

# **Cultural Safety Framework**

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Marathon Health pays respect to the traditional custodians of the land we stand upon.

This seal represents our commitment to working with our communities for a better future for all.

## Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge First Nations and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's First People and Traditional Custodians.

We value their cultures, identities, and continuing connection to Country, waters, kin and community.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and are committed to making a positive contribution to the wellbeing of First Nations people, by providing services that are welcoming, safe, culturally appropriate and inclusive.

## In the development of this Framework, Marathon Health would like to acknowledge the guidance, input to content and cultural relevance from First Nations people:

- Nathan Peckham Cultural Advisor previously worked for Marathon Health, designed the artwork 'Walk to Reconciliation' from which elements have been used to create the graphics throughout the Framework
- Michelle Shipp Cultural and Content Consultant
- Troy Pietsch Board Member Marathon Health
- Marathon Health's First Nations staff who provided guidance and input to ensure this Framework is meaningful and applies to the communities we work with

First Nations cultures are the oldest living cultures in the world.

First Nations communities and people are rich in culture and diversity, with varied histories pre and post invasion. First Nations people's connection to Country remains strong despite colonisation. Marathon Health is committed to ensuring this history is understood and acknowledged by Marathon Health staff.

Through our Cultural Safety Framework, Marathon Health will continue our journey with First Nations people and communities with a reciprocal approach to shared values through **I-WIRIMBIRRA**, meaning I-CARE in Wiradjuri language.





## From our Board

Marathon Health is committed to improving health and wellbeing outcomes for First Nations people and our communities.

At the heart of Marathon Health, we recognise the importance of creating culturally safe environments, services and workplaces for First Nations staff, clients and community members. We understand the significance of this task and the importance of working from a foundation of strong relationships, mutual respect and understanding.

This document is the Framework and foundation to guide Marathon Health in genuine engagement and participation with our First Nations people; promote collaboration with and learnings from First Nations people; and to enhance supported and sustainable delivery of our services.

We are proud of the services Marathon Health delivers to all Australians living on the lands traditionally under the custodianship of First Nations people. The knowledge and perspective First Nations people bring to Marathon Health, will strengthen our cultural safety to support our staff in delivering appropriate health and wellbeing services.

**Annette Crothers**On behalf of Marathon Health Board









## From our CEO

Marathon Health exists to enable communities to thrive through improved health and wellbeing and the health and wellbeing of First Nations people and communities is integral to that.

We are an organisation with our heart and soul in regional areas and we live and work in communities where we see health inequality every day. We see the impact that this inequality has at every stage of life.

This Framework outlines our commitment to culturally safe practice and aims to guide every action we take from recruitment and retention through to engagement, service design, delivery and evaluation through leadership, accountability and transparency.

A successful implementation of our Framework will enhance our journey where First Nations people will feel safe working with us, we will gain valuable knowledge about the delivery of health and wellbeing services from them, and we will support more First Nations people to achieve their health and wellbeing outcomes. This is how we can contribute to Closing the Gap.

This is an ongoing journey for Marathon Health and our senior leadership team, including myself, are deeply and personally committed to working to improve health equality for First Nations people.

We will build and grow our commitment to cultural safety over time, and this Framework represents our starting point.

Megan Callinan CEO, Marathon Health

## Our purpose

Marathon Health delivers primary health services across a broad footprint, with a predominant focus in regional NSW where many First Nations people reside. In supporting a journey towards health equality for First Nations people, we strive to deliver healthcare services closer to home, informed by the knowledge of the people we are working with and their communities.

Marathon Health is committed to cultural safety and the delivery of culturally safe services to First Nation communities that support improved health, social and wellbeing outcomes.

Marathon Health is invested in Closing the Gap for First Nations people. The organisation and its people are committed to a greater partnership with First Nations people in achieving health equality through a strength-based approach, where we place First Nations people and communities at the centre of service delivery.

We commit to a collective journey – a shared commitment to empower First Nations people to live healthy and prosperous lives.

