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Introduction

Background

Karreeta Yirramboi ran between 2011 and 2015, and was the Victorian Government's previous plan to improve public sector employment outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians.

The Victorian public sector commission's Aboriginal Employment Unit has commenced work on developing a new Aboriginal Employment Strategy for implementation in 2017.

Karreeta is the Gunditjmara word for "grow" and Yirramboi is the Taungurang word meaning "tomorrow".

Karreeta Yirramboi is the Victorian Government's plan to improve public sector employment and career development outcomes for Aboriginal people. The plan spans a timeline of 2010-2015 and responds to the COAG National Partnership Agreement in Indigenous Economic Participation and the commitment to halve the gap in employment outcomes between indigenous and non-indigenous people within a decade.

Karreeta Yirramboi sets an Aboriginal employment target of one percent for the Victorian public sector and requires public sector organisations with 500 or more employees to develop an Aboriginal employment plan.

The public health sector plays an important part in the overall achievement of the one percent Aboriginal employment target. Thirty-two Victorian Public Health Services have a workforce of over 500 employees, the aim is to develop individual Aboriginal employment plans that are tailored to the individual organisations capacity and reflective of the communities in which they operate.

Objective

Our objective is to employ aboriginal people within our social justice framework.

Through the process of increasing Aboriginal employment participation, greater understanding of cross-cultural requirements will be achieved to develop the environment and systems for long-term Aboriginal participation throughout the entire Central Gippsland Health Service.

Approach

This Aboriginal Employment Plan is designed to provide practical steps to maintain our one percent rate and to reach our target of two percent in 2021.

To ensure CGHS's plan is balanced, an Integrated Implementation model has been adopted throughout. This model ensures the plan addresses four critical areas:

- 1. Resources funding, people and infrastructure;
- 2. Internal procedure, preparation, ownership and measurement;
- 3. Development employment initiatives, training and investment; and
- **4.** Engagement partnerships, networks and strategic alliances.

The objectives and outcomes of the plan are spread over the next three years (2016-19). It is important to remember when utilising this document that this is not a 'static plan'. As opportunities arise and momentum grows through new initiatives and greater employee and partnership participation, this plan must reflect such change.

Environment

Organisation Profile

Central Gippsland Health Service provides a variety of health care services to the Wellington Shire and is one of the region's major employers with approximately 1,016 people employed in a variety of professional and skilled occupations. The health service comprises campuses in Sale, Maffra, Rosedale, Loch Sport and Heyfield and services a population of 44,000.

Central Gippsland Health Service embraces a genuine commitment of 'social justice' within their community. This is clearly demonstrated through their dedication to Aboriginal employment and the last 5 years of traineeship programs specifically designed to introduce Aboriginal employees to public health. This program was implemented after successfully applying for Closing the Gap funding through the Department of Health and has been supported by Koolin Balit.

The program has been championed through Learning Services in conjunction with various other departments at CGHS and has successfully integrated the skills of clinical educators to act as trainers and mentors for the program. The health service has partnered with various RTO's (Registered Training Organisations) to deliver the competency training. The onsite education centre has provided training facilities and resources that have assisted in the successful implementation of the program.

Central Gippsland Health Service is an organisation that embraces social diversity and strives to 'make a difference' within their community. The Aboriginal trainee program demonstrates CGHS's commitment to Aboriginal employment within the region. Central Gippsland Health Service provides the support to enable the implementation of innovative employment programs within Victoria's regional health service. The challenge for CGHS is to develop a system that provides enduring relationships leading to ongoing Aboriginal employee retention and integration throughout all levels of the organisation.

Review Process

To determine the requirements for the Aboriginal Employment Plan (AEP) 2016 – 2019 an internal review process has been completed by our Aboriginal Project Worker. Importantly, this included an evaluation of the current Aboriginal trainee program to assist in determining quality improvement measures for future Aboriginal employee engagement.

In addition to the interviews, a policy and procedure audit has been conducted to determine systemic deficiencies in relation to Aboriginal employees, trainee and apprentice employment.

Our Aboriginal Project Officer has attended CGHS bi monthly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee meetings to receive feedback and input from our local community members regarding our AEP.

Aboriginal Community

The health service has developed a strong relationship with the local Aboriginal community through the local Cooperative Ramahyuck.

