



# Western Health Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Staff Welcome Kit



Western Health



This is a painting by Annette Joy titled “Delgaia”. Annette Joy is a Gourmajanyuk and Wergaia woman who has completed several artworks for Western Health.

Delgaia means to be good and means to be well in Wemba Wemba. The colours represent Mother Earth:

- Yellow*            the sun, warmth and freshness
- Black/Brown*    our people, strong, powerful, safety, warmth and the land
- Red*                earth, love and strength
- Green*             growth, nature
- Blue*                calming, sky and water
- Orange*            energy, creativeness and self-respect.

The black and white dragonflies symbolise transformation, change and life.

In the centre are our people coming together and joining with everyone to be well and safe.

**Western Health acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which our sites stand. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.**

**We are committed to the healing of country, working towards equality in health outcomes and the ongoing journey of reconciliation.**



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## Foreword by CEO



### **It is a pleasure to introduce a Welcome Kit for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at Western Health.**

This Welcome Kit is a commitment from our Cultural Safety Plan and has been developed specifically for staff who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, to support you in your role at Western Health. Staff includes our large and vibrant volunteer workforce who are essential in supporting the patients, and those directly employed by Western Health.

Western Health's Cultural Safety Plan 2022 – 2025 was developed in consultation with our staff, stakeholders and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Western Health committed to joining the Cultural Safety Plan and Employment Plan into one as it better embodies our Strategic Direction – Together, we deliver health care for the future. Our goal is for Western Health to be an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

As a staff member who identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, Western Health warmly welcomes you and the unique skills, perspectives and experiences that you bring to your role in caring for community. We hope this Welcome Kit is a warm introduction to our organisation and is a helpful reference for you over the coming weeks, months and years as you become an integral and valued member of Western Health.

**Adjunct Prof Russell Harrison,  
Chief Executive**



**This Welcome Kit has been developed to support you in your role at Western Health. Please work through the Kit with your Manager as part of your orientation. It aims to connect you to Western Health’s Cultural Safety Plan 2022 – 2025 and policies of special relevance to you.**

## **Does Western Health have a Cultural Safety Plan?**

Yes, Western Health has a robust Cultural Safety Plan 2022 – 2025 that was developed in consultation with our staff, stakeholders, Aboriginal Health Steering Committee and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. The Cultural Safety Plan also incorporates our Employment Plan as it better embodies our Strategic Direction – Together, we deliver healthcare of the future.

Western Health has decided to have a Cultural Safety Plan rather than a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Safety Plan has been developed to help our mainstream health services create culturally safe environments, services and workplaces. The framework provides a continuous quality improvement model to strengthen the cultural safety of individuals and organisations. It aims to help our health service strengthen cultural safety by participating in an ongoing learning journey.

Western Health strives to support the development and advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities by fostering employment pathways for staff and students in diverse roles across the organisation. We acknowledge the barriers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may face in the attainment of, and advancement in, employment due to systemic historical and contemporary injustices.

Western Health is working to challenge these barriers, and in doing so employs special measures to ensure prospective and existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff have equitable access to employment pathways and career development. Western Health engages our workforce through training programs and opportunities to work collaboratively and in culturally informed ways with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues, patients, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCO’s) and wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, to improve their health and wellbeing.

Western Health is committed to the Uluru Statement from the Heart, to Treaty discussions in Victoria, a Voice to Parliament and to the self-determination principles articulated in the State Government Strategic Plan: Korin Korin Balit Djak.

[Aboriginal Health Cultural Safety Plan 2022-25](#)

[Aboriginal Health Cultural Safety Plan 2022-25 - single page version](#)



## Does Western Health acknowledge Traditional Custodians?

All Western Health meetings and education sessions commence with an Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians.

The Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Register and Information System (ACHRIS) is the online portal of the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register, providing resources and services to various stakeholders throughout Victoria. The first Peoples – State Relations Online Map can be used to identify areas of cultural heritage sensitivity and the boundaries of Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs).

[Welcome Map \(achris.vic.gov.au\)](http://achris.vic.gov.au)

All service delivery sites display the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags. They also display a plaque acknowledging the Traditional Custodians to foster a welcoming and supportive environment. Commissioned Aboriginal paintings and other art pieces are proudly displayed and are integral to new building and refurbishment projects at Western Health.

An Acknowledgement of Country is included in Western Health email signatures.

[Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country](#)

## Who and where are Western Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff?

Western Health employs a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in identified roles within Wilim Berrbang (the Aboriginal Health Unit) and community based programs. In addition, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are in diverse roles ranging from reception, to nursing, allied health professions, doctors, managers and support roles.