Consistent with our ICARE values and strategic priorities to develop and deliver quality health and wellbeing services together with our communities, this Framework consists of three key plans being the Marathon Health Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), the First Nations Strategic Engagement Plan, and the First Nations Workforce Development Plan.

The key objective of this Framework document is to show Marathon Health's commitment in working with First Nation communities and Closing the Gap to address the well-documented inequality that exists between First Nations people and the general community. This includes reducing barriers for First Nations people in accessing Marathon Health services. A key strategy to Closing the Gap includes increasing First Nations representation across all levels of the Marathon Health staffing structure.

"We are an organisation with our heart and soul in regional areas and we live and work in communities where we see health inequality every day. We see the impact that this inequality has at every stage of life."

Megan Callinan, CEO

## **The Cultural Safety Framework**

The Cultural Safety Framework integrates Marathon Health's values and mission, with First Nations values relating to the importance of Connection.

It builds on the previous achievements of Marathon Health's first Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in 2019; guiding the overarching vision for Marathon Health's commitment to cultural safety. An important outcome of the Reflect RAP was the strengthening of relationships with First Nations communities. These relationships have increased awareness and appreciation of First Australians' culture and history throughout our organisation.

This Framework contains the following:

- Our key stakeholders
- Information regarding the First Nations population within the Marathon Health footprint
- Key components of cultural safety within the Marathon Health context
- Marathon Health's shared values and I-WIRIMBIRRA
- The importance of Connection
- Cultural safety and the role of governance

#### **Key stakeholders**

The Framework was developed considering the needs of, and partnerships with, our key stakeholders.

Marathon Health's service delivery and evaluation will ensure there is a focus on the impact of Australia's First Nations people in everything we do.



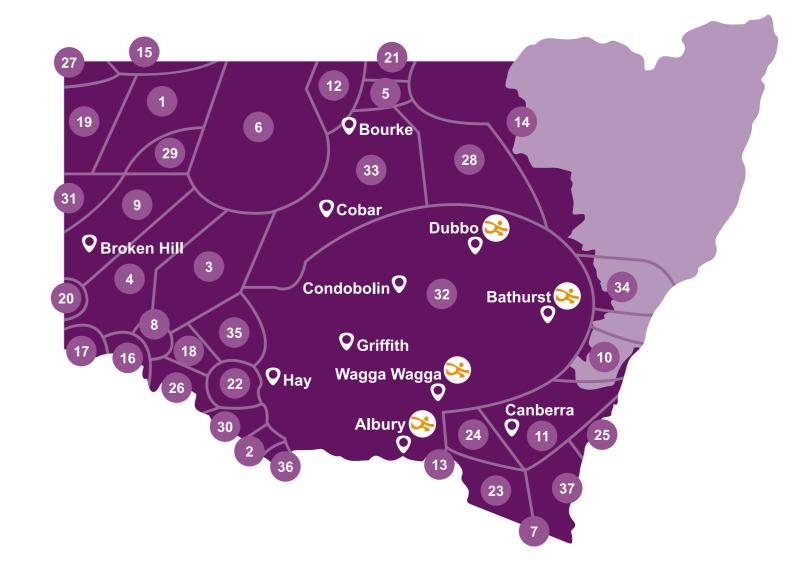
### First Nations communities we serve

Marathon Health has an expanding footprint delivering services across regional NSW and Victoria. The majority of Marathon Health's programs are delivered in NSW with one program currently being delivered nationally.

Within NSW, the Marathon Health footprint encompasses many tribal groups (see figure opposite page). These tribal groups are located in varying geographical locations and range from rural and remote locations to largely populated urban areas. Each tribal group has a diverse set of customs, languages and lore that differ significantly from one area to the next. Notwithstanding this, many First Nations people have been internally displaced from their Country and continue to deal with the ongoing social trauma of being removed from Country. Such experiences have had profound effects on health, mental health and social and emotional wellbeing, alongside the erosion of culture and a sense of belonging to Country. Many First Nations people reside in locations where they did not originate.

