

# Diversity & Inclusion Policy



QP: 12.1

Version 2

Date: February 2021

Authorised: Board

ABN: 48 603 486 442

New England North West Health Ltd (Trading as HealthWISE New England North West) will be referred to as HealthWISE for the purpose of this document.

## Policy Statement

---

The purpose of this policy is to support and facilitate an inclusive environment that embraces our differences and recognises the benefits that these differences make. Diversity includes but is not limited to gender, age, ethnicity, religious or cultural background, disability, marital or family status, sexual orientation, sexual status, gender identity, and Varied thinking and learning styles, behavioural profiles, skills and experience all can enable better client connection, deliverables and decisions.

HealthWISE values diversity of thought and experience and believes that our inclusive and collaborative culture strengthens our organisation and contributes to successful consumer outcomes. HealthWISE is committed to supporting and ensuring a diverse work environment in which everyone is treated fairly and with respect.

HealthWISE recognises diversity as one of our most important resources because we believe that diversity sensitive practices in our workforce helps us:

- a) provide all consumers and people we support with a welcoming, inclusive environment.
- a) attract, retain and motivate employees from the widest possible pool of talent;
- b) foster a culture that reflects our values of empowerment, equality and client focus and is open to all;
- c) improve innovation, creativity and inspire critical thinking;
- d) create a dynamic environment that leads to higher performance and well-being and greater employee engagement and satisfaction; and
- e) improve the connection between our people and the community we serve.

## Scope

---

This policy covers all HealthWISE staff and stakeholders – clients and people we support, community, partners, stakeholders, employees, contractors and consultants engaged within HealthWISE and its programs and activities.

## Definitions

---

**Culture** - the totality of socially transmitted behaviour patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought.

**Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)** - refers to different linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic backgrounds. Cultural diversity embraces Indigenous Australian and multicultural perspectives.

# Diversity & Inclusion Policy

QP: 12.1

Version 2

Date: February 2021

Authorised: Board

ABN: 48 603 486 442

**Culturally safe** - respects the legitimate rights, values and expectations of people and acknowledges the diversity within and between communities living in remote, regional and metropolitan areas.

Cultural Responsiveness – Culturally responsive care is about the centrality of culture to people’s identity and working with them to determine what is culturally safe care for them as individuals.

**Disability** - may be defined as an intellectual, psychiatric, cognitive, neurological, sensory or physical impairment or a combination of those impairments.

**Diversity** - refers to aspects of people such as beliefs, attitudes, languages, social circumstances, ability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender history, health status and age.

**Diverse sexualities** - includes people identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual and sexually diverse, trans and gender diverse and/or fluid, intersex or queer.

**LGBTIQ** – Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender diverse, intersex and questioning.

**Inclusive language** - is free of bias, discrimination and avoids stereotyping and mistaken assumptions about people on the basis of their sex, marital status, pregnancy or potential pregnancy, breast feeding, sexual orientation, intersex status, gender history, health status, race, nationality, colour or ethnic origin, age, religious or political conviction, impairment or disability, socio economic background and family responsibility or family status.

## Background

---

### 1. WHAT DIVERSITY MEANS TO US

#### 1.1. What is diversity?

At HealthWISE, we are committed to a culture that embraces and fosters diversity and inclusion. Diversity encompasses differences in backgrounds, sexual orientation, qualifications and experiences, and also differences in culture, beliefs, approach and viewpoints. HealthWISE ensures that individuals are provided with equal opportunity, while also creating opportunities for those groups that may be disadvantaged.

#### 1.2. Gender diversity

HealthWISE has a commitment to the fundamental principle that gender is not a barrier to participation in our workforce, management, senior executive and on the Board of Directors of HealthWISE (“Board”) or services. Our organisation is committed to providing opportunities for all individuals.

#### 2.3. Board and senior executive diversity

At HealthWISE, diversity of gender and background are two important criteria we take into account in developing our succession plans and appointment processes for our Board and

# Diversity & Inclusion Policy

QP: 12.1

Version 2

Date: February 2021

Authorised: Board

ABN: 48 603 486 442

senior executive positions. However, other selection criteria, in particular business acumen, community feedback and industry experience, are also fundamentally important.

