

2024-2026 Action Plan for the ACT Health Workforce Strategy 2023-2032

The [ACT Health Workforce Strategy 2023-2032](#) (the Strategy) sets out the territory wide approach to building a sustainable health workforce for the ACT.

The Strategy identifies eight strategic priority areas to target specific workforce needs and includes 23 early actions. It focuses on inclusiveness, a culture of learning and development, leadership and innovation and will support the territory and surrounding regions to predict and respond to workforce challenges.

Three action plans will be developed to implement the Strategy over 10 years – 2024-2026, 2027-2029 and 2030-2032. The action plans will be developed in collaboration with stakeholders, including public and private health organisations/ providers, education providers and non-government sectors, and will detail the strategic objectives and actions to be delivered by the Strategy during the specific time horizon.

This is the first of the series of action plans. It sets out the actions to be delivered during 2024-2026. It details five strategic objectives, linked to the strategic priorities from the Strategy, that were identified during consultations with stakeholders. The actions have been grouped around these strategic objectives:

1. Support an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce
2. Grow and develop our own health workforce
3. Facilitate mobility of the health workforce across the ACT health system
4. Embed the collection, dissemination and use of health workforce data, and
5. Support the health workforce to collaborate.

The 2024-2026 Action Plan should be read in conjunction with the Strategy. As with the Strategy, oversight of the 2024-2026 Action Plan will be provided by the Territory-wide Health Workforce Planning Group. Implementation of the actions will be progressed during the time horizon and will be subject to future funding decisions. A review and evaluation of the action plan will be completed in its final year of implementation with any findings implemented in the subsequent action plan.

Strategic objective: 1	Support an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce
Aim:	Build a responsive health system that provides a welcoming and culturally safe environment to attract and retain an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce that is supported to achieve career goals
Why?	<p>The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce makes a vital contribution to health care in both specialised service delivery and in a wide range of mainstream health care roles. An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce delivers better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p> <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are currently underrepresented in the health workforce. The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan 2021–2031 (National Framework and Plan) has set a target for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to represent 3.43% of the national health workforce by 2031. The National Framework and</p>

	Plan details the actions required to support the ongoing development of the size, capability and capacity of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce.
Link to Strategic Priorities in the Strategy:	1 - A focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce and a culturally safe environment 4 - Embracing diversity and a culture of respect to deliver a safe and welcoming workplace 6 - Rewarding careers
Action:	
1.1	Identify and introduce initiatives to strengthen the cultural safety within the ACT health system, for example through ongoing cultural awareness education and training for the health workforce, undertaking cultural safety reviews, and measuring behaviours and experiences to ensure that cultural safety training and development is translating into improved cultural safety outcomes
1.2	Co-design an ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Action Plan, including the use of appropriately collated data to create pathways to increase the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing workforce in the ACT. This plan will be iterated to ensure alignment with local responses to national implementation plans when they become available. This includes the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan 2021–2031 and the <i>Health Sector Strengthening Plan</i> .
1.3	Continue the implementation of a mentorship program with culturally trained mentors to help maintain engagement in education and the health system.
1.4	Support the ongoing implementation of the Indigenous Allied Health Australia Health Academy model in the ACT.
	(see Strategic Objective 2 for initiatives relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students)
	Stakeholders are invited to enter additional actions for consideration, and to include initiatives that your organisation has commenced/ will be commencing that targets the health workforce and may be relevant for inclusion.