According to the 2016 Census, NSW has a First Nations population of approximately 265,685. This represents about 33.3% of the total First Nations population of Australia. For comparison, the Wiradjuri Nation alone is 13,000km larger than Ireland and has the largest population of any tribal group in the nation.

As a result of the complexity and diversity of the communities within the Marathon Health service area, it is essential to develop a behaviour of knowledge seeking and understanding to effectively service them.



1. Bandjigali	14. Kamilaroi	27. Wadigali
2. Baraba Baraba	15. Karenggapa	28. Wailwan
3. Barindji	16. Kureinji	29. Wandjiwalgu
4. Barkindji	17. Latje Latje	30. Wemba Wemba
5. Barranbinya	18. Madi Madi	31. Wiljali
6. Barundji	19. Malyangaba	32. Wiradjuri
7. Bidwell	20. Meru	33. Wongaibon
8. Dadi Dadi	21. Muruwari	34. Wonnarua
9. Danggali	22. Nari Nari	35. Yitha Yitha
10. Dharug	23. Ngarigo	36. Yorta Yorta
11. Gundungurra	24. Ngunnawal	37. Yuin
12. Gunu	25. Tharawal	
13. Jaitmatang	26. Wadi Wadi	

## **Cultural safety at Marathon Health**

Cultural safety at Marathon Health is about creating workspaces where everyone can examine our own cultural identities and attitudes. We need to be open-minded and flexible in our attitudes towards people from cultures other than our own.

Components of the cultural safety approach at Marathon Health also includes:

- The recognition that cultural safety is based on the experience of First Nations clients and staff
- The identification of power relationships between staff and clients, the different levels of staff, and how we empower clients to take full advantage of services
- An accessible, accountable and responsive service to First Nations people
- Services provided are free from racism and inequality

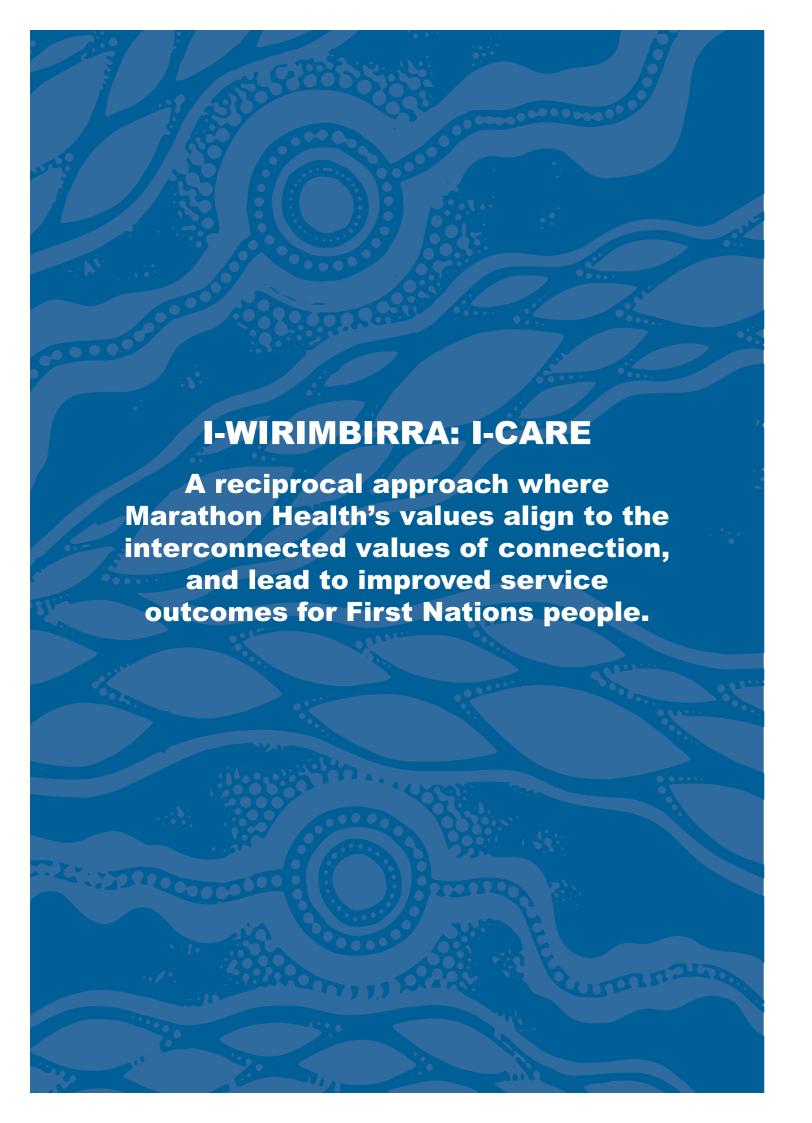
#### We will achieve this through:

