WA Country Health Service

“Your Footsteps, Our Future”

Aboriginal Mentorship Program

Mr Russell Simpson, Area Director, Aboriginal Health Strategy
The WA Country Health Service (WACHS) would like to respectfully acknowledge the Elders past and present of this country in which we live, share and operate. WACHS also acknowledges the ongoing contribution of Traditional Owners as caretakers of their communities and Country.
About the WA Country Health Service (WACHS)

- Largest country health service in Australia
- Delivers services across 2.5M km² to 547,000 people (including 55,522 Aboriginal people)
- 71 hospitals & 27 nursing & remote posts
- Emergency & hospital services, population, public & primary health care, mental health, drug & alcohol services, Aboriginal health, child & community health, and residential & community aged care services
COAG NPA on Indigenous economic participation

- Halve the gap in employment outcomes between Aboriginal & non-Aboriginal Australians by 2018
- National target of 2.6% Aboriginal representation in the public sector workforce
- WA’s committed to a target of 3.2% by 2019
“Your Footsteps, Our Future - Aboriginal Mentorship Program”

- Commenced in 2014
- Aimed at building workforce capacity
- Promotes an inclusive, supportive workplace culture
- Supports employment & retention of Aboriginal people
- Assist WACHS in achieving Strategic goals / improving Aboriginal health outcomes
Program Aims & Objectives

- Provide positive role models
- Promote leadership & succession planning
- Higher staff retention, reducing recruitment costs
- Orientate to workplace culture, provide a sense of belonging within WACHS
- Provide a framework for positive interaction
Program Implementation

- **Phase 1**: Staff engagement & recruitment (August-November 2013).
- **Phase 2**: Training of trainers & mentors (February-March 2014 – 50+ mentors trained).
- **Phase 3**: Recruitment of mentees (ongoing from April 2014 – approx. 31 mentoring relationships).
Program Evaluation

- Evaluation completed after 1st year (Sept 2015)
- The Evaluation questions involved surveying trainers, mentors, mentees, Human Resources and Learning & Development participants

Findings

- Two thirds of survey respondents were satisfied or very satisfied
- Some senior Aboriginal staff reported ‘shame’ at seeking a mentor

Improvement Opportunity – promote greater awareness & engagement of staff not involved with the Aboriginal Mentorship Program
Program Feedback – ‘Belonging’

“The sense of ‘belonging’ has come from developing respectful and trusting working relationships both with my peers and colleagues within the workplace, and the joy of doing a good job well that creates a ripple effect and the ‘world is all alright’ ”.

Jenny Baraga, WACHS employee
Results and Achievements

- 1st program of its kind for the WA public health sector
- 24 WACHS staff have been trained to deliver training (3-4 trainers/region)
- 70+ staff competed mentorship training
- Approx. 31 mentoring relationships established
- Aboriginal Mentorship Program highlighted as ‘best practice’ by the WA Public Service Commission
- Finalist in the WA Health Excellence Awards for 2014
Future Recommendations

- Create ‘Champions’ of the Aboriginal Mentorship Program in each WACHS region
- All new WACHS Aboriginal employees to be offered the program at induction & orientation
- Promote to existing employees via the Professional Development Review process
- Promote roles & responsibilities of trainers & Learning and Development staff
- Ongoing evaluation / clear & measurable reporting
- Engage a Program Coordinator
Role of the Mentor

Questions?