



Traineeship programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in health care and community services

Information for Trainees

About the Artwork: David Williams, proud Wakka Wakka artist at Gilimbaa artwork depicts the 'Workforce' element from Tarni O'Shea and Gilimbaa's artwork ' We All Share The Night Sky'. The artwork, developed for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan highlights shared commitment to a culturally safe, representative Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce.

This information sheet provides details about the Indigenous Health Work Traineeship (IHWT) and the First Nations Health Worker Traineeship (FNHWT) programs.

A qualified and locally based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce helps to build stronger health services and deliver better health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Australian Government has two specific programs that help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enter the primary health care workforce. The programs create viable career pathways and build the capacity of Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS).

About the programs

Indigenous Health Workforce Traineeship (IHWT) program

The IHWT program ensures Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to culturally appropriate health care training and aims to ensure the health workforce providing these services has the capability and skills to meet the health care needs of First Nations people from Certificate II to Diploma level qualifications.

First Nations Health Worker Traineeship (FNHWT) program

The FNHWT program supports training for up to a total of 500 Aboriginal Health Practitioners and Aboriginal Health Workers by providing culturally safe Certificate III and Certificate IV Primary Health Care qualifications for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

What are the differences between the programs?

	IHWT Program	FNHWT Program
How many trainees does the program support?	The IHWT Program supports ACCHSs ¹ with the employment of trainees. The number of trainees supported is determined by the state	The FNHWT program supports up to 500 Aboriginal Health Practitioners and Aboriginal Health Workers.

¹ IHWT Program refers to employers as ACCHSs or AMS

	IHWT Program	FNHWT Program
	or territory IHWT provider, depending on their budget and identified need.	
What qualification is included?	<p>Support to complete Certificate II through to diploma-level qualifications.</p> <p>Trainees select which qualification to complete from any course under the Health Training Package (HLT) and selected courses under the Community Services Training Package (CHC) (https://training.gov.au).</p> <p>Additional courses, including some from the Retail Services Training Package, are also approved.</p> <p>For a list of all current approved qualifications, see Appendix 1.</p>	<p>Cultural and clinical wrap around supports to complete the Certificate III or Certificate IV qualifications in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care training package:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate III in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care • Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care • Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care (Practice) <p>For more information, refer to the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) website: https://www.naccho.org.au/fnhwtp/</p>
Will the trainee be paid a wage?	<p>Trainees are paid a wage throughout their traineeship in accordance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services Award (Commonwealth) or their organisation's Enterprise Agreement, depending on what applies. This ensures trainees receive the correct rate for their role and experience level.</p>	<p>Funding is provided to Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs)² to support the hosting of the trainees including clinical supervision and wrap around supports and may be used to partially subsidise the wages of the trainee.</p> <p>Trainees may be able to apply for financial support through Government funding and subsidies such as Australian Apprentice Training Support Payment, Living Away From Home Allowance or ABSTUDY Living Allowance.</p>
What support is provided to the trainee?	<p>Supervisors and mentors will support trainees through the IHWT program.</p> <p>Trainees may be able to access support for literacy or learning difficulties, mental health and wellbeing support (particularly when training away from home).</p>	<p>A Trainee Clinical Supervisor will provide supervision and workplace support to the trainees throughout their traineeship.</p> <p>A Jurisdictional Traineeship Coordinator is located in each state and territory to support ACCHOs through the program, including identifying additional training funding sources.</p> <p>Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Registered Training Organisations (ACCHRTOs) also</p>

² FNHWT Program refers to ACCHOs as employers.

	IHWT Program	FNHWT Program
		have Trainee Support Officers who will provide you support. For Queensland or the Northern Territory your ACCHO may also have an ACCHO Student Support Manager employed.
Where will the trainee study?	Qualifications can be completed in any Registered Training Organisation (RTO), including Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Registered Training Organisations (ACCHRTOs), pending availability of courses on scope.	Trainees are encouraged to complete their training through an ACCHRTO (where possible), where there are no ACCHRTOs available, training is provided by TAFE or mainstream RTOs. In the Northern Territory training will be provided by Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education; and Central Queensland University, Health Industry Training or TAFE QLD in Queensland.

