

Aboriginal Health Promotion & Chronic Care -AHPACC- Community Health Service Cultural Audit



Artist: Eileen Harrison.

The two etched circles represent the Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation & Community Health Services working together. There are nine of these – representing the nine AHPACC Partnership geographical areas across Victoria. The family in the Centre represents the Victorian Aboriginal population. Surrounding the family are message sticks communicating positive health messages

AHPACC Northern Consortium An AHPACC Quality Improvement Project

We both acknowledge and respect the right of self-determination and community control for individuals, their families and organisations. Ensuring this will provide real choice for Aboriginal people regarding access to all services – whether Aboriginal controlled or mainstream services. The Victorian Aboriginal Health Service will lead in supporting Community Health Service's with sound advice on Aboriginal Community protocols relating to the Aboriginal Health Promotion and Chronic Care partnership



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This document has been endorsed by the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service

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This document was developed by the AHPACC Northern Consortium
in consultation with:
Northern Division of General Practice
Melbourne General Practice Network
Department of Human Services

The following resources informed the development of this document or as references in the text:

- AHPACC Northern Consortium N&WMR Memorandum of Understanding (2007).
- AIHW. (2005) The Health & Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra.
- Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council – Standing Committee for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Working Party. (2004). *Cultural respect framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health 2004-2009*. Department of Health, South Australia, Adelaide.
- Multicultural Forum of Mental Health Practitioners (2005). Cultural Competency standards and Self-Assessment Audit Tool Manual. A guide to assist mental health services to implement the Cultural Competency Standards and Audit tool. Department of Health, Western Australia, Perth.
- National Aboriginal Health Strategy Working Party (1989) *A national Aboriginal health strategy*. Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Canberra.
- Thompson, N. (2005) Cultural respect and related concepts; a brief summary of the literature. *Australian Indigenous Health Bulletin*. 5(4).

ABORIGINAL HEALTH PROMOTION & CHRONIC CARE PARTNERHIPS

The life expectancy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is estimated at 17 years below non-indigenous Australians. Rates of chronic disease, including mental health, communicable disease, disability and child and infant health are higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This community also has lower levels of use and access to health services.¹

The Aboriginal Health Promotion and Chronic Care (AHPACC) program aims to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal people by:

- Increasing access to culturally competent primary health care
- Improving clinical service delivery
- Coordinating approaches to health promotion
- Supporting and training workers and organisations.

The AHPACC Northern Consortium Partnership in the North & West Metropolitan Melbourne Region consists of the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS) working together with the four Community Health Service (CHS) partners; Dianella, Darebin, Plenty Valley and North Yarra. This is a partnership approach, with the VAHS as a lead agency.

WHY THE CULTURAL AUDIT WAS DEVELOPED

It is acknowledged that service accessibility is affected by numerous issues.² One contributing issue is the cultural competence of services. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will often have differing needs and requirements, compared to other service users, in terms of these services and programs being engaging, supportive and accessible. Though this idea is not necessarily new, it remains extremely relevant to today's primary care sector.

The 1989 publication, *National Aboriginal Health Strategy*³, reported a need for clinician competence in working with Aboriginal people by improving cultural awareness through education and training. A review of the literature⁴ identified the shift from cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity of practitioners, to a greater 'systems' perspective of cultural security, cultural safety and cultural respect.

Cultural respect is defined as the 'recognition, protection, and continued advancement of the inherent rights, cultures and traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples'⁵. This concept of cultural respect is incorporated into the *Cultural Respect Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health 2004-2009*. This paper identifies the need for improvements in the performance and accountability of mainstream services to address the marginalisation of Aboriginal people from the health system.

The AHPACC Cultural Audit is a strategy by the Northern Consortium aimed to support this work in the partner Community Health Centers.

¹ AIHW. (2005) The Health & Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra.

² See, for example, (ibid).

³ National Aboriginal Health Strategy Working Party (1989) *A national Aboriginal health strategy*. Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Canberra.

