



Aboriginal Employment Plan (2025 and 2026)



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Background and Introduction

The Victorian Government's Barring Djinang Strategy provides a five-year framework to strengthen Aboriginal employment outcomes across the public sector. While representation of Aboriginal people has improved, further innovation is required to ensure sustainable employment, leadership pathways, and culturally safe workplaces.

We are proud to introduce our Aboriginal Employment Plan (2025 and 2026) aimed at achieving a workforce that reflects the diversity and richness of our community. This Aboriginal Employment Plan (AEP) outlines Peninsula Health's commitment to the Barring Djinang Strategy and our organisational vision for a culturally safe and inclusive workforce.

As of June 2025, Peninsula Health employed 32 staff who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff (0.42% of workforce). While progress has been made, our goal is to continue to progress towards our target of 2% of employees that are Aboriginal. Aboriginal employment is not solely about numbers; it is about walking together with community and creating meaningful careers enabled by strong recruitment, retention, leadership, and professional development practices.

Peninsula Health acknowledges the Bunurong and Boon Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and provide care. We pay our respects to Elders past, present, and emerging. The Bunurong/Boon Wurrung people are the traditional custodians of the lands from the Werribee River to Wilsons Promontory, and proud members of the Kulin Nation. Bunurong/Boon Wurrung country includes the land around Frankston and the Mornington Peninsula on which Peninsula Health stands.

Process

The process to develop this plan was rooted in the principle of partnering with Aboriginal communities, Elders, and organisations to embed cultural authority in decision-making.

The process included a forum with aboriginal staff, survey of aboriginal staff and engagement with Community Elders.

Relationship with Previous Employment Plans

Between 2016 and 2025, Aboriginal staff numbers increased from 16 to 32, representing early progress towards long-term workforce targets.

Since 2012, Peninsula Health has implemented three Aboriginal Employment Plans, the most recent being the 2021–2024 Aboriginal Employment Strategy. This strategy has led to several meaningful outcomes, including:

- Enhancing cultural understanding through face-to-face Cultural Awareness Training.

- Strengthening local connections via cultural immersion tours that build awareness and relationships with the local Aboriginal community.
- Promoting inclusivity and visibility by introducing staff uniforms featuring Aboriginal imagery, symbolising support for Aboriginal colleagues and patients, and fostering a culturally safe environment.
- Embedding cultural respect by incorporating ceremonial leave into relevant workplace policies.
- Deepening partnerships with local education providers, Aboriginal community organisations, and Elders to create pathways into healthcare careers.

Objectives

The Aboriginal Employment Plan (2025 & 2026) builds on these achievements, refining strategies to accelerate progress towards the Barring Djinang 2% Aboriginal workforce target.

Objectives of the Aboriginal Employment Plan (2025 & 2026):

- Increase Aboriginal workforce representation by progressing toward the 2% employment target
- Foster a culturally safe and inclusive workplace that is free from racism and supports the wellbeing of Aboriginal employees
- Support Aboriginal staff to thrive and grow through an employee experience that values and nurtures cultural identity
- Establish strong governance for cadetship programs to create clear and supported entry pathways into healthcare careers
- Enhance accountability and transparency through regular reporting aligned with the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

Key Focus Areas

The key focus areas of the 2025–2026 Aboriginal Employment Plan are:

1. Cultural Safety

Cultural safety underpins all aspects of Aboriginal employment. For Aboriginal staff, working in a culturally safe environment ensures they feel respected, supported, and free from discrimination. For Aboriginal patients, it is vital to receiving care that reflects their cultural identity. For Peninsula Health, embedding cultural safety means building a workforce that listens, learns, and adapts. Cultural awareness training and immersion tours provide opportunities for non-Aboriginal staff to deepen understanding of local history and customs, fostering a culture of respect. Without cultural safety, recruitment and retention efforts are likely to fail, making this the foundation of the Aboriginal Employment Plan.

2. Attraction & Recruitment

To achieve our goal of growing our Aboriginal workforce, we will focus on attracting and recruiting Aboriginal candidates through more rigorous structures in place to ensure that a culturally safe recruitment process is offered consistently. Daily monitoring of Aboriginal applications and direct support for managers improves fairness. Attraction is not only about job opportunities but also about the reputation of Peninsula Health as an employer of choice for Aboriginal people, reinforcing trust with community.

3. Employee Experience through Leadership & Support

We are committed to enhancing the employee experience of our Aboriginal staff through strong leadership. Strong leadership will enable our Aboriginal employees to be set up for success in their roles, supported in their growth and ultimately retain them as employees.

4. Onboarding & Orientation

A strong beginning for Aboriginal staff is essential to creating a sense of belonging. Historically, Aboriginal staff have often entered workplaces without clear support or cultural connection, leading to higher turnover. By creating a tailored orientation process—including cultural welcomes, awareness of specific policies, and immediate connections to Elders and networks—Peninsula Health ensures Aboriginal staff start with confidence. This demonstrates Peninsula Health's commitment to valuing Aboriginal identity from day one.

