

Policy Concordance: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health, Social and Emotional Wellbeing and Suicide Prevention

QUEENSLAND



The Centre of Best Practice in
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander
Suicide Prevention



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In Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health, social and emotional wellbeing and suicide prevention, government policies are critically important because they influence what services are available and how they are delivered – with enormous consequences for people’s lives.

This Concordance is a collection of guides to policy and decision-making at national and State/Territory levels. It includes:

- profiles of key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, government departments and agencies and other organisations with an important role in policy processes
- formal policies that describe governments’ commitments to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, and how they intend to deliver on them
- other essential documents – for example community submissions to policy processes and the most influential research reports.

The Concordance is for anyone seeking information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health, social and emotional wellbeing and suicide prevention policy in any part of Australia, including government and ministerial policy staff, researchers, service providers and community organisations. The focus is on current

policy documents. However some older publications are included where they have been particularly influential, and policies and strategies are included after their intended finish date if they have not yet been replaced and are still guiding practice.

Social and emotional wellbeing and suicide prevention are complex and multi-faceted and do not fall neatly into a single policy domain. This Concordance focuses on the organisations, processes and policies most directly related to these issues, acknowledging that important policy work also takes place in other domains – including education, justice and family services. The Concordance is a living resource and the CBPATSISP welcomes suggestions for additional inclusions.

This section of the Concordance focuses on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health, social and emotional wellbeing and suicide prevention policy in Queensland. Chapters on the other States and Territories, and national policy, can be found at cbpatsisp.org.au.

Key organisations

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community

Organisation	Purpose
Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council (QAIHC)	<p>QAIHC is a leadership and policy organisation. We were established in 1990 and are the peak organisation representing all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Organisations (ATSICCHO) in Queensland at both a state and national level.</p> <p>The QAIHC Membership is comprised of ATSICCHOs located throughout Queensland. Nationally, we represent Queensland through its affiliation and Membership on the board of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO).</p>

Government and other mainstream

Organisation	Purpose
Queensland Health: mental health and wellbeing	This online listing provides details of all Queensland Health mental health services and policies
Queensland Mental Health Commission	<p>The Queensland Mental Health Commission drive reform of the mental health and alcohol and other drugs systems in Queensland, with a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving the mental health and wellbeing of all Queenslanders • preventing and reducing the impact of mental illness • preventing and reducing the impact of problematic alcohol and other drug use • preventing and reducing the impact of suicide. <p>The Commission is a statutory body established under the <i>Queensland Mental Health Commission Act 2013</i>. We actively seek the views and experiences of people with a lived experience to help shape the reform agenda and works across portfolio areas including health, communities, education, child safety, employment, police, corrections, the economy and justice.</p>
Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention (AISRAP)	The Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention (AISRAP) is a non-government organisation located at Griffith University in Queensland. The Institute conducts research in all aspects of suicide prevention and manages the Queensland Suicide Register.

Policy documents

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Date	Title	Organisation	About
2020-2040	Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Strategy 2020-2040	Queensland Government/Healing Foundation	<p>The Queensland Healing Strategy has arisen from <i>Our Way: A generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2017-37</i>. It is a key action under the Changing Tracks Action Plan 2020-2022. It also supports Shifting minds The Queensland Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs, and Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan 2023-2028, which identifies a strategic priority to renew, strengthen and integrate cross-sectoral approaches to social and emotional wellbeing, including adopting healing informed approaches. The Healing Strategy was developed by the Healing Foundation for the Queensland Government.</p> <p>Healing enables people to address distress, overcome trauma and restore wellbeing. Ways to support healing include reconnecting with culture, strengthening identity, restoring safe and enduring relationships and supporting communities to understand the impact that people's experiences have had on their behaviour and create change. Healing occurs at a community, family and individual level. Healing continues throughout a person's lifetime and across generations.</p>

