

Engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples: Woorabinda Multipurpose Health Service

The Woorabinda Multipurpose Health Service, located in Central Queensland, 170 km south west of Rockhampton, is working in partnership with a locally-based registered training organisation (RTO), Bluestone Medical, to build the local workforce. Woorabinda is made up of a young, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population (97%) and has a high rate of unemployment (18.1%).

Training delivery is focused on the Certificate II in Health Support Services and Certificate III in Individual Support. These qualifications were determined through face-to-face engagement between the RTO, Elders, community members and key representatives from the aged care facility, employment services and the local school. This provided the community and the health service with confidence and assurance of the commitment to deliver quality training by the RTO, and the connections and relationships to support delivery. Community information sessions were also held to ensure that potential participants were clear on what was expected of them as students and employees, and to provide information on police checks and vaccinations. Training is delivered face-to-face within the health service grounds and has many benefits, including student familiarity with the work environment, opportunity to simulate the work environment, and to observe employees undertaking various roles in a real-life health setting. The program accesses Certificate III Guarantee and VETiS funding and is supported by jobactive services.

Some students have gained employment with the health service and will require additional training to continue. Others will be able to access employment on completion of their qualification. Several themes have been noted in contributing to the level of success of this initiative. These include positive and respectful early engagement with community members prior and during programs; clear participant expectations of requirements and outcomes; access to resources and funding programs; partnerships; face-to-face onsite training delivery; and access to genuine employment opportunities.

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