- Leadership
- Culturally safe systems and processes
- Setting goals to hold ourselves accountable
- Being transparent about our progress
- Ongoing learning and support
- Establishing deep, lasting and trusted relationships over time

Marathon Health respects and engages with First Nations people to ensure our services are culturally safe and welcoming. Consistent with our Cultural Safety Framework, we deliver a range of health and wellbeing services in partnership with local Elders and communities.

Marathon Health is committed to avoiding unsafe cultural practices that diminish, demean or disempower the cultural identity and wellbeing of an individual.

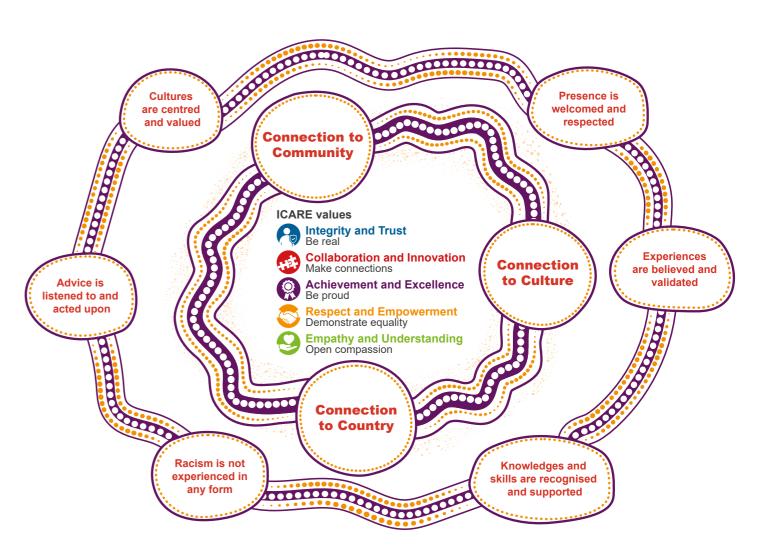




## **Our values**

Marathon Health respects and engages with First Nations people to ensure our services are culturally safe and welcoming.

In delivering services across the Marathon Health footprint, we respect the parallel relationships of our core values and the interconnectedness of connection to Community, connection to Culture and connection to Country across the communities we serve. We deliver a range of health and wellbeing services in partnership with local Elders and communities. The figure below outlines the key elements for ensuring a culturally safe environment for First Nations people.



## The importance of connection

We recognise the importance of rapport and the need to establish this with members of the local First Nations community, specifically building relationships with key people such as respected Elders and members of First Nations organisations.

We are aware that people might not offer their knowledge and assistance at first. The process will take time and must be based on mutual respect. This rapport can be established in a number of ways and is aided by our understanding of the importance of connection to First Nations people.

#### **Connection to Culture**

Marathon Health acknowledges that there are many First Nations cultures and people. First Nations cultures exist and thrive in a wide range of communities throughout Australia. The First Nations people we work with are not the same – their culture, what they value and hold dear, how they live and make decisions, and their relationships are diverse. As in Western and Eastern cultures, First Nations cultures have characteristics they share and others that differentiate them, so it is important to avoid assumptions regarding First Nations cultures. This will influence how Marathon Health will work with each individual ensuring we respect each individual's connection to their culture.