Strategic objective 2:	Grow and develop our own health workforce
Aim:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a pipeline of new graduates for the ACT health system; and • Retain existing health workforce by enabling flexible career pathways with incentives to learn and grow professionally.
Why?	<p>Secondary and vocational students within the ACT represent a potential homegrown pipeline for our health workforce. Increasing awareness about the career opportunities that exist within the health workforce would assist students to make decisions to undertake study in health-related fields and to choose careers within the ACT health system.</p> <p>Anecdotal evidence is that university students who study or train in the ACT often want to remain within the ACT. The ACT is fortunate to have four education providers that deliver vocational, undergraduate and postgraduate pathways to healthcare careers. In addition, other education providers across Australia use ACT health services for clinical placements, pathways to employment or ongoing training opportunities, which introduces students to the ACT health system.</p>

	Investing in staff and providing ongoing professional development and career mobility opportunities for the health workforce to achieve career goals will help to retain the health workforce within the ACT health system. The health workforce is supported through the management of workloads, work life balance and health and safety.
Link to Strategic Priorities in the Strategy:	6 - Rewarding careers 4 - Embracing diversity and a culture of respect to deliver a safe and welcoming workplace 5 - Delivering excellence
Action:	
2.1	Engage with secondary school students and career counsellors to promote health workforce careers, including targeted engagement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students with a disability.
2.2	Attend career expos to promote health workforce careers and the ACT health system as a potential employer.
2.3	Explore the introduction of a health professional graduate program.
2.4	Explore expansion of the Canberra Institute of Technology's Health Starter Career Pathway Program (p40) to encourage secondary students into the health and caring industry.
2.5	Introduce career coaching and mentoring opportunities across the whole of the ACT health system.
2.6	Engage with the National Scope of Practice Review , being led by the Commonwealth, that is reviewing the barriers and incentives for primary health professionals to work to their full scope of practice including extended and advanced levels.
2.7	Consider expanding access to ACT Government health workforce training to the private and non-government sectors, and explore opportunities to provide standard training opportunities for staff and students across health system.
2.8	Review the effectiveness of ACT Government scholarship programs to identify opportunities to improve attraction and retention of health professionals, and to target Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and workforce.
2.9	Continue to support the provision of targeted scholarships to tertiary students to support study at ACT education providers and to reduce placement poverty when on clinical placements.
2.10	Collaborate with local education providers to review the capacity of the ACT health system to meet the clinical placement requirements of students studying health workforce courses.
2.11	Implement Phase Two of Mandated Minimum Nurse/Midwife-to-Patient Ratios.
2.12	Explore the evidence, validity and viability of safe staffing models for allied health professionals, medical officers and community-based nurses and midwives.
2.13	Promote career opportunities within the ACT health system in conjunction with ACT education providers through stories of team members experiences of studying and working in the ACT.
2.14	Continue the development of the Nurse Practitioner workforce in the ACT through the Nurse Practitioner Professional Practice Project to identify opportunities to enhance the Nurse Practitioner role and support the work to implement the National Nurse Practitioner Workforce Plan.
	Stakeholders are invited to enter additional actions for consideration, and to include initiatives that your organisation has commenced/ will be commencing that targets the health workforce and may be relevant for inclusion.