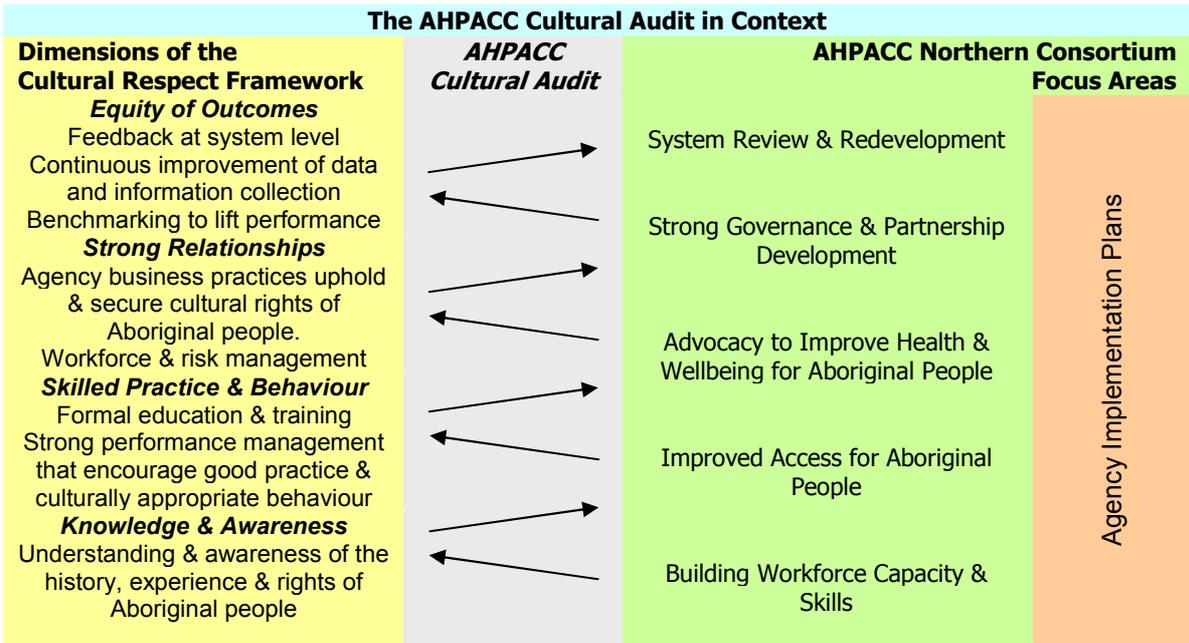
⁴ Thompson, N. (2005) Cultural respect and related concepts; a brief summary of the literature. *Australian Indigenous Health Bulletin*. 5(4).

⁵ Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council – Standing Committee for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Working Party. (2004). *Cultural respect framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health 2004-2009*. Department of Health, South Australia, Adelaide, page 7.

HOW THE CULTURAL AUDIT WAS DEVELOPED

The Focus Areas⁶ of the Northern Consortium were developed through a facilitated collaborative process involving each of the partnership members. The Steering Committee members, representing each partner agency, actively participated in the development of five Focus Areas and associated strategies, included in implementation plans, for their agencies to achieve.

The AHPACC Cultural Audit has been developed as a self-assessment tool to assist each of the Northern Consortium CHS partners investigate some of the sociocultural factors contributing to the accessibility of services for Aboriginal people at the agencies. The Cultural Audit integrates the national Cultural Respect Framework⁷ to align with the objectives of the AHPACC Partnerships and the Focus Areas of the local agency Implementation Plans. This ensures consistency to the work across the Northern Consortium. The diagram below demonstrates how this alignment occurs.



USING THE CULTURAL AUDIT

The AHPACC Cultural Audit is to be completed through a reflective and participatory process. Depending on the agency it may be appropriate for this to occur in various ways.

Wherever possible, the inclusion of the AHPACC Officer in the AHPACC Cultural Audit process is of utmost importance. Other staff members of the AHPACC Northern Consortium may also be involved, including the VAHS AHPACC personnel. These staff can be utilized as facilitators of the AHPACC Cultural Audit if necessary and appropriate.

