

KEEP YOUR SPIRIT STRONG



Keeping spirit strong through a holistic approach

CASE STUDY: WAMINDA

Imagine receiving a care package from your local Aboriginal community controlled health care provider with basic care needs such as food, toiletries, mask, hand sanitiser and craft activities for your children. Your Elders are receiving their medical needs, toiletries and tailored care hampers along with ready to eat healthy meals. Everyone is being reminded to practice self-care by staying positive and active and are nurturing their bodies through eating fresh local wholesome food. That was Waminda's response to lockdown earlier this year in order to ensure good health, wellbeing and the safety of their mob.

Guided by a holistic vision linking culture, education, health and well-being, this organisation aims to see their community thriving through culturally driven holistic care. During the lockdown period office spaces were turned into production/collection sites, gathering and delivery basic care needs and care packages to community members across the coast.

Waminda walks alongside Aboriginal families across the New South Wales South Coast Region; the organisation has strong cultural governance and is guided by a Board of Management of seven local Aboriginal women representatives of the communities in which it operates. Waminda's internal Cultural Committee and 'Model of Care' ensures that the organisation is responsive and accountable to community needs and remains culturally guided.

The organisation offers a wide range of strength-based programs targeting a whole of life and whole of family approach to health and wellbeing care. Waminda emphasises a strong community approach to holistic care and connecting country and culture with a key focus on identity, connection, healing and keeping spirit strong.



Australian Government
Department of Health

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CASE STUDY: **WAMINDA** *(continued)*

The Baalang Healing framework is the groundwork for all of Waminda's services. This framework was developed in response to the social and emotional wellbeing, spiritual, cultural and physical health needs of our community.

"Waminda services have been designed and are led by Aboriginal women under the guidance of Elders. Their voices are powerful in the design of our healing processes, practices and there is a commitment to pass on cultural knowledge, identity and healing for generations to come," said Kristine Falzon, Waminda's executive manager.

The health professionals working across programs include Aboriginal health practitioners, therapists, healing counsellors, case managers, cultural mentors and after-hours support staff. Self-determination is a key focus for Waminda, as participants are encouraged to recognise and value themselves as their own healers. Throughout programs, the team at Waminda have also created resources for the community specific to their needs, including free after hours care, support lines, and additional support to increase accessibility to assistance.

Waminda has been operating on the South Coast for over 36 years. Over the past 14 years, the organisation has grown from roughly 10 employees to currently over 120. Waminda prides itself on its staff wellbeing framework, understanding that our staff cannot provide effective services to the broader community without prioritising self-care themselves. This investment is why the organisation has such a high retention rate for staff, especially considering that most of our staff are local Koori women holding family, community and cultural responsibility outside their employment.

Waminda's vision is that Women and their Aboriginal families are widely admired and proud of their achievements in their own communities and the broader Shoalhaven.

"Waminda aims to provide a culturally safe service, offering women and their Aboriginal families an opportunity to belong and receive quality holistic, health and well-being support across the life span," said Kristine Falzon.

"We've not only had positive response from community members receiving support throughout this challenging time, but we've also had the opportunity to build on and strengthen community networks to enhance timely referral pathways for communities to access other support services ongoing". With the majority of Waminda staff being local Koori women, they understand the importance of walking/working alongside grassroots community providing timely, flexible and responsive holistic care and support to address community needs.

