

**Aboriginal
Health Council
of Western Australia**

Strategic Plan

2026-2030



We acknowledge the Whadjuk people of the Noongar Nation as the custodians of the land that AHCWA is located on and we pay our respects to all Elders, past, present and future.



Dandjoo - Together

The cover artwork, *Dandjoo*, or *Together*, was created by Goreng Minang Noongar man, Kieron Pearce. This piece was inspired by the AHCWA logo, our corporate graphic and the importance of connection and coming together.

The meeting places represent the eight regions where our communities thrive, all pathways leading to Boorloo (Perth), the home of AHCWA. Flowing between them are journey lines, each carrying a colour that reflects one of our six strategic pillars. Among them runs a dark blue line, the seventh pillar, symbolising AHCWA itself, walking beside our Member Services on the same path, side by side. Scattered across Country are 23 people symbols, each one representing a Member Service and the lives, voices, and stories they hold.

In the Boorloo (Perth) region/meeting place, there are people from all over WA sitting together, working together and are committed to providing better outcomes for our people, together.

DISCLAIMERS

A. The term Member Service is inclusive of all Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) that satisfy the membership requirements of the AHCWA Constitution.

B. The word Aboriginal has been used throughout this document. When referring to Aboriginal we are referring to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Overview

About Us

The Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia (AHCWA) is the peak body for Aboriginal Health in Western Australia (WA). AHCWA exists to support, advocate, and act on behalf of our 23 Member Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) across the state, actively representing the Member Services and responding to their individual and collective needs. ACCHS are located across geographically diverse metropolitan, regional, and remote locations, and implement the most effective model of comprehensive primary health care tailored for Aboriginal people. They possess a unique position to identify and address local cultural and health issues pertinent to Aboriginal communities across WA.

Strategic Planning Journey

This Strategic Plan was formulated through a comprehensive review of the components of preceding policy. Coupled with a multi-stage process that incorporated substantial stakeholder engagement, including contributions from AHCWA Board, Member Services, and AHCWA staff, to ensure an evidence-based Strategic Plan. The methodology involved deploying surveys and conducting workshops to capture a wide breadth of perspectives. Grounded in a profound understanding of the health priorities of Aboriginal people in WA, this Strategic Plan delineates AHCWA's collective priorities over the next five years, supporting the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people.

Vision

Aboriginal people in Western Australia to enjoy the same level of health and wellbeing as all Western Australians.

Mission

As the leading authority for Aboriginal health in Western Australia, we strive to strengthen and promote the ACCHS Model of Care, empowering Aboriginal people to achieve health equality in their communities.

Defining Health

For AHCWA and its Member Services, health is understood as a holistic, whole-of-life concept. It extends far beyond the absence of disease or the delivery of clinical services. **Aboriginal health is the social, emotional, cultural, and spiritual wellbeing of individuals, families, and communities, where every part of a person's life is connected and contributes to their overall wellbeing.**

This includes the importance of connection to Country, community, culture, family, and kinship systems, as well as access to housing, education, employment, and culturally safe services. True health equity for Aboriginal people cannot be achieved through primary health care alone - it requires a comprehensive, culturally informed, and community-led approach that recognises and responds to the full context of people's lives.

This understanding of health underpins this Strategy, as well as AHCWA's role as a peak body, shaping advocacy, service delivery, data governance, workforce development, and policy reform in partnership with Aboriginal people and communities across WA.

ACCHS Model of Care



AHCWA's Organisational Values



Culture

Acknowledging and understanding the importance and diversity of Aboriginal culture in all that we do.

Integrity

Working with personal and collective integrity whilst striving to achieve service excellence for our Members and community.

Passion

Exhibiting passion, positivity, and commitment in all that we do to inspire and empower all people, Member Services, and communities to reach their potential.

Collaboration

Fostering and contributing to shared objectives through inclusiveness and engagement with our Member Services.

Accountability

Being accountable to all our Members, stakeholders and the community.

Resilience

Embracing challenges and harnessing opportunities to empower our communities for self-determination.

Guiding Principles to Deliver the Strategic Plan

A set of Guiding Principles have been established to support the successful delivery of this Strategy for AHCWA and its Member Services. These principles reflect the values and enabling conditions that will underpin the implementation of the Strategy and ensure it remains culturally strong, accountable, and aligned with broader system reform efforts.