Within each agency a group of personnel should be convened – this may be an existing group or team meeting. Where possible a broad representation of disciplines and roles is desired. This variation of perspectives will allow for a thorough reflection on the agencies current practices and will ensure that the process of the AHPACC Cultural Audit is embedded and owned across the whole organisation.

The Cultural Audit is divided into five sections. The structure and content of the AHPACC Cultural Audit is designed to be practical, solution and outcome focused ensuring that measurable advances can be identified, achieved, monitored and celebrated.

⁶ AHPACC Northern Consortium N&WMR Memorandum of Understanding (2007).
⁷ Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council – Standing Committee for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Working Party. (2004). *Cultural respect framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health 2004-2009*. Department of Health, South Australia, Adelaide.

As demonstrated above, each reflects one of the priority focus areas of the Northern Consortium Implementation Plans and aligns with the National Cultural Respect Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health. The AHPACC Cultural Audit is structured this way to help agencies reflect on current organisational practices pertaining to service access and treatment of Aboriginal people. Within each section the various questions explore practice standards or examples of good practice related to each relevant focus area. By working through each question the Audit aims to measure current organisational performance.

You are asked to reflect on the practices of your agency related to each question. Each question asks the group to indicate either:

- Our organisation has not addressed this issue
- Our organisation could do this better
- Our organisation does this well

Whichever option the group chooses please demonstrate evidence of the current organisational practice with an example in the extra space provided.

Following each section is a grid to assist participants in developing priority actions to achieve improved and sustainable outcomes in the organisation. Where necessary the group is required to identify strategies and related tasks that address areas in which performance could be improved to the benefit of the community.

The grid format asks participants to identify:

- What will be done?
- Who it will be done by?
- When it will be done by?
- Where it will be done?

This process helps develop a foundation for a quality improvement approach to the AHPACC Cultural Audit by supporting staff to identify ways for achieving better practice to meet the needs of the community.

WHAT NEXT?

After the AHPACC Cultural Audit is completed, the group will have identified areas within the organisation that need addressing to improve the cultural safety and competency of the services.

The results from the group will be delivered by the facilitator to the VAHS AHPACC personnel who, together with the Divisions of General Practice, will analyse the responses and help provide a framework for improving practice by implementing change. This will be in the form of a Continuous Improvement Log (CIL) which will be supplied to you to monitor and report on your progress. You will be expected to report annually, by submitting the completed CIL on the changes that have been implemented across the organisation to address the needs identified in through the Audit process.

It will be useful for the agency to complete the Cultural Audit again in 12-18 months time. This process will allow for identifying any differences in practice and noting improvements. Recording progress is an important process of revisiting the Cultural Audit. The first time an organisations undertakes the Cultural Audit it is unlikely it will indicate good practice in all areas of the agency. Redoing the Cultural Audit will ensure organisations recognize improvements, refocus priority areas and continue to work for better practice.

AHPACC Focus Area 1 – System Review & Redevelopment

For each of the following statements, place a cross [x] in the box you think best reflects your organisation's current situation.

	Our organisation has not addressed this issue yet	Our organisation could do this better	Our organisation does this well	Please demonstrate or provide an example of this
As an organisation we believe it is our responsibility to overcome any cultural barriers when developing and delivering a service/program to Aboriginal people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Our organisation has current information about the Aboriginal people in its catchment area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Information about the Aboriginal population in our organisation's catchment area is regularly updated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
The identification of Aboriginal people is an important part of our organisation's protocols	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Our organisation monitors and measures the number of Aboriginal clients that access our services and programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Our organisation monitors and measures the number of shared clients that access the VAHS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

AHPACC Focus Area 1 – System Review & Redevelopment (continued)

<p>There is a process in place to monitor and evaluate staff performance when working with people from a Aboriginal heritage/background</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Where feedback is provided to our organisation, it is used to review service practices and programs for Aboriginal clients</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>An annual audit of our organisation's physical environment is assessed by the VAHS Managers & AHPACC staff and/or Aboriginal Consultative Committee</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>The organisation collaborates with the AHPACC Officer, VAHS Managers & staff and/or Aboriginal Consultative Committee in the provision, delivery and evaluation of its services and programs</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PLANNING: System Review & Redevelopment

If you placed a cross in any of the boxes under columns 1 or 2 please indicate what actions your organisation will take to continually address system review and redevelopment to strive for better services for Aboriginal people.

