

# First Nations Health Equity Strategy Summary 2025–2028

We learn from First Nations People’s stories to contribute to better lives through better health.

The Metro South Health First Nations Health Equity Strategy 2025–2028 is the result of deep collaboration with community, partners, patients and staff, grounded in a strong co-design approach that honours the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Metro South Health.

This strategy outlines a new journey that supports commitment to improving health equity for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Aligned to the Metro South Health Strategic Plan 2024–2028, this strategy is guided by the strategies:

- We improve health equity for our community
- We learn from First Nations People’s narrative to contribute to better lives through better health.

Embedded in shared values and aligned with national, state, and local frameworks, this new strategy marks a bold step forward in our journey toward health equity for our communities.

## Challenges

### Life expectancy at birth in Queensland

Life expectancy at birth in Queensland was approximately **7.4 years lower** in First Nations males compared with non-First Nations males. Life expectancy at birth in Queensland was approximately **7.0 years lower** in First Nations females compared with non-First Nations females.

	QLD First Nations	QLD Non-First Nations	Australia First Nations	Australia Non-First Nations	
<b>Males</b>	<b>72.9</b>	<b>80.2</b>	<b>71.9</b>	<b>80.6</b>	<b>7.4</b> years age gap in QLD
<b>Females</b>	<b>76.6</b>	<b>83.5</b>	<b>75.6</b>	<b>83.8</b>	<b>7.0</b> years age gap in QLD

Data Source: Queensland Health (2024). Queensland First Nations Peoples Burden of Disease Report 2018, Queensland Health, Brisbane.



We improve health equity for our community

## Our journey

Our journey developing this strategy was informed through an ongoing engagement process across multiple co-design sessions with community representatives and partners; sharing, learning, listening and respecting individual experiences of the health system. Various methods were used to gain insights and perspectives that have guided the six key priorities. These include:

- workforce and consumer surveys
- face to face workshops
- community consultation with Metro South Health region Aboriginal Traditional Owner groups and individuals and with Torres Strait Islander representatives in Metro South Health.

Four principles emerged from the stakeholder consultation rounds:



Workforce



Co-design



Education and training



Communication

A World Café methodology engaged stakeholders to set the context and create safe hospital spaces, with yarning rounds and shared reflections facilitating continuous improvement.

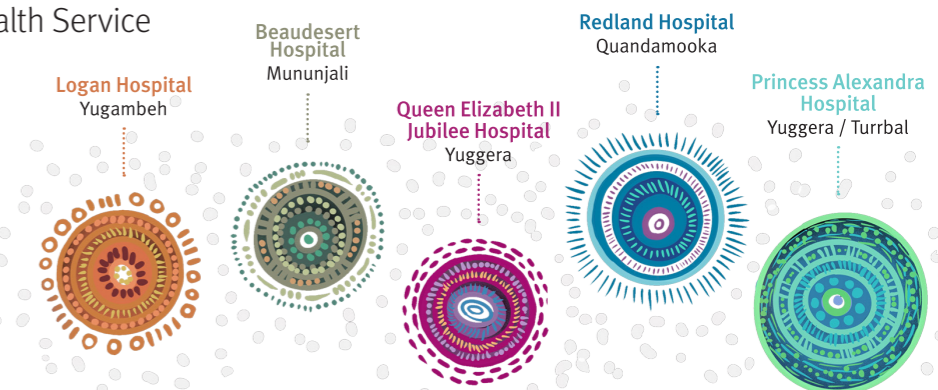
This process allowed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices to inform every stage of the design, decision making, and delivery of this new strategy.

## Opportunity

Throughout the consultation process, a common theme shared by staff and consumers was their experiences of racism within Metro South Health settings.

As a result, a key strategic priority area is ‘Actively eliminate racial discrimination and institutional racism within the service’. Metro South Health continues to drive change towards racism in the organisation. One key action is the establishment of the Eliminating Racism in Metro South Health Committee. The purpose of the Committee is to advise and make recommendations to the Health Service Chief Executive regarding the development, implementation and monitoring of initiatives to eliminate racism in Metro South Health.

We are proud to launch this next chapter towards Metro South Health First Nations Health Equity that will provide a commitment to lasting, positive change for future generations.



