

East Wimmera Health Service

Diversity Plan 2024 – 2026



East Wimmera Health Service acknowledges the Traditional Owners, the Custodians of the land in which we work and live, and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge their significant cultural heritage, their fundamental spiritual connection to the country, and value their contributions to a diverse community. We are proud to embrace the spirit of reconciliation, and learn more from the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, how best to improve their health, social and economic outcomes

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Foreword

East Wimmera Health Service (EWHS) is committed to celebrating diversity and inclusion. This is part of our commitment to partnering with our consumers and our vision to improve the health and wellbeing of our community.

East Wimmera Health Service is committed to being responsive to diversity, which is critical to ensuring positive and equitable health and wellbeing outcomes for all Victorians. This is in line with the Department of Health and Human Services' commitment to do the same.

Being responsive to diversity requires that we are both universally accommodating as well as tailored to particular population groups.

What is a Diversity Plan?

A Diversity Plan is used by organisation to devise and implement actions to ensure that their facilities, services and programs do not exclude people.

The purpose of this plan is to ensure that members of our diverse community, both consumers and workforce, have equal access to: services; care that meets their needs; and employment in the case of workforce. Our workforce is inclusive, respectful, and responsive so that we can deliver equitable health outcomes irrespective of our consumers' diverse needs.

The objectives of this plan are to:

- Foster and create an inclusive healthcare service where our diverse consumers and workforce are treated with respect
- Promote and increase awareness amongst East Wimmera Health Service workforce and the broader community about the specific rights and needs of our diverse consumers and workforce
- Reduce barriers to our diverse populations accessing services, and obtaining and maintaining employment
- Meet legislative requirements in regard to treating people with respect and dignity.

This document will be supported by a Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan which was received with Endorsement from Reconciliation Australia on 08th July 2024 and will outline specific actions and timelines.

How have we prepared this Plan?

Preparing our Diversity Plan has involved by:

- Looking at the organisation as a whole.
- Consulting widely with the community.
- Considering what services and programs are offered and finding out what barriers prevent people from accessing services and obtaining and maintaining employment.
- Coming up with plans to remove those barriers.

In developing this plan, we have been guided by:

- <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/reconciliation-action-plans/>
- The Indigenous Literacy Foundation | ILF | reading opens doors charity non-profit
- Reconciliation Victoria
- Koorie Heritage Trust - Discover Aboriginal Victoria!
- Koolin Balit: Aboriginal health strategy
- 1405012_koolin_balit_info_web---pdf.pdf (health.vic.gov.au)
- <https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-oatsih-rap>
- <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/organisations/about-us/publications-and-resources/reconciliation-action-plan>
- <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/corporate-publications/reconciliation-action-plan-2018-2020/contents/our-vision-for-reconciliation>

The Designing for Diversity Framework's key principles are Access, equity, Inclusiveness, Responsiveness, Empowerment, and self-determination.

Context

A Diversity Plan will help East Wimmera Health Service to play its part in reducing discrimination and help us to meet our obligations under federal and state anti-discrimination legislation. It will promote equality and help us to be consistent with the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 and celebrate our diverse community.

This plan also assists EWHS to meet the following external reporting requirements:

- The National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards
- The Aged Care Quality Standards
- The Victorian Child Safe Standards
- Healthcare That Counts
- Health Services Standards

This Plan also aligns with Better Safer Care's model for partnering with consumers, and other internal EWHS policies.

Who is East Wimmera Health Service?



East Wimmera Health Service (EWHS) is a multi-campus health service situated in the north-west of Victoria. Covering the land first inhabited by the Dja Dja Wurrung, Barengi Gadiin and Jaara Jaara people. EWHS encompasses the townships of Birchip, Charlton, Donald, St Arnaud and Wycheproof and surrounding districts.

St Arnaud is our largest town with a population of approximately 3,500 and the smallest, Birchip with approximately 700 people. EWHS provides healthcare services to an approximate population of 10,000 people.

Evolving in a community predominately known for broad acre cropping and grazier farming, EWHS is an amalgamation of three local hospitals and two Bush Nursing Hospitals. EWHS is focussed on improving the health of its communities with a dedicated team, consisting of over 400 staff members.

Our Vision, Mission and Values

Vision:

To see sustainable improvement in the health and wellbeing of our community.

Mission:

To work together with our community to achieve better health and wellbeing outcomes.

Values:

- Together – We will be an effective team. We will ensure our effectiveness as a team and as partners with our community. We will dare to be different to improve health outcomes.
- Honesty – We will be fair and straightforward. We are sincere in what we do and share honestly how we feel. We do the right thing.
- Empathy – We deliver compassionate consumer centred care. We are caring, compassionate and responsive to the needs of our consumers, staff and volunteers who are the centre of everything we do.
- Community – We will engage our communities. We partner with our consumers to build a healthy community. We walk in our consumer's shoes to provide better care.
- Open – We will be clear and open in all our communication. We see things as they are and as they could be to improve health and wellbeing.
- Respect – We will be respectful of everyone. Our behaviours demonstrate trust, inclusion and mutual understanding and we communicate openly and respectfully.
- Excellence – We will deliver positive health experiences. We ensure the highest standard of quality and safety every time. As a community we focus on healthy outcomes.

About Diversity

- Diversity doesn't just mean different ethnicities, races, and religions, but includes gender, sexuality, age, abilities, perspectives, social and economic backgrounds, life experiences and all other aspects that makes someone unique.
- Inclusion puts diversity into action, by creating an environment of involvement and respect.
- The Equal Opportunity Act 2010 says that equal opportunity is about giving and getting a fair go. It does not assume everyone is the same and it does not mean treating everyone the same.