#### **Connection to Country**

Country is the term often used by First Nations people to describe the lands, waterways and seas to which they are connected. The term contains complex ideas about law, place, custom, language, spiritual belief, cultural practice, material sustenance, family and identity.

For many First Nations people in Australia, land is much more than soil, rocks or minerals. It's a living environment that sustains, and is sustained by, people and culture. "Before colonisation, the reciprocal relationship between people and the land underpinned all other aspects of life for First Nations people. Today, this relationship with the land remains fundamental to the identity and way of life of many First Nations people," Dr. William Jonas.

#### **Connection to Community**

We recognise that each community is different and unique. What applies to one community, will not automatically apply to another.

The concept of community is crucial in identity and concepts of self. It defines relationships, social roles and cultural norms. Community is the venue where individuals and communities connect with one another. Marathon Health will aim to build understanding of, and relationships with, each community we work with.







"For Indigenous people to participate in Australian society as equals requires that we be able to live our lives free from assumptions by others about what is best for us. It requires recognition of our values, culture, and traditions so that they can co-exist in mainstream society.

It requires respecting our difference and celebrating it within the diversity of the nation."

Dr. William Jonas (Former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission)

## The Framework

The Cultural Safety Framework provides guiding principles that will underpin the development of the organisation's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), First Nations Strategic Engagement Plan, and First Nations Workforce Development Plan.

The Framework will ensure we meet the required Cultural Safety Quality Assurance Standards.

To achieve cultural safety, Marathon Health needs to sustain, grow and maintain meaningful relationships with First Nations communities. We need to continuously improve placing cultural safety at the heart of everything we do.

#### **Implementation**

The Marathon Health Cultural Safety Framework implementation will be embedded within the:

- Marathon Health Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) continued journey
- First Nations Strategic Engagement Plan
- First Nations Workforce Development Plan
- Marathon Health Cultural Safety Quality Assurance Standards
- Monitoring, Evaluation and Continuous Performance Framework

We commit to a collective journey – a shared commitment to empower First Nations people to live healthy and prosperous lives



## Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

A plan to develop and strengthen relationships with First Nations people, engaging staff and stakeholders in reconciliation



#### First Nations Strategic Engagement Plan

A strategic engagement action plan to strengthen and grow meaningful engagement and partnerships with First Nation communities and organisations



#### First Nations Workforce Development Plan

A plan to grow a well-supported First Nations workforce

#### Marathon Health Cultural Safety Quality Assurance Standards

Standards to meet the needs of First Nations people

#### Monitoring, Evaluation and Continuous Performance Framework

Cultural Safety is built into our monitoring, evaluation and continuous performance framework through consideration of:

- Access to health, disability and wellbeing services
- Delivery of Culturally respectful health, disability and wellbeing services
- · First Nations people's experiences of our health, disability and wellbeing services







"Before colonisation, the reciprocal relationship between people and the land underpinned all other aspects of life for First Nations people.

Today, this relationship with the land remains fundamental to the identity and way of life of many First Nations people."

Dr. William Jonas (Former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission)

## **Cultural Safety Quality Assurance Standards**

In addressing Cultural Safety and Closing the Gap, Marathon Health has developed organisational specific Cultural Safety Quality Assurance Standards.

These standards also align to the Marathon Health Strategic Plan, and are directed at improving the quality of care and health outcomes for First Nations people.

These standards will be used in guiding and assessing future work such as:

- Development of a Marathon Health First Nations Workforce
- Ensuring quality services for First Nations People
- Building feedback mechanisms regarding service delivery for First Nations people
- Guiding the development of future Reconciliation Action Plans (RAP)

These standards will be reported on an annual basis to our funding bodies and within our Annual Report.