Frequently asked questions for trainees

I live in a regional/rural/remote area, how can I proceed?

You can find more information about the IHWT program on the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing website: <https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/indigenous-health-workforce-traineeships-program>, at your nearest ACCHO or by contacting the IHWT Program provider in your state or territory who will be able to support you to apply for the Traineeship.

Below is a list of IHWT Program providers for each State and Territory to help you get started (contact details provided in More Information section below):

Northern Territory	Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory
Western Australia	Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia
South Australia	Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia
New South Wales	Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW
Queensland	Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council
Tasmania	Karadi Aboriginal Corporation
Victoria	Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations

For the FNHWT program, you can also contact the National Aboriginal Community Control Health Organisation (NACCHO) Traineeships team by emailing traineeship@naccho.org.au.

Where will I undertake my training?

Indigenous Health Workforce Traineeship program

Trainees in the IHWT Program will train at an RTO, including Aboriginal Community Controlled Health RTO (ACCHRTO) that is closest to you. Work placements will depend on where you are located and the course you are undertaking. Your state or territory IHWT provider will have more information when that time comes, which can be found in More Information below.

First Nations Health Worker Traineeship program

All trainees in the FNHWT program are encouraged to train through an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Registered Training Organisations (ACCHRTO) (where possible). In the Northern Territory and Queensland there are no ACCHRTOs available who deliver the qualification, so training is provided by TAFE or mainstream RTOs. All work placements are provided in an ACCHO workplace, where possible, and you will have structured learning which links to your coursework.

What support will I get when I am training?

If you are in the **IHWT program** at the state/territory level, a program coordinator will support you through your traineeship. Wrap around support, mentoring and supervision will be provided to you.

If you are in the **FNHWT program**, you will be supported by a Trainee Support Officer in the ACCHRTO to ensure you receive cultural and other wrap around supports during your training and clinical placements in Queensland or the Northern Territory your organisation may also employ a student support manager. Each NACCHO Affiliate also employs a Jurisdictional Traineeship Coordinator who is there to provide support to your host organisation/employer. For more information about the support that is provided through the FNHWT refer to <https://www.naccho.org.au/fnhwtp/>

Why should I complete a qualification?

A career in the health sector is extremely rewarding and can help improve health outcomes for your community. Traineeships support you through this process, giving you an opportunity to get a job and begin a career in health that helps people and has endless possibilities.

Why would it benefit me?

As a trainee, you will get formal training for your qualification and be provided with a pathway to a job in health.

I am currently employed by an ACCHO, and I am interested in undertaking a traineeship, how do I proceed?

Speak to your Manager/Supervisor to discuss your options. Each ACCHO will have different requirements to participate and may have different and/or other qualifications that may better suit your needs and the needs of the workforce.

What is a work placement?

Work placement is supervised work experience. You will gain practical skills and learn about your industry or role, and it takes place during your traineeship.

Do I need to be employed before I apply for a traineeship?

No, you do not. You can apply for a traineeship whether you are currently employed or not employed at the moment. If you currently work in an ACCHO or AMS, the IHWT Program also provides opportunity to upskill. Your ACCHO can provide with more information on how to apply.

Do I have to travel to study?

Travelling for study will depend on where you live, and where the course is being offered.

If you are in the IHWT program, travel, accommodation, meals, and other expenses related to your travel may be covered by the traineeship. Reach out to your state or territory IHWT contact to find out more.

If you are in the FNHWT program, support will be available if you need to travel. NACCHO works with your ACCHRTO and ACCHOs to provide culturally safe and specialised training near your location and on-country if possible.

What if I have previous experience?

You should speak to your Registered Training Organisation (RTO) to see if you are eligible for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) which may count towards your qualification. Current qualifications or previous work experience will be assessed to see if you meet the RPL requirements for a unit of study. The previous experience can be through previous formal and informal learning.

You may also be able to do a Credit Transfer (CT) which is a key process that supports existing workers to upskill or cross skill more efficiently. This is commonly used to recognise units that you have already completed through other courses and qualifications.