Cultural Safety

AHCWA is committed to creating culturally safe environments, systems, and services that uphold the rights, identity, and wellbeing of Aboriginal people, and that actively address racism and discrimination within the health system.

Alignment to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap

This Strategy is guided by the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and its four Priority Reforms, ensuring AHCWA's work contributes to structural change, Aboriginal leadership in decision-making, and improved outcomes for communities.

Commitment to Transforming Government and Systemic Reform

AHCWA will advocate for and actively contribute to the transformation of government systems, policies, and funding models to better reflect Aboriginal priorities, cultural governance, and self-determination.

Self-determination

AHCWA will uphold the rights of Aboriginal people to make decisions about their health, services, data, and futures. All actions under this Strategy will be designed to empower Aboriginal communities to lead in matters affecting their lives.

Aboriginal-led Governance and Leadership

Aboriginal leadership and governance will guide the delivery, monitoring, and evaluation of this Strategy. AHCWA will prioritise Aboriginal knowledge, authority, and leadership in every aspect of delivering the Strategic Plan.

Transparency and Accountability

AHCWA will operate with integrity, transparency, and accountability to their Member Services, communities, and partners, providing clear reporting on progress, outcomes, and lessons learned throughout the life of this Strategy.



Alignment to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap

This Strategic Plan has been developed in alignment with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. At the heart of this agreement are four Priority Reforms that address the underlying enablers of inequality and set a new standard for how government and Aboriginal organisations work together.

- 1 Priority Reform 1: Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision-Making**
 AHCWA will lead and strengthen formal partnerships between ACCHS, communities, and government agencies, ensuring Aboriginal people have a genuine voice in decisions about their health services and systems.
- 2 Priority Reform 2: Building the Aboriginal Community-Controlled Sector**
 This Strategy places investment in the capability, leadership, and sustainability of ACCHS at its centre - through workforce growth, operational support, commissioning reform, and advocacy for equitable funding.
- 3 Priority Reform 3: Transforming Government Organisations**
 Through advocacy, policy influence, and commissioning reform, AHCWA will work to hold government agencies accountable and advocate for systemic changes that create culturally safe, responsive, and effective health systems for Aboriginal people.
- 4 Priority Reform 4: Shared Access to and Control Over Data**
 This Strategy commits to advancing Aboriginal data sovereignty by strengthening Aboriginal leadership in data governance, supporting community-led data systems, and enhancing secure, culturally appropriate data use for decision-making and advocacy. This alignment ensures that AHCWA's Strategy is not only community-driven, but nationally connected and positioned to contribute meaningfully to Closing the Gap reforms in WA. It also reinforces AHCWA's leadership role in driving Sector-wide structural change to improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people in this state.

AHCWA's Strategic Priorities, Guiding Principles, and planned initiatives directly contribute to advancing these reforms.

Strategic Pillars and Priorities

This Strategic Plan is structured around six strategic pillars. Each pillar outlines a key focus area for the organisation over the next five years.

- Pillar 1 - Leading with Influence and Advocacy
- Pillar 2 - Empowering Member Services
- Pillar 3 - Growing Our Aboriginal Workforce Across the Sector
- Pillar 4 - Championing Data Sovereignty
- Pillar 5 - Transforming Aboriginal-led Commissioning and Funding Reform
- Pillar 6 - Driving the Growth of the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Sector

AHCWA's Strategic Plan

AHCWA's Five-Year Blueprint 2026-2030

This Strategic Plan reinforces AHCWA's leadership role in driving Sector-wide structural change to improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people in Western Australia.

Our Vision
Aboriginal people to enjoy the same level of health and wellbeing as all Western Australians.

Our Mission
As the leading authority for Aboriginal health in WA, we strive to strengthen and promote the ACCHS Model of Care, empowering Aboriginal people to achieve health equality in their communities.

Organisational Values

Resilience
 Culture
 Accountability
 Integrity
 Collaboration
 Passion

Model of Care

Strength in culture, community control, and self-determination underpin everything we do, we understand that when services for Aboriginal people are led and delivered by Aboriginal people, the outcomes are always better.