## Connection to Culture, connection to Country, connection to Community



#### **Quality Workforce Standards**

Develop and implement a First Nations Workforce Development Plan



#### **Quality Services Standards**

- Safety and Quality priorities address the specific health needs of First Nations people
- High-quality standard of culturally appropriate service delivery which is supported by appropriate quality assurance processes
- Providing a welcoming environment that recognises the importance of the cultural beliefs and practices of First Nations people
- Work in partnership with First Nations communities to meet their healthcare needs
- Encourage First Nations people and other diversity groups to participate in decision making
- Ensure appropriate cultural support mechanisms are in place



#### **Quality Knowledge Standards**

- Implement strategies to improve the cultural awareness and cultural competency of the workforce
- Establishing and maintaining appropriate and culturally safe consumer feedback procedures, including complaint handling procedures
- Implement processes to routinely ask service users if they identify as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and to record this information in administrative and clinical information systems
- Support intentional policy and practice change where required
- Appropriate risk assessment and management procedures are in place



#### **Outcome**

 Cultural safety governance and accountability process is implemented, monitored and is parallel to that of the organisation's Strategic Plan

## **Cultural Safety Framework – Governance**

All Marathon Health directors, managers, staff and contractors are responsible for ensuring cultural safety.



#### **Directors**

The governance of cultural safety is set within the context of the broader governance role of the Marathon Health directors. This includes overseeing that appropriate governance structures are in place to lead the processes, including needs assessment and service planning.



#### **Chief Executive Officer**

Provides the organisational framework for effective cultural safety governance.



#### **Senior leadership team**

Marathon Health's senior leadership team have a responsibility to plan, review and integrate governance systems that promote cultural safety within work practices.

The senior leadership team will clearly articulate organisational and individual accountabilities for cultural safety.



#### **Employees**

Under the guidance of the Chiefs and management, Marathon Health staff are required to adhere to the Marathon Health Cultural Safety Framework as it applies to their respective role, function and responsibility.











## References

#### Internal

Marathon Health Strategic Plan 2019-2024

Marathon Health Clinical Governance Framework August 2022

Marathon Health – Monitoring Evaluation and Continuous Improvement Framework

Marathon Health 2020-2021 Annual Report

#### **External**

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## **Appendix 1 – Cultural Safety Quality Assurance Standards Workplan**

Quality Workforce Standards Action Plan – Year 1
First Nations Workforce Development Plan – Year 1

Utilise the YOP traineeship program to establish and trial a mentoring program for trainees and staff within the YOP	Unit responsible YOP
establish and trial a mentoring program for trainees and staff within the YOP	YOP
establish and trial a mentoring program for trainees and staff within the YOP	YOP
program	
Review existing staffing profile by role and business stream. Data to be available as part of Power BI HR workforce dashboard	HR
Develop workforce action plans for each Business unit to identify opportunities for First Nations recruitment	General Managers
Utilise the YOP traineeship program to trial alternative recruitment methods including social media and localised community campaigns	HR Marcomms
Evaluate effectiveness and applicability for other roles	
Working group to be established to review current recruitment systems and processes. Current First Nations staff to be invited to participate on working group	HR
Hold First Nations staff gathering to identify ongoing mechanisms for consultation and feedback	COO HR
Utilise agreed First Nations staff consultation mechanisms to explore	
employment related issues  3. Utilise entry and exit surveys to	
understand barriers and enablers	
t	role and business stream. Data to be available as part of Power BI HR workforce dashboard Develop workforce action plans for each Business unit to identify opportunities for First Nations recruitment  1. Utilise the YOP traineeship program to trial alternative recruitment methods including social media and localised community campaigns  2. Evaluate effectiveness and applicability for other roles Working group to be established to review current recruitment systems and processes. Current First Nations staff to be invited to participate on working group  1. Hold First Nations staff gathering to identify ongoing mechanisms for consultation and feedback  2. Utilise agreed First Nations staff consultation mechanisms to explore employment related issues  3. Utilise entry and exit surveys to understand barriers and enablers