Case studies

‘Aiden’

Aiden was working as a driver in his local ACCHS when he was approached to complete a qualification under the IHWT program. He had a yarn with the ACCHS Program Manager and decided that he wanted to complete a Certificate II in Community Services. He had never studied outside of school before. Aiden’s motivation to start a career in healthcare was so he could help his community and support them by working in the local ACCHS.

Aiden was supported during his traineeship by a dedicated trainee coordinator at the ACCHS. Extra literacy support through the ACCHRTO was available to Aiden to help build his confidence and ability to complete the qualification. He enjoyed travelling and meeting his peers when block training was held. He was grateful his travel and accommodation were covered by the traineeship. Aiden has confidence in his abilities and really enjoys learning about work health and safety.

After completing his Certificate II in Community Services, Aiden wanted to build on this experience to become an Aboriginal Health Worker to work in his ACCHS. Aiden has now enrolled in the FNHWT program to start the Certificate III in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care.

‘Sally’

Sally completed a Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care (Practice) through the FNHWT program. This course allowed her to work as an Aboriginal Health Practitioner. She loved her job, but wanted to expand her skills and was interested in nursing. Sally wanted to specialise in renal nursing so she could work with her community on kidney health and dialysis nursing care. She spoke with her local ACCHS who supported her in continuing this pathway.

Through the IHWT program, Sally enrolled in a Diploma of Nursing. She has completed training in both the city and a regional centre alongside her peers. Her travel and accommodation were covered by the traineeship, and she is able to support her family as she gets a wage while studying.

Sally is on track to complete her Diploma and plans to apply for university to obtain a Bachelor of Nursing qualification.

More information

Indigenous Health Worker Traineeship (IHWT) Program Contacts and links

Location	Organisation
Northern Territory	Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory https://www.amsant.org.au/ Phone: (08) 8944 6666 Email: reception@amsant.org.au
Western Australia	Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia https://www.ahcwa.org.au/ Phone: (08) 9227 1631; (08) 9228 1099 Email: reception@ahcwa.org
South Australia	Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia https://ahcsa.org.au/ Phone: (08) 8273 7200 Email: ahcsa@ahcsa.org.au
New South Wales	Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW https://www.ahmrc.org.au/ Phone: (02) 9212 4777 Email: ahmrc@ahmrc.org.au
Queensland	Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council https://www.qaihc.com.au/ Phone: (07) 3328 8500 Email: communications@qaihc.com.au
Tasmania	Karadi Aboriginal Corporation http://www.karadi.org.au/ Phone: (03) 6272 3511 Email: info@karadi.org.au
Victoria	Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations https://www.vaccho.org.au/ Phone: (03) 9411 9411 Email: communications@vaccho.org.au
National	IHWT: https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/indigenous-health-workforce-traineeships-program

First Nations Health Worker Traineeship (FNHWT) Program Contacts and links

National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)	NACCHO Traineeships team Email: traineeship@naccho.org.au Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Health and Care Traineeship Framework Webpage: www.naccho.org.au/fnhwtp/
Department of Health, Disability and Ageing	FNHWT Program: https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/first-nations-health-worker-traineeship-program First Nations Health Workforce Mailbox: FirstNationsHealthWorkforce@health.gov.au

Appendix 1 – Indigenous Health Workforce Traineeship (IHWT)

As of March, 2026 the qualifications below are eligible for inclusion in the IHWT program:

HLT – Health (Release 9.2, last updated July 2023)	
Certificate II	
HLT20121	Certificate II in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care
HLT21020	Certificate II in Medical Service First Response
HLT23221	Certificate II in Health Support Services
HLT26015	Certificate II in Population Health
HLT26120	Certificate II in Indigenous Environmental Health
Certificate III	
HLT30121	Certificate III in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care
HLT31020	Certificate III in Ambulance Communications (Call-taking)
HLT31120	Certificate III in Non-Emergency Patient Transport
HLT31220	Certificate III in Basic Health Care
HLT33021	Certificate III in Allied Health Assistance
HLT33115	Certificate III in Health Services Assistance
HLT35021	Certificate III in Dental Assisting
HLT35115	Certificate III in Dental Laboratory Assisting
HLT36015	Certificate III in Population Health
HLT36115	Certificate III in Indigenous Environmental Health
HLT37015	Certificate III in Sterilisation Services
HLT37121	Certificate III in Hospital or Health Services Pharmacy Support
HLT37215	Certificate III in Pathology Collection
HLT37315	Certificate III in Health Administration
HLT37415	Certificate III in Pathology Assistance