Task/Activity	Who	By when	Where

AHPACC Focus Area 2 – Strong Governance & Partnership Development

For each of the following statements, place a cross [x] in the box you think best reflects your organisation’s current situation.

<i>Caution should be used with the use of ABS demographic information. ABS population figures of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Victoria are considerable under-estimates of the true figure.</i>	Our organisation has not addressed this issue yet	Our organisation could do this better	Our organisation does this well	Please demonstrate or provide an example of this
Our Mission/Vision Statement has a statement about diversity which also refers to the provision of services to Aboriginal people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Our organisation has a written access policy and fees policy addressing the provision of services to Aboriginal people as clients	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Our Strategic and Operational Plans include specific allocation of resources for increasing accessibility for people with a Aboriginal heritage / background	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Our employment policy also encourages the employment of Aboriginal people in all operations of the agency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Our organisational procedure manual contains specific instructions and guidelines about the provision of services to Aboriginal people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Our organisation believes the involvement of Aboriginal people in the agency contributes to the quality of service delivery	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Our organisation has developed a formal partnership agreement with the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

AHPACC Focus Area 2 – Strong Governance & Partnership Development (continued)

Our organisation has identified the necessity to establish an Aboriginal Consultative Committee (ACC)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our staff regularly consult with the AHPACC Officer, VAHS Managers & staff and/or the Aboriginal Consultative Committee regarding cultural issues & program development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consultation processes with the AHPACC Officer, VAHS Managers & staff and/or the Aboriginal Consultative Committee is adequately resourced and conducted appropriately	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The organisation is involved with a range of relevant community groups and organisations in program/service design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ongoing professional development programs – including staff exchanges with the VAHS are available to staff to enable them to respond effectively to the needs of Aboriginal people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adequate funds are allocated for staff to receive Aboriginal Cultural Safety Training activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PLANNING: Strong Governance & Partnership Development

If you placed a cross in any of the boxes under columns 1 or 2 please indicate what action your organisation will take to improve its business practices and policies in relation to the provision of services to Aboriginal people.

Task/Activity	Who	By when	Where

AHPACC Focus Area 3 – Advocacy to Improve Health & Well Being for Aboriginal People

For each of the following statements, place a cross [x] in the box you think best reflects your organisation’s current situation.

	Our organisation has not addressed this issue yet	Our organisation could do this better	Our organisation does this well	Please demonstrate or provide an example of this
Procedures ensure that your programs are engaging of people with an Aboriginal heritage/background	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Information about the Aboriginal population in our organisation’s catchment’s area is used when planning and evaluating our programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Staff have access to appropriate information on cultural differences and the past and present experiences of Aboriginal people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Our staff know where to obtain relevant information on the socio-economic characteristics of Aboriginal people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
The ‘friendliness’ of our forms has been assessed through feedback from the AHPACC Officer, Aboriginal Consultative Committee and/or the VAHS Managers & staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Information materials are produced in consultation with the AHPACC Officer, VAHS Managers & staff and/or Aboriginal Consultative Committee	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
There is a complaint procedure in place that Aboriginal clients are aware of and understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

AHPACC Focus Area 3 – Advocacy to Improve Health & Well Being for Aboriginal People (continued)

<p>There are mechanisms in place which ensure feedback from Aboriginal clients about the services we provide (oral and written opportunities are provided)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>Staff know which Aboriginal organisations and services to refer Aboriginal clients to if they wish to have the support of these services</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>Staff act as advocates for clients who have an Aboriginal heritage/background</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>Staff are informed about the strategies to improve access for Aboriginal people</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

PLANNING: Advocacy to Improve Health & Well Being for Aboriginal People

If you placed a cross in any of the boxes under columns 1 or 2 please indicate what actions your organisation will take to ensure good practice and advocate for improved health and well being outcomes for Aboriginal people.

Task/Activity	Who	By when	Where

APHACC Focus Area 4 – Improved Access for Aboriginal People

For each of the following statements, place a cross [x] in the box you think best reflects your organisation’s current situation.