## 2.4. Supporting policies

HealthWISE's approach to diversity is supported by a range of policies, including:

- Code of Conduct – HealthWISE is committed to not only complying with its legal obligations, but also acting ethically and responsibly. Our Code of Conduct sets out the minimum standards of behaviour and conduct expected of all HealthWISE employees, contractors and consultants.
- Recruitment – HealthWISE is committed to maintaining a supportive, healthy and productive work environment, free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation and to maintaining appropriate federal legislative commitments.
- Flexible Working Arrangements Policy – HealthWISE believes in assisting employees to maintain a healthy and holistic balance between work, family, domestic responsibilities and other commitments, activities and interests. To ensure that we meet the needs of our employees and clients and people we support, HealthWISE offers flexibility in working arrangements for all employees, across all organisational levels that recognise and accommodate individual needs whilst still meeting business objectives.
- Leave policies – A range of leave options are available to HealthWISE employees to ensure they have appropriate options for time off work. This includes annual leave, carers' leave, personal leave, parental leave, compassionate leave, community leave, ceremonial leave and long service leave.
- Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy – HealthWISE is committed to creating an environment that is free from bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation. HealthWISE is committed to supporting and maintaining a healthy and safe workplace which promotes the physical and mental wellbeing of our employees.
- Cultural Inclusion Framework – HealthWISE is committed to working towards building a society where there is equity in health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and has formalised this commitment by working towards a Cultural Inclusion Framework.
- Education Assistance Policy – To support our employees to reach their full potential, HealthWISE offers a range of internal learning and development opportunities and supports employees to undertake additional study, relevant to their position.
- Complaints/Feedback policy and Complaints Procedure

## 3. HOW WE PROMOTE DIVERSITY

### 3.1. Areas of Focus

We aim to promote diversity by:

# Diversity & Inclusion Policy

QP: 12.1

Version 2

Date: February 2021

Authorised: Board

ABN: 48 603 486 442

- striving to create an inclusive environment respectful of all cultural backgrounds and beliefs, including recognising and celebrating various multicultural events across the business, such as NAIDOC Week, International Women's Day and Harmony Day;
- fostering a culture which supports and respects the values and needs of all individuals;
- identifying program or service areas that require change to be more accessible and effective for service users diverse needs;
- contributing to the update and review of programs and services to ensure that they are responsive to a wide range of individuals with diverse needs;
- assisting with consultation of the people we support, clients and their carers, stakeholders and relevant expert organisations to assess and monitor service and program accessibility and relevance, as required;
- considering ability and not disability when we employ and promote people and aiming to create a physical and cultural environment which supports participation and reasonably accommodates special needs;
- ensuring recruitment and selection processes across all levels of HealthWISE are structured so that a diverse range of candidates are considered;
- actively reviewing HealthWISE's recruiting practices, policies and procedures to reduce bias, both conscious and unconscious, on a regular basis;
- implementing programs that:
  - are provided in a way that maximises fair and equitable access to all employees and seek to ensure that employees are aware of their responsibilities in relation to equal opportunity and diversity; and
  - assist in the development of a broader and more diverse pool of skilled and experienced employees that, over time, will prepare them for senior management and board positions;
  - setting targets for gender balance in management and senior leadership positions to ensure accurate and fair representation; and
  - ensuring that unlawful discrimination and harassment does not occur, that is, when a person, or a group of people, is treated less favourably (either directly or indirectly) than another person or group because of a protected attribute.

Harassment is unwelcome conduct on the basis of certain protected attributes that could reasonably be anticipated to cause a person to be offended, humiliated or intimidated.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

---

HealthWISE's staff have an understanding of the specific cultural and historical patterns that have structured Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's lives and the ways in which these patterns continue to be expressed in contemporary Australia.

Culturally safe ways of working with Aboriginal people, their families and communities are used, ensuring treatment and services:

- Incorporate a holistic concept of health and wellbeing

# Diversity & Inclusion Policy

QP: 12.1

Version 2

Date: February 2021

Authorised: Board

ABN: 48 603 486 442

- Are grounded in an understanding of the historical factors, including traditional life, the impact of colonisation and the ongoing effects
- Aim to strengthen family and kinship systems of care, control and responsibility
- Work from within principles of empowerment, and
- Understand the need for developing rapport and trust with Aboriginal people to better provide care and services.

