

Statement of Commitment



We Work and Live on Aboriginal Lands

We acknowledge those who have come before, and continue to be, the caretakers and custodians of this land.

Aboriginal people are the First Nations people of New South Wales and have lived in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven region for over 65,000 years; cultures, lores, ceremonies and connection to the land and waterways are strong and enduring.

Respect is extended to elders past and present; especially those affected so unjustly by local health policies. We apologise unreservedly for the profound effects of those stolen from their families, we are deeply sorrowed by the deep hurt, the physical, emotional, and spiritual damage, and the ongoing intergenerational trauma of Aboriginal peoples today.

We recognise that history has resulted in a lack of trust by many Aboriginal peoples and we highly value and will continue to work in true partnership with local Aboriginal community-controlled services. We remain committed to work in genuine partnerships with Aboriginal peoples, communities, services, and survivors of the Stolen Generations.

The gaps in Indigenous health are unacceptable. Quality data will be sourced and used for open and honest accountability, and to inform excellent and safe clinical practice.

Racism will not be tolerated in the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District, and will be challenged. We will find ways to overcome institutional racism created by history.

We are committed to providing a culturally safe and welcoming environment for patients and will support staff to feel culturally secure and safe within our services.

We commit to furthering professional development of all staff in acquiring a better understanding of culture and how to best support the cultural wellbeing of Aboriginal colleagues and patients.

We acknowledge the vital importance of Aboriginal language and its relationship to spiritual wellbeing and will seek to work with local peoples to incorporate language and naming throughout our services and the system.

The Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District acknowledges the principles of the Uluru Statement of the Heart. We share aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship and a better future for our children based on justice and determination through truth telling. We recognise that when Aboriginal people have power over their destiny, their children will flourish, and will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to this country.

We will continue to work with, and walk together with, Aboriginal peoples to enable their empowerment and control over their destiny and health outcomes.

Chris Bertinshaw - Board Chair

Margot Mains - Chief Executive