### Our values:



### Acknowledgement of Country

Metro South Health recognises and pays respect to the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters—the Yugambah, Quandamooka, Jaggera, Ugarapul, Turrbal and Mununjali peoples—and to Elders, past and present.

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**Key priority areas**

<p><b>1</b></p>  <p><b>Actively eliminate racial discrimination and institutional racism within the service</b></p>	<p><b>2</b></p>  <p><b>Increase access to healthcare services</b></p>	<p><b>3</b></p>  <p><b>Influence the social, cultural and economic determinants of health</b></p>	<p><b>4</b></p>  <p><b>Deliver sustainable, culturally safe and responsive healthcare services</b></p>	<p><b>5</b></p>  <p><b>Work with First Nations peoples, community and organisations to design, deliver, monitor and review health services</b></p>	<p><b>6</b></p>  <p><b>Strengthen the First Nations Workforce</b></p>
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**What we will do about it**

<p><b>1.1</b> Enhance and strengthen anti-racism education and cultural capability training across multiple platforms.</p> <p><b>1.2</b> Identify, review and disrupt mechanisms that encourage systemic racism.</p> <p><b>1.3</b> Strengthen our leadership through storytelling, mutual respect and understanding of racism and shared experiences.</p> <p><b>1.4</b> Create a strong workforce designed to respond to incidences of racism and ensure support for staff and consumers.</p> <p><b>1.5</b> Undertake a culturally appropriate review of recruitment processes to ensure best practice and develop support frameworks.</p>	<p><b>2.1</b> Create stronger partnerships with local services and community-controlled health sector.</p> <p><b>2.2</b> Co-design services and models of care with our partners, community and consumers and align them to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of <b>Knowing, Being and Doing</b>.</p> <p><b>2.3</b> Enhance health information provided to consumers and community and support their journey through the health system.</p> <p><b>2.4</b> Develop policies, processes and structures to ensure appropriate protocols are adhered to when engaging and consulting with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.</p> <p><b>2.5</b> Review and optimise the allocation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce and expand into areas of high need.</p>	<p><b>3.1</b> Strengthen health promotion activity throughout Metro South Health.</p> <p><b>3.2</b> Work across sectors to influence the determinants of health.</p> <p><b>3.3</b> Strengthen collaboration with Metro South Health public health unit to protect and promote healthy environments.</p> <p><b>3.4</b> Embed cultural determinants into the way services and programs are designed and developed.</p>	<p><b>4.1</b> Metro South Health facilities promote a welcoming and safe environment and staff have the tools to support and respond to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients.</p> <p><b>4.2</b> Increase opportunities to use research to create better health care services for our community.</p> <p><b>4.3</b> Develop systems to strengthen communication between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p> <p><b>4.4</b> Grow and develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership across Metro South Health to ensure a cultural lens across services and programs.</p>	<p><b>5.1</b> Develop mechanisms to enhance communication pathways for our community and staff to provide feedback on how services are designed, delivered, monitored and reviewed.</p> <p><b>5.2</b> Enhance the way we connect with Traditional Owners, Elders and Elder Groups, and community organisations for greater collaboration and connection.</p>	<p><b>6.1</b> Create a strengthened network of support for the emerging workforce.</p> <p><b>6.2</b> Implement creative and innovative recruitment methods using co-design.</p> <p><b>6.3</b> Nurture and enhance support for the current workforce through activities and mechanisms that promote a sense of belonging and safety.</p> <p><b>6.4</b> Grow the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce and ensure representation across all Metro South Health areas.</p> <p><b>6.5</b> Review current recruitment processes to ensure culturally aligned for best outcomes, attracting First Nations applicants.</p>
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**What success looks like**

<p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, families and community experiences of racism no longer exist. First Nations attendance across Metro South Health facilities is trending to indicate completed delivery of care to First Nations consumers.</p>	<p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and their families have no barriers to accessing quality healthcare. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and their families have access to appropriate and timely healthcare based on their needs. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and their families have access to care closer to home.</p>	<p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and their families are empowered and have access to information and resources to increase control over and improve their health.</p>	<p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and their families feel the service they received has met their cultural needs. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community are actively engaging with Metro South Health services.</p>	<p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and their families have enhanced positive experiences of Metro South Health services.</p>	<p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are equitably represented and empowered across all health professions and employment streams within Metro South Health, at levels that reflect our population.</p>
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