The Ramahyuck District Aboriginal Corporation was established in 1992 by the late Noel Yarram. Ramahyuck was the original name of one of the many Missions in the region during the late 1800's. The word Ramahyuck is composed of the biblical word "Ramah" meaning the 'Home of Samuel' and the Gunai/Kurnai 'Yuck' meaning Mother or Own.

The original Ramahyuck Mission housed many of the Brayakooloong and Tatungooloong clans of the Gunai/Kurnai Tribe. Today Ramahyuck provides a variety of medical and social services to the Gippsland community.

Central Gippsland Health Service acknowledges the traditional owners of the land - the Gunai/Kurnai people through the annual National Aborigines Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) week and with a permanent plaque at the front of the building. CGHS has a permanent display of local Aboriginal artwork with the National Apology framed beside them. The Aboriginal flag is now raised at all CGHS buildings in Heyfield, Maffra, Rosedale and Lochsport. CGHS have successfully won 2 organization awards from Ramahyuck District Aboriginal Corporation during NAIDOC week for the constant support CGHS have towards the Aboriginal community. This has all been achieved with the support of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee that meets every 2 months.

Objectives

Strategies

As described above each public health service must strive towards achieving and improving our one percent target rate to two percent Aboriginal employment rate by 2021 as per the Department Of Health and Human Services Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2016-2021.

Many of the career opportunities within the health sector are professional and require academic qualifications. To achieve the desired outcomes we have targeted Certificate entry level opportunities within the organisation, that in many instances lead to further study in professional areas.

An additional strategy is the identification of undergraduate Aboriginal students currently completing professional qualifications. Consideration of funded cadetship placement not only engages additional Aboriginal employees with CGHS but also provides critical employment placement for the acquisition of practical skills.

Following the introduction of the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 in August 2011, CGHS can advertise and reserve positions for Aboriginal applicants without applying for anti-discrimination exemption from the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT). This change in policy allows CGHS to target specific sectors of the organisation for Aboriginal employment. We have implemented a statement for all advertised position vacancies saying 'At CGHS we encourage applications from people with culturally diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; and people living with disabilities'

Key Initiatives

The initiatives for CGHS's Aboriginal Employment Plan are designed to be an addition to the current Aboriginal Trainee program.

The initiatives are divided into four key areas:

- 1. Introduction of School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships and support for VCAL students undertaking placement
- 2. Ongoing improvement measures to current Aboriginal Employment Programs
- 3. Support current Aboriginal staff to increase and build on their knowledge and skills to progress their career pathways
- 4. Increase employment opportunities at CGHS for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Each key initiative has a specific goal and detailed strategies and actions to achieve the goal. An indicative time line has been provided to assist in the implementation.

Progress to date from the previous Plan

Target

Central Gippsland Health Service currently employs 13 Aboriginal employees representing 1.27% of the total workforce.

The health service has made significant inroads into the employment of Aboriginal people within their organisation over the last 5 years. This included the engagement of 18 Aboriginal trainees working in various departments of the hospital with the support of Closing the Gap and Koolin Balit funding. This has brought CGHS above the target rate of one percentage Aboriginal employment target under the 2012-2015 Karreeta Yirramboi.

The new target for CGHS is to maintain one percent target rate and improve our percentage to two percent by 2021. The health service has established a bench mark Aboriginal employment program within the Public Health sector. This document concentrates on building from the solid foundation formed over the last 5 years. Essentially the initiatives focus Central Gippsland Health Service's attention on retention, expansion of current programs, quality improvement and increased community partnerships to ensure the target of one percent employees is maintained and improved to two percent by 2021.

Current Aboriginal employees by occupation as of June 2016

Occupation	Current Number of Aboriginal Employees
Aboriginal Health Liaison Officer	1
Administration	2
Allied Health	6
Dental	1
Nursing	1
Community Services	1
Central Sterilising Department	1
Total	13



Aboriginal Employment Achievements

Central Gippsland Health Service has established a platform for the engagement for local Aboriginal people over the last 5 years. This has been built from the existing concept of providing training opportunities through traineeships and apprenticeships introduced throughout Central Gippsland Health Service from 2010.