Strategic objective 3:	Facilitate mobility of the health workforce across the ACT health system
Aim:	The health workforce has the knowledge and support they need to move within the health system to access career opportunities and, consequently, do not choose to prematurely exit the ACT health system
Why?	<p>To achieve a sustainable health workforce the ACT needs to be a location of choice. One of the ACT's advantages is that it can offer a variety of career opportunities in one location, e.g. tertiary hospital, non-government organisations, private sector, education providers etc.</p> <p>Retaining staff within the ACT health system will benefit all providers of health services. As the largest employer of health workforce in the ACT the ACT Government has a key role to train and develop health professionals, many of whom will filter out to join other health service providers. A supported and valued workforce will have opportunities for progression, flexibility and mobility across the system, including participating in skills enhancement education and training, access to flexible working arrangements throughout their career and transitioning to retirement.</p> <p>Enabling the health workforce to traverse the ACT health system will bring benefits overall through enhanced capabilities and this flows through to safer quality care for consumers. It will facilitate networking between the health workforce, enable the sharing of knowledge and expertise, and will increase knowledge about how health service providers operate. This will contribute to the development of a more collaborative health system and better quality and safety for consumers.</p>
Link to Strategic Priorities in the Strategy:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 - Rewarding careers 4 - Embracing diversity and a culture of respect to deliver a safe and welcoming workplace 5 - Delivering excellence 7 - Stepping into the future 3 - Promoting a collaborative health system
Action:	
	3.1 Educate managers and executives about the benefits for the staff and organisation of providing staff with flexibility and mobility opportunities.
	3.2 Increase awareness of the entitlements of ACT Government health workforce staff regarding flexibility and mobility opportunities.
	3.3 Review barriers to mobility within the ACT Government Enterprise Agreements and human resources systems to identify where changes may need to be considered during future bargaining negotiations and in systems to enable mobility within and across organisations.
	3.4 Continue to embed a positive workplace culture so that the ACT health system supports the health workforce to achieve their professional goals.
	3.5 Promote information about career pathways across the ACT health system.
	3.6 Explore use of a portable entitlements scheme across the ACT health system.
	Stakeholders are invited to enter additional actions for consideration, and to include initiatives that your organisation has commenced/ will be commencing that targets the health workforce and may be relevant for inclusion.

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Strategic objective 4:	Embed the collection, dissemination and use of health workforce data within the ACT health system
Aim:	High quality health workforce data is accessible across the ACT health system and is an input for workforce planning
Why?	<p>Current health workforce data in the ACT is inconsistent and insufficient for health planners to have a clear understanding of the current workforce, support anecdotal reports of service gaps, or deliver holistic, robust workforce plans.</p> <p>Providing clear, consistent, high-quality data on the ACT health workforce will enable stakeholders across the ACT health system to forecast health workforce trends or identify emerging areas of workforce shortage, and to proactively manage the utility of the health workforce through the redesign of models of care or health service provision.</p>
Link to Strategic Priorities in the Strategy:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 – Investing in workforce planning and intelligence 5 – Delivering excellence 7 – Stepping into the future 3 – Promoting a collaborative health system 8 – Advocating for reform
Action:	
	4.1 Continue the development of the System-Wide Workforce Dashboard and perform a gap and needs analysis for health workforce data for the ACT health system.
	4.2 Establish data analytics capability within the ACT Health Directorate and develop a real-time workforce profile dataset with national comparators.
	4.3 Disseminate and promote the health workforce data that is available for the ACT health system.
	4.4 Explore how to improve the collection of non-ACT Government health workforce data.
	4.5 Increase access to health workforce data for health services and health workforce planning within the ACT.
	Stakeholders are invited to enter additional actions for consideration, and to include initiatives that your organisation has commenced/ will be commencing that targets the health workforce and may be relevant for inclusion.

Strategic objective 5:	Support the health workforce to collaborate
Aim:	Supportive and sustainable collaborations between the health workforce across public, private, education, government and non-government agencies
Why?	The <i>ACT Health Services Plan 2022-2032</i> will be actioning opportunities to improve health service delivery through better collaboration between ACT Government publicly funded health services, Australian Government funded health services including those funded through Capital Health Network, the private sector, primary care and allied health care

	<p>providers. Whilst structural and system changes are needed, another contributor to achieve the goal of a collaborative health system is the efforts of the health workforce.</p> <p>The health workforce needs to have the knowledge and support to collaborate across the ACT health system.</p>
Link to Strategic Priorities in the Strategy:	<p>3 - Promoting a collaborative health system</p> <p>5 - Delivering excellence</p> <p>7 - Stepping into the future</p> <p>8 - Advocating for reform</p>
Action:	
5.1 Provide opportunities to improve cross-system communication, such as the ACT Health Forum, and achieve attendance from a broad range of stakeholders across the ACT health system.	
<p>Stakeholders are invited to enter additional actions for consideration, and to include initiatives that your organisation has commenced/ will be commencing that targets the health workforce and may be relevant for inclusion.</p>	

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