Strategic Pillars and Priorities

Closing the Gap Priorities

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

Strategic Pillar 1: Leading with Influence and Advocacy

5-Year Commitment

Strengthen the leadership position of AHCWA and its Member Services in Aboriginal health across WA and the regions by influencing policy decisions, shaping health system reforms, and holding governments accountable through strategic leadership, advocacy, and partnerships with Aboriginal communities.

Key Goals	Alignment to CtG PR
1.1 Strengthen AHCWA's leadership and visibility in the Sector: Ensure AHCWA and its Member Services are widely recognised as the leading authorities on Aboriginal health in WA and its regions, advocating for policy and system changes that benefit Aboriginal communities.	1, 2
1.2 Enhance AHCWA's role in shaping policy and health reforms: Influence state and national health policy by providing evidence-based input, representing Aboriginal community needs, and ensuring Aboriginal voices are central in decision-making.	1, 2, 3
1.3 Build strategic partnerships with key stakeholders: Strengthen relationships with governments, industry leaders, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and other peak bodies to drive systemic change, improve service delivery, and advance Aboriginal health outcomes.	1, 2
1.4 Increase public advocacy and media presence: Position AHCWA as a trusted voice in the public sphere, ensuring Aboriginal health issues are visible, understood, and acted upon by governments, the media, and the broader public.	2
1.5 Empower Member Services to lead in advocacy: Support and equip Member Services to advocate for their communities, helping them develop the tools and confidence to engage in public discourse, policy development, and media outreach.	1, 2
1.6 Increase cultural safety of mainstream services: Work with mainstream services to deliver cultural safety education, and increase awareness of what it means to work with Member Services or to deliver services for Aboriginal people.	3
1.7 Lead advocacy and education to address lateral violence and systemic racism: Work with Member Services, government, and partner organisations to deliver education, resources, campaigns, and capacity-building initiatives that promote safe workplaces, strengthen cultural governance, and support healing, respect, and cultural safety for Aboriginal people and the health workforce.	2, 3

Strategic Pillar 2: Empowering Member Services

5-Year Commitment

Ensure that AHCWA's Member Services are fully supported and empowered to deliver high-quality, culturally safe services, through responsive policy, operational, and governance support that enhances their capacity and impact.

Key Goals	Alignment to CtG PR
2.1 Strengthen the capacity and governance of Member Services: Provide tailored support to ensure all Member Services have robust governance structures and sustainable operations in place.	2
2.2 Enhance operational and service delivery support: Develop tools, resources, and training that support Member Services to increase their operational excellence and enhance their delivery of culturally safe services.	2
2.3 Strengthen Member Services engagement and collaboration: Facilitate regular communication and collaboration across the network, ensuring that all Member Services can share resources, challenges, and opportunities for collective growth.	2

Strategic Pillar 3: Growing Our Aboriginal Workforce Across the Sector

5-Year Commitment

Cultivate a robust, culturally safe Aboriginal workforce in Member Services by developing clear career pathways, expanding training opportunities, and advocating for systemic changes that ensure the retention and development of Aboriginal professionals in the Sector.

Key Goals	Alignment to CtG PR
3.1 Develop clear career pathways for Aboriginal professionals in ACCHS: Work with Member Services and educational institutions to design structured career development and progression opportunities for Aboriginal people.	2
3.2 Increase training opportunities and access to education: Utilise and collaborate with Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and partners to ensure more Aboriginal people have access to training, internships, and professional development programs.	2
3.3 Advocate for systemic workforce changes: Partner with government and health organisations to advocate for policies that support the recruitment, retention, and development of Aboriginal people.	2, 3
3.4 Increase partnerships for training and professional development: Strengthen partnerships with schools, universities, and vocational training providers to ensure more Aboriginal people have access to training, internships, and professional development programs.	2

Strategic Pillar 4: Championing Data Sovereignty

5-Year Commitment

Work with key stakeholders (including NACCHO, State Government, and Commonwealth Government) to strengthen and ensure Aboriginal data sovereignty.

