



Project Name	ABORIGINAL LIAISON PROGRAM – STATEWIDE COORDINATION
COAG Name	National Partnership Agreement On CLOSING THE GAP in Indigenous Health Outcomes: AREA 5 – FIXING THE GAPS & IMPROVING THE PATIENT JOURNEY
Project Leads	ROBERT MILES: Senior Project Officer – Liaison Coordination (WACHS) KIM HAWKETT: Portfolio Officer – Hospital Liaison (AHCWA)
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What are we aiming to do?

Through an Aboriginal Liaison Program we aim to fix the gaps and improve the patient journey of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accessing health care services in metropolitan and regional areas of Western Australia through the introduction, implementation and evaluation of the State-wide Aboriginal Liaison Program. The Aboriginal Liaison Program is in accordance with the National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes, Priority Area 5 – Fixing the Gaps and Improving the Patient Journey.

Why are we doing it?

Coordination and Continuity of Care

Many Aboriginal people find it difficult to navigate the health system within the hospital and primary health setting. In many instances Aboriginal people are missing out on tremendous opportunities for prevention of future illness and disability because of gaps that exist between in the patient journey across the health system. Reasons include:

- Difficulty in attending outpatient clinics and specialist appointments due to transportation issues
- High rates of self discharge
- Lack of referral networks across all regions of the state for Indigenous patients
- Inadequate patient follow-up and care post discharge
- Poor attendance for specialist or outpatient clinic appointments

Barriers include:

- Transportation
- Language difficulties
- Family commitments
- Cultural issues

How will we do it?

The WA Country Health Service (WACHS) and the Aboriginal Health Council of WA (AHCWA) will work collaboratively to support the introduction, implementation and evaluation of a State-wide Aboriginal Liaison Program. Both organisations have employed an Aboriginal Liaison Coordinator to provide leadership and support to staff involved in the Aboriginal Liaison program across each health region as well as facilitate strategic planning and coordination of a State-wide implementation plan.

Key Areas of the Plan

The Aboriginal Liaison Program is grouped into four key areas supported by a series of strategic activities and targets. The four key areas of the plan are as follows:

Key Area 1: Communication, Consultation and Engagement

Key Area 2: Service Enhancement

Key Area 3: Patient Journey

Key Area 4: Workforce, Education and Training





Who will do it?

Aboriginal Liaison Coordinators (one officer from the Western Australian Country Health Service and one officer from the Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia) will work collaboratively to develop and implement the State-wide plan



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What are we aiming to achieve?

- A strong and resourceful ALO workforce within hospitals and primary health care services across Western Australia
- An improved patient journey and follow-up care approach towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accessing health care services in metropolitan and regional areas of Western Australia
- A culturally competent hospitals program and service enhancement plan to ensure hospitals and primary health care services have the capacity to deliver coordination and continuity of care necessary to best meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients
- A comprehensive Statewide communication, consultation and engagement strategy to ensure multi-level support for the program

Aboriginal Liaison Officers

Each health region in WA submitted proposals for Aboriginal Liaison Programs which resulted in 41 ALO positions being created throughout the state under the COAG NPA on Closing the Gap. Mapping of existing and new ALO's across WA is underway to be included in the State-wide plan.

What next?

More communications will be released in coming weeks and months to inform the ALO network and key stakeholders of what's coming up, including a statewide forum and a call for the establishment of a Statewide Reference Group

For more information about the COAG initiative, please go to the following link:

http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/national_partnership_agreements/indigenous/closing_the_gap/Closing_the_Gap_indigenous_health_outcomes.pdf