The Plan

STRATEGIES	DELIVERABLES	Accountability	Timeframe
Reducing barriers to services and facilities	Ensure interpreting services are provided to all consumers who need them.	Director of Primary Care	Ongoing
	Ensure all new written health material and brochures are available in accessible languages and formats.	Director of Clinical Services	Ongoing
	Ensure consumers experience patient-centred, culturally appropriate care (including aged care and end-of-life care).	Director of Primary Care	Ongoing
Reducing barriers to employment	Ensure Equal Employment Opportunities are in place for our diverse populations.	Director of People and Culture, Human Resources Manager	Ongoing
	Improve volunteer opportunities	Director of Primary Care	Ongoing

	available for our diverse populations.		
	Create and support an organisational culture that values, respects, and is inclusive of workforce from diverse backgrounds.	Director of People and Culture, Diversity & Inclusion Officer	Ongoing
Capacity Building	Train workforce in Diversity and Inclusivity, including the use of inclusive language that positively reflects the diversity of our community.	Clinical Education Coordinator, Diversity & Inclusion Officer	Ongoing
	Promote and create awareness of the Diversity Plan to workforce.	Director of People and Culture, Diversity & Inclusion Officer	Ongoing
	Build and strengthen relationships with our diverse community.	Health Promotion	Ongoing

Community Collaboration	Find ways to engage diverse consumers.	Community Nursing	December 2024
	Collaborate with other health and community organisations to improve services for diverse consumers.	Director of Primary Care	Ongoing
	Hear and understand consumer stories.	Community Nursing	Ongoing
Communication	Report to our community on the work being done.	Communications and Marketing Officer	December 2024
Celebration	Celebrate and support our diverse communities through promotions and/or events and activities.	Diversity & Inclusion Officer, Communications & Marketing Officer	December 2024
Evaluation	Meaningfully evaluate what we are doing.	Reconciliation Action Plan Committee	December 2024

Further reading

East Wimmera Health service	www.ewhs.com.au
Disability Services - Victorian Department of Health and Human Services	https://dhhs.vic.gov.au/disability <hr/>
Reconciliation Australia.	http://www.reconciliation.org.au/
Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation Inc	www.vaccho.org.au
Inclusion Australia	https://www.inclusionaustralia.org.au/ <hr/>

Glossary

Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people	An Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander person is someone who: is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent or identifies as an Aboriginal person or a Torres Strait Islander person.
Barrier	A barrier is anything that prevents people from participating on an equal basis. There are many kinds of barriers, and these can be physical, attitudinal, or systemic.
Bisexual	An individual who is romantically, emotionally, physically, or sexually attracted to more than one sex/ gender.
CALD	Culturally and linguistically diverse.
Carers	Families and friends providing unpaid care and assistance.
Consumer	Refers to a person who uses, or potentially uses, health services, including their family and carers.
Culture	A shared system of values, beliefs, and behaviour.
Cultural identity	A person's sense of self identity related to their notion of belonging to a particular cultural or ethnic group.
Diversity	A broad concept that includes age, personal and cultural background, education, function, and personality. Includes lifestyle, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and status within the general community.

Elder	Key go-to person within Aboriginal communities who is respected and consulted due to their experience, wisdom, knowledge, background, and insight. Often described as the "custodians of knowledge." Elder does not necessarily equate with age.
Gay	An individual who is romantically, emotionally, physically, and sexually attracted to individuals of the same sex/gender.
Gender identity	An individual's sense of identity, appearance, mannerisms, or other gender-related characteristics.
Heterosexual	An individual who is romantically, emotionally, physically, and sexually attracted to individuals of the opposite sex/gender.
Homosexual	An individual who is romantically, emotionally, physically, and sexually to individuals the same sex/gender. Gay and/or lesbians are common terms used to describe homosexual people.
Inclusion	Inclusion is meaningful participation in all aspects of society with access to services and opportunities for all people.
Intersex	Intersex people are born with physical, hormonal, or genetic features that are neither wholly female nor wholly male, or a combination of female and male. Being intersex does not pre-determine any particular gender identity.
LGBTIQA+	LGBTIQA+ is an evolving acronym that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual. Many other terms (such as non-binary and pansexual) that people

	use to describe their experiences of their gender, sexuality, and physiological sex characteristics.
Participation	This is when consumers, carers and community members are meaningfully involved in decision making about health policy and planning, care and treatment, and the wellbeing of themselves and the community.
Patient-centred care	This is about treating the consumer with dignity and respect and involving them in all decisions about their health. When healthcare professionals and services give you patient-centred care, it puts you at the centre of your healthcare, and is respectful of and responsive to your preferences, needs and values.
Reasonable Adjustment	Employees with a disability may require reasonable adjustments to ensure increased productivity and safety in the workplace, such as changes to work processes or equipment, or adjusting work schedules. The law states that, whenever it is necessary, possible, and reasonable, employers should consider a person's disability and make appropriate adjustments to the work environment to accommodate that person.
Reconciliation	Reconciliation is about building a new relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and the wider community, one that heals the pain of the past and ensures we all share fairly and equally in

	our national citizenship. (Commonwealth of Australia 1997).
Seldom-heard groups	Sometimes called “marginalised” groups, there are some people whose voices aren’t always heard. Some people are more likely to suffer poverty, disadvantage, and social exclusion. These groups might include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, people in rural and remote communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, people with a Diversity, young people, older people; LGBTIQ+ communities.
Sexual Orientation	The gender (or genders) to which a person is attracted.
Transgender	An umbrella term used to refer to individuals whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs to their sex assigned at birth.
Wellbeing	Wellbeing is about more than not being ill or having a disease. It combines physical, mental, emotional, and social health factors. Wellbeing is strongly linked to happiness and life satisfaction. In short, wellbeing could be described as how you feel about yourself and your life when things are going well for you.



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