HLT – Health (Release 9.2, last updated July 2023)	
Certificate IV	
HLT40121	Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care
HLT40221	Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice
HLT41020	Certificate IV in Ambulance Communications (Dispatch)
HLT41120	Certificate IV in Health Care
HLT42021	Certificate IV in Massage Therapy
HLT43021	Certificate IV in Allied Health Assistance
HLT45021	Certificate IV in Dental Assisting
HLT46015	Certificate IV in Population Health
HLT46115	Certificate IV in Indigenous Environmental Health
HLT47015	Certificate IV in Sterilisation Services
HLT47121	Certificate IV in Hospital or Health Services Pharmacy Support
HLT47321	Certificate IV in Health Administration
HLT47415	Certificate IV in Audiometry
HLT47515	Certificate IV in Operating Theatre Technical Support
HLT47715	Certificate IV in Medical Practice Assisting
HLT47815	Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing
Diploma	
HLT50121	Diploma of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice
HLT50221	Diploma of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Management
HLT50321	Diploma of Clinical Coding
HLT51020	Diploma of Emergency Health Care
HLT52021	Diploma of Remedial Massage
HLT52115	Diploma of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) Remedial Massage

HLT – Health (Release 9.2, last updated July 2023)	
HLT52215	Diploma of Shiatsu and Oriental Therapies
HLT52315	Diploma of Clinical Aromatherapy
HLT52415	Diploma of Kinesiology
HLT52515	Diploma of Reflexology
HLT52615	Diploma of Ayurvedic Lifestyle Consultation
HLT54121	Diploma of Nursing
HLT55118	Diploma of Dental Technology
HLT57415	Diploma of Audiometry
HLT57715	Diploma of Practice Management
HLT57821	Diploma of Orthopaedic Technology
HLT57921	Diploma of Anaesthetic Technology and Practice

Units of competency	
HLTAMAT001	Provide antenatal health care
HLTAMAT002	Assist with childbirth
HLTAMAT003	Provide postnatal health care for mothers and babies
HLTAMAT004	Assess children's health
HLTAMAT005	Provide healthcare for children
HLTASXH002	Promote women's sexual health
HLTSS00079	Allied Health Assistance – Podiatry Skill Set

CHC – Community Services (Release 9.3, last updated July 2023)	
Certificate II	
CHC22015	Certificate II in Community Services
Certificate III	

CHC – Community Services (Release 9.3, last updated July 2023)	
CHC33021	Certificate III in Individual Support
CHC32015	Certificate III in Community Services
Certificate IV	
CHC43015	Certificate IV in Ageing Support
CHC40321	Certificate IV in Child, Youth and Family Intervention
CHC42021	Certificate IV in Community Services
CHC43121	Certificate IV in Disability Support
CHC40421	Certificate IV in Youth Work
CHC43215	Certificate IV in Alcohol and Other Drugs
CHC43315	Certificate IV in Mental Health
CHC43515	Certificate IV in Mental Health Peer Work
CHC43415	Certificate IV in Leisure and Health
Diploma	
CHC51015	Diploma of Counselling
CHC52021	Diploma of Community Services
CHC53315	Diploma of Mental Health
CHC50421	Diploma of Youth Work
CHC53215	Diploma of Alcohol and Other Drugs
CHC50321	Diploma of Child, Youth and Family Intervention

SIR – Retail services training package	
Certificate II	
SIR20116	Certificate II in Community Pharmacy
Certificate III	
SIR30116	Certificate III in Community Pharmacy
Certificate IV	

SIR – Retail services training package	
SIR40116	Certificate IV in Community Pharmacy
SIR40216	Certificate IV in Community Pharmacy (Dispensary)

Certificate IV	
11037NAT	Certificate IV in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Theory and Practice

BSB (TAFE) – Certificate III in Business	
BSB30120	Certificate III in Business (Medical Administration)

WA TAC	
52890WA	Certificate II in Community Health and Wellbeing