



Case Study Eight:

Indigenous AHAs traineeship program

This case study looked at the recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander AHAs by creating a career pathway for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the local community. This was achieved by establishing a traineeship program, creating a strong relationship between industry and school, and providing an appropriate level of support plus flexibility to ensure student success.

This case study comes from a Queensland regional Registered Training Organisation (RTO) that offered a Certificate III in AHA as a school-based traineeship. It was offered in response to industry feedback about the need for more local Indigenous AHAs who could communicate effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability in metropolitan, rural, and remote settings. The traineeship program also helped to build the local Indigenous workforce.

Students initially completed a Certificate II in Health Support Services, which gave them the background health knowledge and relevant skills to undertake the traineeship. Training was delivered in a blended mode with students undertaking the traineeship at school, working one day a week, and attending training blocks during the school holidays. The traineeship provided pathways to employment in local communities. Industry feedback identified the need to introduce the more specialised Certificate IV in AHA, as this was becoming the minimum qualification for AHAs.



Benefits

Students could complete the Certificate II in Health Support Services at their own pace, then a Certificate III in AHA through a traineeship whilst still attending school. This created a pathway for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to enter the workforce or continue and qualify as a health professional such as a nurse or an AHP.

The traineeship also allowed them to give back to their community and be role models for other Indigenous youth. This program reduced cultural barriers, thereby allowing clearer communication with providers so they could understand their needs.

provided regular and consistent student support via workplace visits and meetings on Microsoft teams to ensure as many completions as possible. In addition, they created stronger links between schools, communities, and the RTO to increase enrolments.



Challenges

The number of students entering the traineeship dropped this year, even though the program was flexible to accommodate student needs.



Strategies for success

The RTO worked towards introducing the Certificate IV in AHA so students could be upskilled and job-ready as this level of qualification was becoming an industry requirement to work as an AHA. They



Key principles of good practice

- Creating positive working relationships with local schools supporting the traineeship program
- Targeted enrolment to recruit local Indigenous students to undertake the traineeship and develop the skills to deliver AHA services to the local community
- Providing a progressive pathway by first preparing students through training in the Certificate II in Health Support Services, which gives them the background health knowledge and relevant skills to undertake the traineeship and Certificate IV in Allied Health Assistance
- Providing regular support to students throughout the traineeship
- Using mixed-mode delivery to facilitate flexible learning options for students.