Strategy	Actions	Unit responsible
Culturally safe workplace		
Staff across Marathon Health are better equipped and supported to create a culturally safe and responsive work environment	<ol> <li>Localised cultural immersion training to be sourced and provided in all Marathon Health locations</li> </ol>	HR
	100% completion rate for online cultural safety training	
	Grievance policy to be amended to include specific reference to reporting of racism	
	<ol> <li>Engage with First Nations agencies for example, Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA) for cultural mentorship of frontline staff working with First Nations communities</li> </ol>	
Provide a welcoming environment that recognises the importance of the cultural beliefs and practices of First Nations people	Marathon Health office locations and meeting places are culturally safe and welcoming	General Managers Centre Managers

## **Quality Service Standards Action Plan – Year 1**

Strategy		Actions	Unit responsible
Safety & Quality priorities address the specific health needs of First Nations People	1.	Review of current and new policies and procedures to assess cultural impact	CGUR
	2.	Strengthen cultural inclusion in all policy, procedures, frameworks and templates; focusing on key clinical service delivery documents	
	3.	Establish clear processes for accountability and transparency – through organisation review and establish key performance indicators that demonstrate accountability	
High quality standard of culturally appropriate service delivery which is supported by appropriate quality assurance processes	1.	Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country	Marcomms CGUR
	2.	Participate in independent accreditation processes for service evaluation on culturally appropriate service delivery	
	3.	Implement the key principles for Self- Determination for First Nations people – in all service delivery models of care	
Provide a welcoming environment that recognises the importance of the cultural beliefs and practices of First Nations people	1.	Review all office locations and meeting places for cultural appropriateness and implement recommendations	General Managers CGUR
	2.	Ensure cultural safety education provision explores Non-Indigenous staff's behaviours and challenges un-conscious / conscious behaviours	Centre Managers
	3.	Create a workspace that embraces and addresses the First Nations concept of social, emotional, physical, cultural and spiritual dimensions of wellbeing	
Work in partnership with First Nations communities to meet their health care needs	1.	Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with First Nations stakeholders and organisations	General Managers
	2.	Meet with First Nations stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement	
Encourage First Nations people and other diversity groups to participate in decision making	1.	Utilise co design principles in the planning, establishment and evaluation of programs	General Managers
	2.	Strengthen the local community partnerships with Land Councils and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) to increase joint planning and decision making for better health local community outcomes	
Ensure appropriate cultural support mechanisms are in place	1.	Establish systems for cultural supervision and mentorship	Principle Practice Lead
piace	2.	Establish agreed mechanisms for consultation and engagement with First Nations staff	C00

### **Quality Knowledge Standards Action Plan – Year 1**

Strategy	Actions	Unit responsible
Implement strategies to improve the cultural awareness and cultural competency of the workforce	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs across Marathon Health	HR General Managers
	Consult local Traditional Owners and First Nations advisors to inform our cultural learning strategy	Central Managers
Establish and maintain appropriate and culturally safe	Review existing policies, procedures and feedback mechanisms	CGUR
consumer feedback procedures, including complaint handling procedures	Consult with First Nations staff and consumers as to appropriateness of mechanisms	
	3. Monitor utilisation and complaints data for First Nations representation	
Implement processes to routinely ask service users if they	Educate staff in the importance of recording this information	CGUR
identify as being First Nation, and to record this information in administrative and clinical information systems	Provide training to staff in culturally sensitive language to support administrative compliance	
	3. Review clinical information system to enable recording of information	
Support intentional policy and practice change where required	<ol> <li>Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti- discrimination provisions, and future needs</li> </ol>	HR
Appropriate risk assessment and management procedures are in place	Explore opportunities for how cultural care can be integrated as part of mental health care plans	CGUR
	2. Review client journey systems, tools and templates across the services for cultural impact and make positive changes to increase cultural safety (e.g. review current intake and assessment documents through co-design to ensure culturally appropriate)	

### List of abbreviations

**CEO** – Chief Executive Officer **HR** – Human Resources

**CGUR** – Clinical Governance Unit and Risk RAP – Reconciliation Action Plan

**COO** – Chief Operations Officer **YOP** – Youth Outreach Program



ABN: 86 154 318 975

**Marathon Health** is a not-for-profit, registered charity delivering high quality health and wellbeing services to people wherever they choose to live.

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