Utilising Closing the Gap and Koolin Balit funding through the Department of Health and Human Services, Central Gippsland Health Service commenced a total of 18 Aboriginal Traineeships through various departments of CGHS over the last 5 years. The traineeships were implemented jointly through the Workforce Capability framework, Learning Service and various departments. Careful consideration to Aboriginal community partnerships, selection processes, pre –employment program, mentoring, funding, internal cultural training, Registered Training Organisation and TAFE partnerships attributed to the success of the program.

Achievements to date have been outlined in this section of the plan whilst the final section of the Aboriginal Employment Plan will provide for forward planning to improve established programs and implement additional initiatives. This combination of improvement and expansions of existing programs will assist Central Gippsland Health Service in maintaining one percent Aboriginal employment goal under Karreeta Yirramboi, and moving towards two percent

Achievements:

Partnerships and Working Group

Central Gippsland Health Service has established essential partnerships and clearly defined protocols within the organisation. Most importantly senior management has taken ownership in conjunction with the entire workforce to ensure the introduction of Aboriginal employees is successful:

- partnership established with Ramahyuck District Aboriginal Corporation;
- engagement of appropriate RTO's to qualification required to conduct the theoretical aspect of the training;
- engagement with Latrobe City Indigenous Employment Program
- established internal management and staff platform to ensure the induction, training and welfare outcomes for the Aboriginal employees are achieved

Funding

Central Gippsland Health Service have utilised the following funding sources to establish their Aboriginal Employment Program:

- Koolin Balit funding
- Australian Government Indigenous Employment Program funding
- Federal traineeship funding; and
- Youth Employment Scheme (Y.E.S) funding
- CGHS self-funded by employing Aboriginal people into existing (EFT's) positions as traineeships

Training

Central Gippsland Health Service has established partnerships with various RTO's. In addition to these partnerships Central Gippsland Health Service has achieved the following outcomes:

- utilised clinical educators as trainers and mentors;
- identified that RTO or TAFE training needed to be local, flexible and online
- assisted with literacy and numeracy training;
- established procedures to assess trainees progress;
- through weekly communication with various RTO's and Central Gippsland Health Service monitors the progress of each trainee;
- provided the required facilities and resources for learning; and
- outlined operational training expectations both internally and through external training providers to managers and supervisors.

Mentoring

Mentoring is an essential part of the engagement process for Aboriginal employees. The organisation implemented a system for the Aboriginal Project Officer to work alongside the trainees and be their main sauce of support throughout the traineeship. Pairing each new Aboriginal trainee with a mentor during the initial Aboriginal trainee intake. This strategy ensures the Aboriginal trainees feel supported and valued within the organisation. The program of mentoring will continue throughout the trainees training program at Central Gippsland Health Service.

Cultural Awareness Training

Cultural awareness training is a critical element of organisation preparation for engagement of Aboriginal people. Central Gippsland Health Service embarked on a thorough process of training and learning before the recruitment process:

- cross cultural training completed with key staff and management;
- Aboriginality training
- advice obtained about bench mark processes for selection and induction of Aboriginal employees;
- interview techniques adjusted to accommodate Aboriginal culture; and
- training and advice provided to supervisors, managers and mentors conducting on the job training;

Attraction and Recruitment

Central Gippsland Health Service implemented a specific system to attract and recruit the Aboriginal Trainees:

- utilised the existing relationship with Ramahyuck Aboriginal Corporation and co-ordinator Indigenous Employment Program (IEP) to source candidates;
- ensured the interview and selection techniques were sensitive to the Aboriginal culture;
- clearly defined the application and interview requirements;
- completed literacy and numeracy assessments on the candidates;
- ensured the interview questions were structured appropriately to enable the interview process to be relaxing and engaging; and
- Implemented a 7 week pre-employment program course or internal with an orientation program to introduce Aboriginal employees to Central Gippsland Health Service.

Pre – Employment Program

An essential component of the Aboriginal Traineeship program is a comprehensive Pre – Employment program. This seven week program included the following initiatives.

Training for all potential traineeship departments; employability skill

- Fast tracking RTO's
- Central Gippsland Health Service expectations;
- staged work placement within all vacant traineeship departments
- work experience in all vacant traineeship departments; and
- Introduce the importance of health and wellbeing through diet and exercise this may include gym memberships and access to Central Gippsland Health Service dieticians.
- Where this has been unavailable externally an internal program was conducted

Program Evaluation

The Learning Service department at CGHS embarked on a process of internal and external evaluation throughout the current Aboriginal trainee program.