5. Employee Connection

Connection is a deeply important value for Aboriginal people. Creating structured opportunities for Aboriginal staff to gather, share experiences, and support one another helps strengthen cultural identity and resilience in the workplace. For Peninsula Health, investing in these connections demonstrates respect for Aboriginal values and builds staff wellbeing. This also helps develop informal peer mentoring and leadership opportunities within the Aboriginal workforce.

6. Monitoring & Reporting

Transparent reporting builds trust and accountability. This demonstrates that Peninsula Health is serious about delivering on commitments, not just setting targets. Regular updates on progress will provide visibility and ensure that successes and challenges are shared honestly. For Peninsula Health, this strengthens alignment with the Reconciliation Action Plan and Barring Djinang and provides evidence of improvement for internal and external stakeholders.

7. Future Planning

As a newly created entity of Bayside Health in January 2026 there will be opportunity to learn from each other, leverage resources and align. During 2026 we will work together to develop an aligned Aboriginal Employment Plan for 2027 and beyond. Sustainability is key to Aboriginal employment. Developing a joint plan for Bayside Health ensures that the progress made is embedded long-term. This provides consistency, shared learning, and a stronger platform for Aboriginal employment across a larger system. Engaging Aboriginal voices in future planning ensures cultural authority continues to guide decisions and that future strategies are community-led.

Action Plan 2025 and 2026

Focus Area	Action	Measure of Success	Timeline	Lead
Cultural Safety	Deliver First Nations Cultural Awareness workshops and Immersion Tours. Refresh cultural awareness workshops for acute settings with emphasis on Emergency Department staff and high-contact services.	≥80% staff have completed mandatory training. 25% of attendees in training and tours are from the acute setting	December 2026	Organisational Development Manager and Aboriginal and Allied Health Manager
Onboarding & Orientation	Develop Aboriginal-specific induction (welcome email, policy awareness, connection with Auntie Helen and Aboriginal staff network).	100% of new Aboriginal staff receive induction; strong connection to community and supports.	New process to commence in April 2026	Organisational Development Manager and Aboriginal and Allied Health Manager
Recruitment & Attraction	Strengthen culturally safe recruitment (daily monitoring of Aboriginal applications, manager engagement, recruiter cultural training and list of Aboriginal people available to attend interviews).	100% of recruiters attended face to face training 80% of aboriginal candidates interviewed have an aboriginal person on their panel	New process to commence by July 2026	Director People Experience
Employee Connection	Host semi-annual Aboriginal staff networking and support events, led by Aboriginal voices.	Two events held in 2026 Feedback highlights improved belonging.	Ongoing	Organisational Development Manager

Leadership & Support	Ensure all leaders managing Aboriginal staff complete leadership program targeted at their leadership level.	90% of managers (with an Aboriginal person that reports to them) attend.	December 2026	Organisational Development Manager
Cadetship and Scholarship Framework	Develop a cadetship and scholarship framework to enable entry into a healthcare career that is culturally safe and supported.	Framework endorsed by Executive	December 2026	Aboriginal Cultural Lead
Engage youth	Host semi-annual tours/ presentations of/ about Peninsula Health for Aboriginal Youth to create an understanding of the diverse career paths in healthcare and at Peninsula Health. Target Aboriginal youth to participate in Peninsula Health Work Experience program	Two events held in 2026 Two Aboriginal youth participate in Work Experience program	December 2026	Director People Experience/ Manager Talent Acquisition Director People Experience/ Manager Talent Acquisition
Monitoring & Reporting	Publish biannual AEP progress report, with Aboriginal voices included in outcomes.	Reports delivered on time; visible progress shared with staff and Board	February 2026	Director People Experience
Future Planning	Develop a joint Aboriginal Employment Plan for Bayside Health (2027+), guided by Aboriginal community input.	Draft plan endorsed by RAP Steering Committee and Workforce Committee.	December 2026	Director People Experience

Governance

The implementation of the Aboriginal Employment plan will be overseen on a day-to-day basis by the Director People Experience and Executive Director People, Culture and Governance. Monthly updates will be provided to the Reconciliation Action Plan Steering Committee.

Semi-annual reports will be provided to the Workforce Committee, People and Wellbeing Executive Committee and Quality, Safety and People Committee (Board Subcommittee).

These committees will monitor implementation of each item of this plan and ultimately the measure of the percentage of staff that identify as Aboriginal.

Conclusion

Through this Aboriginal Employment Plan, Peninsula Health reaffirms its commitment to Barring Djinang and to the Aboriginal community. Each action is designed not only to meet workforce targets, but to honour culture, embed respect, and provide Aboriginal staff with safe and supportive experience at Peninsula Health. By committing to these actions, Peninsula Health aims to create a workforce that is not only diverse but also reflective of the community we serve. We believe that by supporting Aboriginal employment, we can enhance the quality of care we provide and foster a more inclusive and culturally aware environment.

Thank you for your support and commitment to this important plan.

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Peninsula Health is proudly inclusive.