	Our organisation has not addressed this issue yet	Our organisation could do this better	Our organisation does this well	Please demonstrate or provide an example of this
Flexible service delivery takes into account relevance for people who have an Aboriginal heritage/background	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
All staff are orientated and are aware of the policies and procedures which relate to the provision of services to Aboriginal people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
If an Aboriginal client needs to fill our forms, these are in plain English and assistance is available and/or offered	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Our organisation explains services, programs and client rights to every client, regardless of their background	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Staff demonstrate a desire to provide appropriate support to all clients that are of Aboriginal heritage/background	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Staff demonstrate an awareness of the strategies required to make our services accessible and culturally appropriate to Aboriginal clients	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
We are aware that even the physical appearance of the organisation can be an access barrier for clients from a Aboriginal background	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
The appearance and design of the waiting room/areas is friendly and welcoming to Aboriginal people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
There are appropriate physical images in the waiting area to help Aboriginal clients’ feels comfortable (eg. Aboriginal posters/artwork and pamphlets)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

APHACC Focus Area 4 – Improved Access for Aboriginal People (continued)

The waiting area is suitable for large families and groups (approximately 2/3 Adults and 4/6 children)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information materials about Aboriginal organisations, services and programs including AHPACC and the Aboriginal Consultative Committee are on display in our waiting areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Appropriate child care is available for Aboriginal clients who need it, or there is a suitable area for children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The consulting and treatment rooms in our organisation that we consult and treat Aboriginal clients in have outside views	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our sites are easily accessible by public transport and, as an organisation, we offer transportation services to Aboriginal clients when necessary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The service can be accessed by people with mobility problems (eg. wheelchairs or prams)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aboriginal community channels are used to disseminate information about our services and programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff have access to a comprehensive resource file or directory that lists all Aboriginal organisations and services in the community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PLANNING: Improved Access for Aboriginal People

If you placed a cross in any of the boxes under columns 1 or 2 please indicate what action your organisation will take to ensure culturally appropriate environments and behaviour for Aboriginal people who utilize our services and programs.

Task/Activity	Who	By when	Where

AHPACC Focus Area 5 – Building Workforce Capacity & Skills

For each of the following statements, place a cross [x] in the box you think best reflects your organisation current situation.

	Our organisation has not addressed this issue yet	Our organisation could do this better	Our organisation does this well	Please demonstrate or provide an example of this
Our organisation recognizes and highly values the critical importance of all our staff undertaking ongoing Cultural Safety Training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Staff can address cultural issues for Aboriginal clients effectively as they have experience working with Aboriginal people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Organisations need to be aware of the needs of clients from Aboriginal backgrounds when planning their service needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Staff demonstrate interpersonal skills (eg. Empathy, a sensible voice, appropriate body language) when working with Aboriginal clients	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Staff have a demonstrated knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal cultural values, beliefs and history Information materials about	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Staff demonstrate a willingness to learn from others, including from Aboriginal clients, the AHPACC Officer, VAHS Managers & staff and the Aboriginal Consultative Committee	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Staff demonstrate an awareness of the history of Aboriginal people, including those in our organisation's catchment area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

AHPACC Focus Area 5 – Building Workforce Capacity & Skills (continued)

Staff demonstrate an awareness about cross cultural communication in their work practices when providing a service to Aboriginal clients	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
The Staff Orientation Package includes a component about Aboriginal culture, beliefs, values and history	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Staff are introduced to basic principles of cultural safety and communication as it relates to the provision of services and programs to Aboriginal people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Section 5 – Building Workforce Capacity & Skills

If you placed a cross in any of the boxes under columns 1 or 2 please indicate what action your organisation will take to ensure understanding and awareness of Aboriginal culture and rights.

Task/Activity	Who	By when	Where

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF PARTICIPATION

Thank you for being involved in this important process.
Your responses to the AHPACC Cultural Audit will be collated
and results will be delivered to your organisation as soon as possible.

Audit by:

Organisation:

Date completed:

<i>Participating personnel</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>