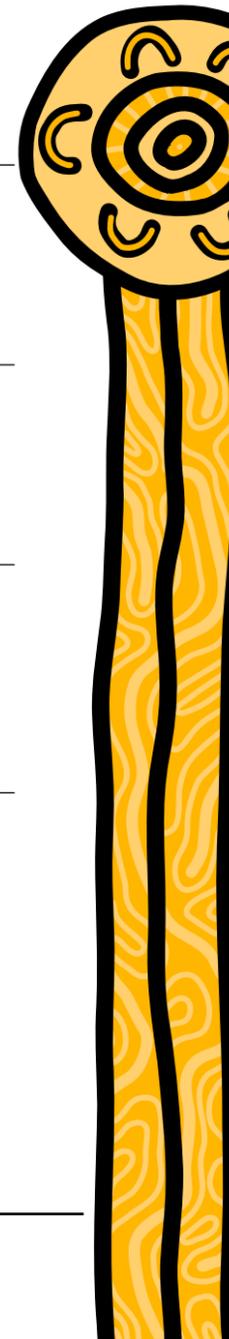
Key Goals	Alignment to CtG PR
4.1 Advocate for Aboriginal data sovereignty at local and national levels: Lead discussions with State Government, Commonwealth Government, and health organisations to ensure Aboriginal communities have control over their health data, including influencing data governance policies and frameworks.	4
4.2 Explore state health data repository: Investigate possible avenues for a state Aboriginal health data warehouse, ensuring communities can access, interpret, and use local health data for decision-making and advocacy.	4
4.3 Enhance data sharing and security protocols: Work with Member Services and governments to establish secure, ethical data-sharing systems that prioritise Aboriginal ownership and ensure privacy and security.	4
4.4 Support capacity building in data use: Provide training and resources for Member Services and communities to understand and use health data for evidence-based decision-making and advocacy.	4
4.5 Strengthen Aboriginal data sovereignty in research: Advocate for Aboriginal ownership and control over research data by supporting Member Services' involvement in the governance of ethics, promoting the role of the Western Australian Aboriginal Health Ethics Committee (WAAHEC), and working with research institutions to establish clear, culturally governed agreements on data ownership, custodianship, and ethical approval processes.	4

Strategic Pillar 5: Transforming Aboriginal-led Commissioning and Funding Reform

5-Year Commitment

Drive funding reform in partnership with Member Services to explore, support, and advocate for Aboriginal-led commissioning, ensuring that resources are allocated based on community priorities, evidence-based strategies, and sustainable outcomes for Aboriginal health.

Key Goals	Alignment to CtG PR
<p>5.1 Explore the role of AHCWA and its Member Services in Aboriginal-led commissioning: Work collaboratively with Member Services to scope, define, and understand what Aboriginal-led commissioning means for the sector in WA, and identify opportunities for regional and state-level leadership in this space.</p>	1, 2
<p>5.2 Support Member Services to strengthen their commissioning capability: Partner with Member Services, regional bodies, and other Aboriginal organisations to share lessons, resources, and models that support the growth of culturally safe, community-led commissioning across WA.</p>	1, 2
<p>5.3 Develop and test Aboriginal-led commissioning models in partnership with the sector: Work with Member Services and stakeholders to explore, co-design, and pilot innovative commissioning models that reflect the priorities, governance structures, and aspirations of Aboriginal communities.</p>	1, 2
<p>5.4 Advocate for Aboriginal-led funding reform and accountable, culturally safe commissioning processes: Lead advocacy efforts for structural reform in government and philanthropic funding processes, ensuring that commissioning and resource allocation decisions are community-led, transparent, accurate to the true cost of service delivery, culturally appropriate, and accountable to Aboriginal people.</p>	1, 2, 3



Strategic Pillar 6: Driving the Growth of the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Sector

5-Year Commitment

Facilitate the successful transition to Aboriginal community control for Aboriginal health services across WA, and work with communities to establish new ACCHS and expand existing services, improving access to Aboriginal comprehensive and holistic health services for Aboriginal people.

Key Goals	Alignment to CtG PR
<p>6.1 Support the transition of health services to Aboriginal community control: Work with Member Services, government, and key stakeholders to plan and negotiate transition requirements and needs.</p>	1, 2
<p>6.2 Support the establishment of new ACCHS: Collaborate with local communities and governments to develop and support the expansion of existing, and creation of new ACCHS in under-served regions, including securing funding and resources.</p>	1, 2
<p>6.3 Strengthen community partnerships for local health solutions: Build partnerships between local communities, government agencies, and ACCHS to support holistic, culturally safe care and community health planning.</p>	1, 2





**Aboriginal
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