



# Aboriginal health and wellbeing in public health planning

## Objective 2: Prevent – Reduce the burden of chronic disease, communicable disease, and injury

Objective 2 of the *State Public Health Plan 2025–2030* reflects the prevention of disease and injury before they occur is a core pillar of public health.<sup>1</sup> Prevention initiatives support physical and mental health and wellbeing, community safety and amenity, social and health equity, social connection, workforce productivity as well as the broader economy. In partnership with the Aboriginal community, local governments should identify the social and environmental factors which impact health outcomes for Aboriginal people and address them in a way that is strengths-based and recognises cultural determinants of health.

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**Local spotlight:** *The City of Geraldton hosts the Iwarra Wilungga Festival of Aboriginal Art and Culture; a festival which shines a light on the rich fabric of Aboriginal culture in the Mid West. Iwarra Wilungga is a family friendly festival which includes a traditional Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony. Alongside engaging performances by Aboriginal dancers and musicians, the event offers workshops and stalls providing authentic Aboriginal experiences as well as the opportunity to learn about Aboriginal culture. In 2023 the inaugural event aimed to not only shine a light on Aboriginal culture, but also raise awareness around mental health and some of the support services available locally.*

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<i>Theme</i>	<b>POTENTIAL STRATEGIES</b>		
	<i>Fundamental</i>	<i>Intermediate</i>	<i>Advanced</i>
<b>Public health messaging</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share strengths-based culturally responsive health promotion resources through existing channels. Topics may include, but not limited to, quitting smoking, social and emotional wellbeing programs, access to Aboriginal health checks and chronic disease and cancer screening programs.</li> <li>• Promote seasonal and/or topical public health messages (e.g. annual flu vaccinations, preventing mosquito bites).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fund ACCOs to share health promotion messages via their own existing channels.</li> <li>• Provide safe, trusted spaces in community hubs and at relevant community events for Aboriginal health promotion stalls and the sharing of public health messages.</li> <li>• Collaborate with ACCOs to develop a shared strategy specially focussed on public health messages.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage storytelling and trusted messengers (e.g. Elders, community leaders or peer educators) to act as local champions to deliver public health messages.</li> <li>• Invest in community-led health promotion platforms for ACCOs to design and promote their own public health messaging platforms (e.g. podcasts, Facebook pages and radio shows).</li> </ul>
<b>Public health programs and services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish culturally responsive processes for Aboriginal community members to provide feedback on public health programs and services available in the local government area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide safe, trusted spaces for ACCHS to offer preventative health activities (e.g. Aboriginal health checks and vaccinations) at relevant community events.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with ACCHS to develop preventative health programs for chronic and communicable diseases, considering the unique rights of Aboriginal communities. Effective targeted programs must be developed with Aboriginal people to support social and emotional wellbeing and healthy lifestyles among Aboriginal people. This may include creating or hosting spaces where the local Aboriginal community can feel culturally safe.</li> </ul>

<b>Community based initiatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with ACCOs and Aboriginal community members to ensure public spaces where people undertake physical activity that encourage physical activity are culturally safe for Aboriginal people.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and/or fund local ACCOs to deliver community programs and/or services that support healthy lifestyles and social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal people. This may include sporting programs, cultural activities and events for Aboriginal children.</li> <li>• Support and/or partner with ACCOs to deliver nutrition education, cooking programs, bush food projects and community gardens and support health food behaviour and food security for Aboriginal people.</li> <li>• Work with the local Aboriginal community to identify high-risk areas for injuries (e.g. playgrounds and/or meeting spaces) and, where possible, make changes to reduce this risk.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a grants program to support Aboriginal people and ACCOs to deliver ad-hoc community-based health initiatives.</li> </ul>
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## References

<sup>1</sup> 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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