This reflection and ongoing evaluation has resulted in adjustments to the training and employee engagement both during the current intake of allied health trainees and will see additional improvement measures. These improvements include adjustments to the selection and preemployment programs through to the engagement of external providers.

The following document outlines these improvements in systems and procedures and includes new strategies to increase the number of Aboriginal employees at Central Gippsland Health Service.

Aboriginal Employment Program Improvements and New Initiatives

Initiative #1

Introduction of School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships and support VCAL students with work placement.

School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBAT) provide an opportunity for Year 10, 11 and 12 students to engage with Central Gippsland Health Service during their final years of schooling. This system assists the student in the transition from school to work while delivering vital industry specific competency training. Supporting students in their VCAL study placement will provide students to complete their block of placement in health care and will help the school aged student to understand the skills required to work in the health care system.

Goal:

- To develop and implement a SBAT program within Central Gippsland Health Service and aim to employ Aboriginal SBAT's by January 2019.
- To support school aged student in VCAL placement

Objective	Strategies / Actions	Time Frame
Further develop partnerships with local schools and education networks to establish SBAT program	 As an introduction to SBAT's further develop a partnership with 2 of the local secondary schools (Contact details below) Continue the relationship with the local Gippsland East LLEN (Contact details below) Contact the local Koori Education Support Officer of schools to talk through potential students in this program Networking through CGHS education committee to support aboriginal students and youth at risk 	Ongoing
2. Host Koori Pathways school tours/meet and greet of CGHS for	 Have the school students complete the CGHS Expression of Interest (EOI) form which defines; 	yearly

	available school students in years 9 through to 12 with all local Sale and Maffra Secondary Colleges	 twenty nominated work areas/career pathways options for school based work experience within CGHS Introduce the school students the previous Aboriginal trainees to showcase their own experiences at CGHS 	
3.	Support the communication processes between CGHS and the school career teachers	 Keep the lines of communication open and streamlined to enable further push-pull strategies to occur Establish one point of contact in each school 	Ongoing
4.	Build the relationships with the students	 Encourage the students and career teachers to identify areas of interest / potential career pathways and offer flexible work experience arrangements to permit the student to try the occupation without obligation in the initial instance Encourage students to complete work experience placement at CGHS. Attend all school careers nights to promote work experience and placements at CGHS. 	Ongoing
5.	Make the student the centre of the recruitment options	 Encourage the schools to proactively approach CGHS to discuss options for students regarding SBATs Discuss the possibility of placements with department managers to identify training opportunities within Central Gippsland Health Service 	Ongoing
6.	Determine RTO requirements and relationship with Secondary school education	 Identify the theoretical training requirements and the level of CGHS support to complete RTO training As previously identified RTO requirements for workplace training is completed as a block one day per week. Determine if the identified CGHS SBAT vocations will be included into this training format Establish the selection process for the SBAT 	2017

7.	Establish funding availability for SBAT through Australian Apprenticeship Centre	In consultation with Australian Apprenticeship Centre determine the funding available for each placement	2017
8.	Embed SBAT system and management practices throughout CGHS	 Introduce SBAT requirements to managers and supervisors Design and implement a one day induction program for new SBAT utilising the current Aboriginal employees 	As required
9.	Monitoring and communication between stakeholders	 Establish communication protocols between schools, parents and CGHS to monitor school and work performance Ensure each SBAT understands that the desired outcome is successful completion of school and the traineeship or apprenticeship. Inadequate achievement in either area may result in the student being removed from the SBAT program Organise bi – monthly meetings with representatives from each school Ensure regular reports are received from the RTO on each SBATs theoretical training 	ongoing

Initiative #2

Ongoing improvement measures to current Aboriginal Employment Programs

As detailed in the achievements section of this plan, CGHS has imbedded a successful program for Aboriginal Trainees. The following details system and procedure changes that will improve the current program.

As discussed previously this is not a 'Static Plan'. Further adjustments and improvements will continue to be identified and this plan adjusted accordingly.

