



Aboriginal health and wellbeing in public health planning

Objective 1: Promote – Foster strong, connected communities and healthier environments

Objective 1 of the *State Public Health Plan 2025–2030* recognises the strength of a community, and the health of its environment directly impact how people live across the life course, work, and connect with one another.¹ Objective 1 relates to improving the surrounding environment to create vibrant, liveable neighbourhoods that offer a sense of belonging, culture, and spirit, and facilitate behaviour change to support people to lead healthier lifestyles. The development and implementation of strategies for objective 1 must recognise the cultural determinants as central to health and wellbeing for Aboriginal people.

Local spotlight: *Gynning Yorgas Womens Group operates as a healing circle within the City of Swan. Held weekly, Gynning Yorgas is a place for Aboriginal women to come together for friendship, yarning, workshops, arts and crafts, life-skills as well as community and cultural activities.*

Gynning Yorgas is strengths-based and focuses on increasing cultural knowledge and community connections as a way of achieving healing for Aboriginal people in a safe and cultural space.

Theme	POTENTIAL STRATEGIES		
	<i>Fundamental</i>	<i>Intermediate</i>	<i>Advanced</i>
Truth telling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Aboriginal-led and trauma informed yarning circles, story-telling gatherings and/or community dialogues where Aboriginal people can share lived experiences of intergenerational trauma, racism, survival and strength. Embed truth-telling opportunities in local museums, libraries, visitor centres and other public spaces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission and share truth-telling resources (e.g. reports, short films, podcasts) that document the history of colonisation in the local government area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicly report on council's role in past policies and/or actions that affected Aboriginal people differently to non-Aboriginal people.
Strengthen connections to Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and/or review and update local government policies related to Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country, with input from Aboriginal community members. Incorporate Aboriginal languages, place names and art in mainstream facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Traditional Owners, Custodians and cultural knowledge holders to facilitate on-country visits and cultural workshops for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people within the local government area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with ACCOs and Aboriginal rangers to support and invest in long-term caring for Country initiatives. Co-develop or fund Aboriginal cultural centres or ceremony grounds where Aboriginal culture can be practiced, protected and passed on.
Support health literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and/or disseminate public health messages prepared by ACCOs. Train local government officer to use clear and inclusive communication when promoting health messages and local government service information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed health literacy into youth services and early years programs. Establish processes to seek feedback from Aboriginal community members on what health promotion messages work and how they can be improved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support digital literacy training or other initiatives to assist Aboriginal people to confidently access online health services and/or telehealth.
Transform mainstream services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-design new community services and policies with Aboriginal people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish culturally responsive mechanisms for ongoing community feedback and complaints which ensure services are responsive and transparent. Audit and modify existing local government policies and service procedures through an Aboriginal cultural lens to identify and address racist and systemic barriers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employ Aboriginal community liaison officers who can guide people through services and explain local government processes.

References

¹ Department of Health, Government of Western Australia (2025). *State Public Health Plan 2025–2030*. Available from: <https://www.health.wa.gov.au/~media/Corp/Documents/About-us/Public-Health-Act/State-Public-Health-Plan-2025–2030.pdf>

Acknowledgement of Country and people

WA Health acknowledges the Aboriginal people of the many traditional lands and language groups of Western Australia. It acknowledges the wisdom of Aboriginal Elders both past and present and pays respect to Aboriginal communities of today.

Using the term Aboriginal

Within Western Australia, the term Aboriginal is used in preference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, in recognition that Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of Western Australia. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander may be referred to in the national context and Indigenous may be referred to in the international context. No disrespect is intended to our Torres Strait Islander colleagues and community.

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