## What do I do if I experience racism or a lack of cultural safety at Western Health?

Western Health recognises the need and obligation to maintain a safe work environment for all staff and volunteers and requires everyone, regardless of level within the organisation, to behave in a professional manner and to treat each other with dignity, respect and in a manner consistent with Western Health values of Compassion, Accountability, Respect, Excellence and Safety.

Western Health will not tolerate any form of discrimination, bullying, harassment, victimisation or inappropriate conduct and staff are encouraged to report all instances or complaints promptly so that appropriate measures can be taken. All incidents or complaints will be dealt with promptly and in a fair and transparent manner.

All individuals, including those making a complaint and those against whom a complaint has been made, will be treated with respect and courtesy. All complaints and requests for information and advice regarding the complaints process will be dealt with in a sensitive and confidential manner throughout the process.

If you feel culturally unsafe in the workplace then you should discuss this with your manager in you feel it is safe to do so.

The Management and Prevention of Workplace Bullying and Harassment is outlined and includes the feedback and complaints process.

[Management and Prevention of Workplace Bullying and Harassment](#)



## Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Western Health is committed to the health and wellbeing of its staff and offers confidential counselling, manager support and critical incident response EAP services. Western Health recognises that EAP provides early intervention strategies for staff, to assist them to identify and resolve professional, personal, health or work-related issues.

Caraniche At Work is the external provider of EAP for Western Health and accessing EAP is free, voluntary and confidential.

<http://inside.wh.org.au/departmentsandservices/PeopleServices/Documents/EAP%20-%20CISM/WH%20CaW%20EAP%20flyer%20updated%2013%20Feb%202020.pdf>

## What is Western Health doing to improve cultural safety and cultural competence within the organisation?

Western Health does have some specific policies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

Here are some Western Health Policies and Procedures of special relevance to you as well as other information you may find helpful. All Western Health policies are on located the intranet at <https://app.prompt.org.au/search>. Please click on the links to read the policy and make a time to discuss these with your manager.

These may be helpful and are in addition to the policies and procedures listed in the Orientation checklist, which all Western Health employees are required to read as part of their orientation:

## Leave Policy

Please note the provision of ceremonial leave. In addition staff are encouraged to attend NAIDOC Week activities both internal and external to Western Health. Please discuss these opportunities with your manager.

[Taking and Managing Leave Procedure](#)

## Aboriginal Health Steering Committee

The purpose of the Aboriginal Health Steering Committee is to provide advice and direction to WH on matters relating to improving the health of Aboriginal patients and improving the working experience for staff with the aim of closing the gap on health outcomes for Aboriginal people in Melbourne's west.

The key functions and responsibilities of the Committee are to:

- Oversee and inform the development, implementation and evaluation of the WH Aboriginal Health Cultural Safety Plan 2022-2025.
- Make recommendations to WH Best Care Committee on matters relating to Aboriginal health in the Western Region of Melbourne.
- Assist in the development and ongoing monitoring of key performance indicators for service quality and accessibility.
- Provide advice and receive reports as required for other relevant programs and projects.
- Provide support and advice to Wilim Berrbang.
- Strengthening ties with Aboriginal communities and local Aboriginal service providers.

The Committee is made up of Community members who actively contribute lived experience, content knowledge and views to discussions in the steering group meetings. Key members from WH comprising, including:

- Executive Director of Nursing and Midwifery (Chair)
- Manager, Aboriginal Health Policy and Planning
- Wilim Berrbang staff
- Representative from People and Culture
- Allied Health Manager - Social Work & Pastoral Care
- Manager of Consumers and Inclusion
- Manager of Maternity Group Practice
- And, Non-Western Health members who shall reflect the particular needs and interests of the Aboriginal communities in the Western each quarter.



## Cultural Awareness Training

Currently, e-learning Cultural Awareness training modules are provided for all staff on WeLearn. Staff are required to complete these modules. Western Health is looking to develop meaningful learning opportunities for staff and this is a recommendation in the Cultural Safety Plan 2022 – 2015.

## Events

Western Health facilitates a culturally significant event that celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people each year. There is a calendar of key events on the intranet.

<http://inside.wh.org.au/departmentsandservices/AboriginalHealth/Documents/2023%20Significant%20Dates%20Aboriginal%20and%20Torres%20Strait%20Islander.pdf>

## Deadly Western Connections

[Deadly Western Connections](#) is an online meeting place for the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in western metropolitan Melbourne. It's a connecting place for community groups, organisations and businesses to let you know about services, programs, jobs and events.

