and programs, build rapport with communities and meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in NSW.

Related guiding principles: 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8

Actions	Performance Indicator
3.1 Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations	• New partnerships developed • Existing partnerships maintained and strengthened
3.2 Implement the FPA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Engagement and Consultation Guidelines to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations	• FPA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Engagement and Consultation Guidelines implemented
3.3 Strengthen partnership with AHMRC to deliver streamlined services and research across NSW	• Relationship with AHMRC developed
3.4 Work in partnership with Aboriginal Medical Services to continue to develop and deliver innovative clinical, education and training and health promotion initiatives	• Clinical, education and health promotion partnership initiatives delivered



4

Strengthening the capabilities of our workforce to ensure the provision of services that prioritise cultural safety and inclusivity

We believe in providing employment and professional development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Providing opportunity and pathways for employment and ongoing professional development encourages future leaders to actively shape the reconciliation pathway. By committing to greater representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, we are able to ensure our services reflect the needs of communities, foster and build stronger relationships, and improve reproductive and sexual health outcomes.

Related guiding principles: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9

Actions	Performance Indicator
4.1 Implement the FPA Aboriginal Cultural Learning Strategy	• All actions within Aboriginal Cultural Learning Strategy completed
4.2 Continue to deliver online Aboriginal Cultural Competency training to all staff	• 85% of FPA staff have completed FPA cultural competency training
4.3 All new staff to complete 'Working with Aboriginal Communities' module on Moodle Staff Orientation Hub	• 85% of staff completed Working with Aboriginal Communities Moodle module within 6 months of commencing at FPA
4.4 Investigate and implement external face- to-face cultural awareness training at each FPA site	• Face-to-face cultural awareness training delivered
4.5 Strengthen recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees across all areas of the organisation	• At least 3% of FPA staff identify as Aboriginal • Increase in the overall percentage of Aboriginal staff employed across all pillars of FPA • Increased number of targeted positions recruited to
4.6 Encourage self-identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees through ELMO to support accurate data collection informing the Aboriginal Employment and Retention Strategy	• FPA staff complete diversity questions within ELMO
4.7 Implement and review the Aboriginal Employment and Retention Strategy	• Aboriginal Employment and Retention Strategy implemented
4.8 Make Family Planning Australia an employer of choice through maintenance of partnerships and relationships with Aboriginal employment and education services	• Partnerships established and maintained with Aboriginal Employment Services and educational institutions
4.9. Investigate the expansion of the Aboriginal Liaison Officer position	• Aboriginal Liaison Officer roles recruited to in Dubbo and Hunter clinics

Implementation

The implementation of this plan will be led by the existing Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group and will align with the six actions within the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards (NSQHS), focusing specifically on catering to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals.

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

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of this plan will be done through the RAP working group, guided by a detailed evaluation plan to support its implementation over the next 5 years.

Evaluation and monitoring will be conducted to:

- 1 Inform ongoing implementation of the AHP, making adjustments as needed to improve effectiveness and address identified challenges.
- 2 Incorporate lessons learned and best practices into future planning processes to enhance the delivery of reproductive and sexual health services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The objectives of evaluation will include:

- Assess the effectiveness of the Aboriginal Health Plan (AHP) in improving reproductive and sexual health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients at Family Planning Australia.
- Determine the extent to which the AHP aligns with guiding principles, strategic actions, and performance indicators outlined in the plan.
- Monitor progress towards achieving overall goals and targets detailed in the plan.
- Ensure accountability and transparency in reporting progress to stakeholders.
- Identify strengths and areas for improvement in the implementation of the AHP.

Evaluation methods

The AHP will be evaluated using the following overarching methods:

Quantitative Methods

- 1 Track specific health indicators related to reproductive and sexual health outcomes (e.g. contraceptive use, STI prevalence rates, cervical screening rates).
- 2 Track Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clinical numbers (visits, appointments, health promotion participation numbers, Aboriginal Health Worker Participation numbers)
- 3 Conduct short sampling in waiting rooms across fixed clinics specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients to assess satisfaction with FPA services, access, and cultural appropriateness.

Qualitative Methods

- 1 Conduct an Aboriginal cultural safety audit within FPA clinics and programs to evaluate the extent to which services are respectful, responsive, and inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural beliefs, practices, and preferences.
- 2 Facilitate focus groups with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to gather feedback and co-develop solutions for addressing reproductive and sexual health needs and challenges.
- 3 Map out network of partnerships, collaborations, and relationships formed as part of the AHP implementation with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health services, Aboriginal Medical Services and stakeholders, assessing the strength of connections, levels of engagement, and mutual benefits for stakeholders involved.

References

Evaluation Timeline

- **Quantitative Methods:** Data to be collected at baseline, monitored annually, and reported as part of final evaluation in 2028.
- **Qualitative Methods:** Staggered periodically throughout the life of the AHP and reported as part of final evaluation in 2028.

Progress of the AHP will be reported to the FPA Board quarterly via the RAP Champion and FPA Executive representative.

Key actions will also be included in the monthly CEO report to the Board to ensure monitoring and accountability is maintained and strengthened.

AIHW and NIAA (2020b) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework- external site opens in new window*, AIHW and NIAA, Australian Government, accessed 3 April 2022.

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About the artist:

Natalie 'Nanii' Davies is a contemporary Wiradjuri artist based on the East Coast of Australia. Her totem is the crow, and her work is deeply influenced by her cultural heritage, connection to Country, and love of storytelling. After painting privately for over 20 years, she now devotes more time to sharing her art with broader audiences.

Blending traditional Aboriginal design with intricate geometric patterns, Nanii's style is a unique fusion of culture, mathematics, and personal expression. Influenced by a creative upbringing surrounded by music, craft, and storytelling, she creates works that explore connection, repetition, and the calming rhythm of nature and memory.

Inspired by her family, community, and the stories passed down through generations, Nanii's art is a reflection of her journey and identity. Her work contributes to the evolving landscape of contemporary Indigenous art while honouring the traditions and knowledge of her Wiradjuri ancestors.



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