



Queensland Ambulance Service

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander *Cultural Safety*

Queensland Ambulance Service

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Safety Policy Statement

Version 1.0, Effective 1 July 2023

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to articulate the commitment of the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) to ensuring a culturally safe organisation, which respects and honours the diversity of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, workforce, and the communities in which we deliver services.

The QAS acknowledges the historical disadvantages and injustices suffered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the ongoing impact to cultural identity, social and emotional wellbeing, and equitable healthcare.

Cultural capability is essential for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to receive safe, effective, and quality healthcare which is free of racism and discrimination.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all QAS employees and volunteers.

3. POLICY CONTENT

3.1. Principles

3.1.1. The QAS recognises that cultural capability is essential to ensuring a culturally safe organisation for employees, patients, and communities.

3.1.2. The QAS is committed to ensuring that culturally safe and appropriate services are delivered across our diverse communities, enabled by culturally safe work practices and leadership.



3.1.3. To enable and support the growth of cultural capability throughout the organisation, the QAS is committed to:

- eliminating racism from our workplaces and our services.
- creating a workplace culture that values and respects diversity and promotes inclusivity.
- developing and sustaining a culturally competent workforce, which recognises the needs of, supports, and is capable of working effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds.
- the provision of cultural competency training for all employees, to enable a respectful and practical understanding of the cultural norms, values, beliefs and practices of our communities, and community members.
- ensuring that all organisational Policies, and business processes and practices are designed to be culturally sensitive and take into account the needs of diverse communities.
- encouraging the recruitment, retention and progression of employees from diverse backgrounds and providing appropriate opportunities for career development and advancement.
- encouraging open and respectful communication and dialogue between employees from different cultural backgrounds.
- engaging with our stakeholders using culturally specific and respectful stakeholder engagement processes, to better understand and meet the needs of diverse communities.

3.2. Responsibilities

3.2.1. QAS Executives are responsible for ensuring that this Policy Statement is effectively implemented with their areas of functional accountability by:

- demonstrating proactive leadership which strives to create and maintain an organisational culture that prioritises cultural capability as a key driver of cultural safety;
- maintaining systems and processes which enable cultural safety across our workplaces and operating environments, including by embedding cultural considerations in all aspects of management practices;
- working in partnership with other government departments, non-government agencies and communities to ensure coordinated and collaborative health responses to culturally diverse community needs;
- acknowledging and effectively responding to the unique needs of employees and other stakeholders, particularly those from priority groups including:
 - those who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander; and
 - from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- maintaining arrangements which help to ensure the cultural safety of children and young people who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds;

3.2.2. All employees and volunteers within the QAS are responsible for:

- a) Adhering to the requirements of this Policy Statement;
- b) Contributing positively to a culturally safe workplace; and
- c) Undertaking any mandatory training in relation to cultural capability and cultural safety.



3.3. Governance

3.3.1. The QAS will maintain effective governance of cultural safety and cultural capability through the following:

- A QAS Cultural Safety Steering Committee, chaired the QAS Commissioner, which:
 - provides strategic direction, leadership, policy development, guidance, advocacy, support and oversight on the delivery of initiatives and project outcomes for the QAS cultural safety portfolio and scope of work.
 - works in consultation with the QAS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Committee, aligning with the Whole-of-Government commitment (including, but not limited to Closing the Gap targets), in sharing decision making in design, implementation and evaluation of QAS policies and services affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.
- A QAS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Committee, chaired by an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employee, which:
 - supports the progression to have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their perspectives embedded in the design, implementation and evaluation of QAS initiatives, programs and policies to generate better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland.
 - support the QAS Cultural Safety Steering Committee in providing a forum for consultation, advocacy, support and direction on culturally safe, culturally responsive and best-practice models of services impacting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their communities.
 - work collaboratively with the QAS Cultural Safety Steering Committee, aligning with the Whole-of-Government commitment (including, but not limited to Closing the Gap targets), in sharing decision making in the design, implementation and evaluation of QAS policy and services with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and the broader health network.
- Networks of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander liaison officers and cultural capability champions which:
 - work collaboratively with Assistant Commissioners, District Directors, and local staff to implement local and state initiatives under the QAS Cultural Capability Action Plan (CCAP) and champion cultural safety in their everyday practice.
 - supports the QAS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Committee to provide consultation and direction on the development of new initiatives to meet the differing needs of QAS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.
 - work in consultation with the QAS Cultural Safety Steering Committee and the QAS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Committee, aligning with the Whole-of-Government commitment in sharing decision making in design and delivery of policy and services with QAS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.



4. GLOSSARY

TERM	DEFINITION
Cultural Capability	Cultural capability refers to the skills, knowledge, behaviours and systems that are required to plan, support, improve and deliver services in a culturally respectful and appropriate manner. <i>(QLD Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Division)</i>
Cultural Safety	Cultural safety is determined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, families and communities. Culturally safe practice is the ongoing critical reflection of health practitioner knowledge, skills, attitudes, practicing behaviours and power differentials in delivering safe, accessible and responsive healthcare free of racism. <i>(QHealth – Q32 – First Nations Strategy)</i>
QAS Executive	An employee who is engaged at an executive level within the QAS.

5. REFERENCE

- *Ambulance Service Act 1991*
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*
- *Human Rights Act 2019*
- *Public Sector Act 2022*

6. AUTHORITY

Commissioner, Queensland Ambulance Service

7. AMENDMENTS REGISTER

1 July 2023	New policy created
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