## Wilim Berrbang

Wilim Berrbang, meaning “Place of Connection” is the Aboriginal health team located at both the Sunshine and Footscray hospital sites. Wilim Berrbang offers cultural support and assistance to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that attend Western Health, and aims to:

- Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are aware of, and have access to, all Western Health services
- Guide and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to navigate the hospital setting
- Ensure that Western Health is culturally sensitive, safe and welcoming to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Wilim Berrbang welcome the chance to connect with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, students and volunteers within Western Health. Please call Wilim Berrbang on 83450952 or email us at [wilim.berrbang@wh.org.au](mailto:wilim.berrbang@wh.org.au) to link in.

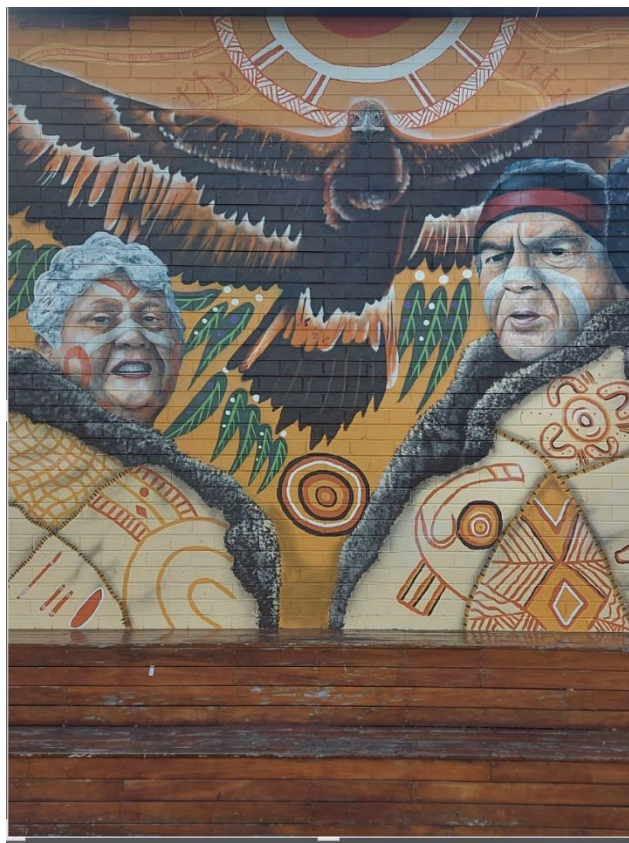
<http://inside.wh.org.au/departmentsandservices/AboriginalHealth/Documents/Wilim%20Berrbang%20Information%20Sheet.pdf>

## Recognition of our Elders

### Aunty Joyce and Uncle Boots

The mural below is a collaboration between muralist / artist Mike Maka aka Makatron and local Indigenous artists Mandi Barton and Lee-Anne Clarke. The mural honours local indigenous elders Aunty Joyce and Uncle Boots and is at Tin Shed in St Albans - a multi-ethnic community recreation, social advocacy and welfare centre.

Aunty Joyce and Uncle Boots are valued community members of Western Health's Aboriginal Health Steering Committee.



### Aboriginal Elder Graham Cooper

Uncle Boots is a strong Yorta Yorta man. Born in Shepparton and a descendant of the river clans, He's passionate about supporting his community and does this through advisory roles with organisations, including the Western Health Aboriginal Health Steering Committee, as well as working in the community. Uncle Boots and his wife Aunty Joyce, have fostered 89 children over 27 years through the formal system, and many more outside of this.

### Aboriginal Elder Caroline Joyce Cooper

Aunty Joyce is a proud Yorta Yorta woman, and a descendent of the Wiradjuri, Wurundjeri and Dja Dja Wurrung peoples. Aunty Joyce is focussed on helping community, working to pass on her culture and knowledge to the next generation.

## Recognition of Our Commitment to Closing the Gap

Western Health was the 2022 Winner of the Improving Aboriginal Health category in the Victorian Public Healthcare Awards. The award was granted in recognition of Western Health's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Outpatient Clinic.



*Pictured (L-R): Adjunct Professor Shane Crowe, Executive Director of Nursing and Midwifery, Jordan Casey, Manager, Aboriginal Health, Policy and Planning, Tanya Druce, Aboriginal Cultural Safety Officer, and a representative from VACCHO.*

## How do I give feedback?

If you have feedback about this welcome kit or any feedback at all that you would like to give to Western Health on any matter please contact:

- Shane Crowe, Executive Director of Nursing and Midwifery – [shane.crowe@wh.org.au](mailto:shane.crowe@wh.org.au); or
- Jo Darmanin People & Culture Business Partner, People Services - [joanne.darmanin@wh.org.au](mailto:joanne.darmanin@wh.org.au).