Goal:

Systemic and procedural improvements to the current Aboriginal trainee program

Initiative / Objective	Strategies / Actions	Time Frame
Improve the attraction and selection process	 Provide access to aboriginal students through a CGHS tour to introduce and promote health career pathways. Utilise partnerships with local schools and the LLEN to identify school leavers wanting to enter the health sector Develop a presentation to deliver within the schools that showcases health career pathways and opportunities Expand attraction marketing to include CGHS tours and 'come a try' days 	Ongoing
2. Adjust the Pre – employment training program	 Seek further opportunities for potential pre – employment training Facilitate a work experience program for all potential trainees to ensure the applicants are well informed about the career choice they are applying for Continue pairing of mentors on the first day of employment Investigate the possibility of work placement at Ramahyuck for CGHS Aboriginal trainees Support applicants with resume/cover letter detailing. Support applicants with interview practice prior to interview. 	Ongoing

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3.	Improve mentoring program	 Extend the mentoring program to all Central Gippsland Health Service employees Develop an attraction and selection process for mentors Implement a 1 day training program for new mentors or investigate an online learning module 	Ongoing
4.	Policy and Procedure changes	Continue to review the existing CGHS procedures to incorporate changes and improvements to the program as needed.	Ongoing
5.	Regional and industry Aboriginal working group	 Utilising our education committee network, develop a cohort of Schools, RTO's and Public Health Services in the region who employ Aboriginal employees Utilise the network to celebrate local aboriginal employee successes Determine bench mark practices for all organisations to implement Link all regional Aboriginal employees through the network The working group should meet twice per year Continue networking and contributing to DHHS Aboriginal Employment Plan (AEP) Project Officers Working Group Continue networking and contributing to DHHS Aboriginal Employment Plan (AEP) Advisory committee 	Bi Yearly
6.	Investigate providing Indigenous scholarships to Aboriginal medical students	 Identify aboriginal students engaged with local and metropolitan universities Discuss the possibility of placements with department managers to identify training opportunities within Central Gippsland Health Service Depending on the volume of Aboriginal students identified - negotiate the possibility of hosting students Details about funding and programs can be found in the resource material below 	

Initiative #3

Support current aboriginal staff to increase their knowledge and skills and progress their career pathways

Goal: increase our current employees to complete further study in the health industry

Objective	Strategies / Actions	Time Frame
Support current Aboriginal Employees	 Support current employees to complete further studies (professional development days, study time and placements) Support can be given in a number of ways for example; by way of course fees, paid study leave and assistance from qualified staff members 	ongoing
2. Assist staff with scholarship applications	 Inform current employees of available scholarships available and support them in their application process 	ongoing
3. Support staff with study leave	 Continue to apply for Koolin Ballit funding (or equivalent) to support staff in further studies Support the use of paid study leave as per award 	Ongoing

Initiative #4

Increase employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

To support the community in interviews and resumes so we can increase the amount of Aboriginal applicants applying for mainstream jobs.

Goal: To increase Aboriginal applications in all job vacancies

Objective	Strategies / Actions	Time Frame
1. Support applicants with resumes and interviews -Assist with skills required to apply for positions	 Support potential employees with interviewing, resume documentation and cover letter. Support community members with interviews, resumes and cover letter writing 	Ongoing
2. Promote CGHS assistance with position applications	 Create a flyer to go into Ramahyucks newsletter to inform community members of this opportunity. Presentation and promotion to local Ramahyuck community meetings 	6 monthly
3. Promote open Communication channels	 Keep communication channels open with CGHS executive through ATSI meetings Utilising our education committee network 	Bi monthly
4. Increase Department Heads knowledge of employment plan	 Promote Initiatives at Department Head meetings All advertisements for positions to contain "At CGHS we encourage applications from people with culturally diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; and people living with disabilities." Identify aboriginal applicants that have applied and consider Aboriginal employment program Initiatives in decision making 	Ongoing
5. Encourage staff to update their Aboriginal and Torres Strait	 Complete department head count each year Investigate current HR processes as to where/how this data is collected and 	Yearly

Islander Status	where it is located	
6. Support Aboriginal employees at CGHS	 Build a support network for all aboriginal employees at CGHS and hold regular catch ups 	Bi monthly

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Aboriginal Artwork painted by local Aboriginal Artist Justin Kennedy