HealthWISE staff and contractors provide culturally safe ways of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their families and communities including disclosure / processes around supporting consumers to self-identify.

HealthWISE employs local people who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander who have strong and existing relationships with community to promote inclusive practices. This ensures that our workplace is culturally safe and inclusive, and supports the various needs, backgrounds, abilities and other distinct characteristics of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with respect, sensitivity and understanding.

## Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex or queer (LGBTIQ)

---

It is essential that our organisation is appropriately responsive to the needs of the diverse community that it serves and promotes health and well-being through equitable access to culturally safe services.

The organisation develops working relationships with LGBTIQ health services and provides appropriate referral pathways when needed. Staff training and development supports HealthWISE to ensure a welcoming, accessible and safe environment for staff and clients who identify as a member of the LGBTIQ community.

## People with a disability

---

HealthWISE services will be inclusive for clients and people with a disability. Education, information and support are provided to staff and volunteers on service responsibilities and best practice when working with people with disabilities.

Working relationships with disability services are developed. Where appropriate, clients and people we support are linked to disability support networks as part of case management and continuing care.

## Culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD) and culturally safe practices

---

HealthWISE considers issues of culture and diversity in the delivery of programs/services and involves other services to support the needs of culturally diverse consumers and is aware of potential issues when considering using an interpreter. Client concerns may include confidentiality, the interpreter coming from their own community or being known to them, and difficulty translating some languages accurately.

# Diversity & Inclusion Policy

QP: 12.1

Version 2

Date: February 2021

Authorised: Board

ABN: 48 603 486 442

Our staff have a professional obligation to ensure they understand our clients and the people we support and can assist them when necessary to understand any verbal instructions or written information. Clients who do not speak or read English or who are more proficient in another language, or who have special communication needs, are offered the choice of using the assistance of a language service to communicate with the team members. The needs of carers and other relevant parties are also considered.

Information on translator and interpreter services and services for clients with a disability is maintained, updated regularly and readily available to all staff. For example, the National Relay Service (NRS) for clients that are deaf or the Translation and Interpreter Service (TIS) for clients from a non- English speaking background.

## 4. IMPLEMENTATION AND MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

The Board and management believe that this policy contributes to achieving HealthWISE's corporate objectives and embeds the importance and value of diversity at HealthWISE.

Roles	Responsibilities
The Board	<p>Endorse and ensure compliance with the Diversity &amp; Inclusion Policy.</p> <p>Be familiar with the organisation's legislative requirements regarding Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and discrimination.</p>
CEO/Senior Managers	<p>Set the tone for the organisation by modelling inclusive behaviour</p> <p>Ensure an organisational culture that supports diversity and inclusion for all.</p> <p>Manage and monitor compliance with this policy.</p> <p>Support staff competence and compliance with this policy and procedure.</p>
Team Leaders	<p>Set the tone for the organisation by modelling inclusive behaviour</p> <p>Manage and monitor compliance with this policy.</p> <p>Support staff competence and compliance with this policy and procedure.</p>
Staff, volunteers, contractors and students	<p>Comply with the Diversity and Inclusion Policy</p> <p>Act in accordance with legislation and HealthWISE policy to ensure anti discriminatory practices.</p>

# Diversity & Inclusion Policy

QP: 12.1

Version 2

Date: February 2021

Authorised: Board

ABN: 48 603 486 442

## Document Control

---

The electronic version of this Policy Document stored on the HealthWISE Intranet is the controlled version.

Printed or hard copies of this Policy document are uncontrolled.

Before using or relying on a printed or hard copy of this Policy document, the user must verify that it is the current version.

## Source Documents and Cross Reference

## Revision History

---

The following table shows the changes that have been made to this document.

Author	Version	Date	Reviewed by...	Comments
Sally Urquhart	1	23 August 2018	Senior management	Submitted to the board for approval on 1 November 2018
	2	February 2021	Cultural Inclusion Framework Group and the Board	Approved March 2021

## Update Schedule

---

This document should be reviewed September 2022.