2021	Making Tracks Together: Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Equity Framework	Queensland Health/ Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council (QAIHC)	Making Tracks Together outlines the strategic framework to drive health equity, eliminate institutional racism across the public health system and achieve life expectancy parity for First Nations peoples by 2031. It details the policy settings and strategic directions for Hospital and Health Services (HHSs) to develop and implement new Health Equity Strategies as required by the recent amendments to the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 and the Hospital and Health Boards Regulation 2012. An accompanying First Nations Health Equity Toolkit has also been prepared to provide operational guidance for HHSs to develop and implement the Health Equity Strategies.
2010	Making Tracks toward closing the gap in health outcomes for Indigenous Queenslanders by 2033: Policy and Accountability Framework	Queensland Government	<p>In July 2010 the Queensland Government launched Making Tracks, which provides the overarching policy directions to guide the Queensland Government's long-term effort towards achieving health parity between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Queenslanders.</p> <p>Making Tracks outlines five key priority areas required across the lifespan and health service continuum to achieve health parity.</p> <p>Priority 1 – A healthy start to life: Ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children 0-8 years are best placed for a healthy and safe start to life.</p> <p>Priority 2 – Addressing risk factors: Addressing the modifiable risk factors that contribute to preventable and chronic conditions.</p> <p>Priority 3 – Managing illness better: Establishing seamless pathways facilitating enhanced access to screening, early diagnosis, procedures and appropriate treatment of chronic conditions.</p> <p>Priority 4 – Effective health services: Improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' access to, and experience in, the health system, ensuring cultural capability throughout the patient journey and across the healthcare continuum.</p> <p>Priority 5 – Improving data and evidence: Improve the quality and availability of research and data, accountability mechanisms and evaluation.</p>
2021	Making Tracks towards achieving First Nations health equity Interim Investment Strategy 2021 – 2022	Queensland Government	Interim funding announcements and a commitment to investing in alignment with Queensland's Treaty process. A promised investment strategy for 2022-2025 has not been released.
2016-2026	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategic Framework 2016-2026	Queensland Government	<p>Key priorities are for a health system that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increases the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees working in Queensland Health—across all health professions and employment streams • builds partnerships between the health, education and training sectors to deliver real change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who want to enter the health workforce and improve career pathways for existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff • provides leadership and planning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce development • uses the increasing pool of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university graduates who have completed health courses • creates a health workforce that underpins Queensland's efforts to close the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and the non-Indigenous population by providing culturally safe and competent health services.

2017-2037	Our way: A generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2017–2037 and related action plans	Queensland Government / Family Matters Queensland	This strategy, and associated action plans, seek to close gaps in outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • health, mental health and disability • housing • early childhood and education • employment and training • domestic and family violence and violence against women • financial resilience.
2022-2027	Queensland Corrective Services Mental Health Strategy 2022–2027	Queensland Government	The strategy includes a prominent focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in custody, addressing issues such as intergenerational trauma, culturally appropriate mental health screening and intervention, and working with communities to end over-incarceration. The Year 1 Action Plan 2022-2023 includes detailed commitments including the roll-out of social and emotional wellbeing programs in prisons.
2021	Tracks to Treaty: Reframing the relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders	Queensland Government	The Statement of Commitment to Reframe the Relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders sets out the Queensland Government's strategic reform agenda to improve outcomes in partnership with Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people. Tracks to Treaty gives effect to this commitment and comprises two key elements: Local Thriving Communities (LTC) and Path to Treaty.
2022-2024	Local Thriving Communities Action Plan 2022–24	Queensland Government	This Plan is established under Tracks to Treaty. It outlines how the strengths of leadership and local cultural knowledge held by Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities should directly influence the design and delivery of Queensland Government services in their communities.
2021	Path to Treaty	Queensland Government	These reports, responses and agreements represent key milestones in Queensland's treaty negotiations.

Whole of community

Date	Title	Organisation	About
2023-2028	Shifting minds The Queensland Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs, and Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan 2023–2028	Queensland Government	Overarching plan with separate suicide prevention and alcohol and other drugs plans aligned to it.
2019-2029	Every life: The Queensland Suicide Prevention Plan 2019-2029	Queensland Government	The plan is inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with Indigenous issues prominent and integrated into a community-wide response, drawing on ATSISEPP and the Gayaa Dhuwi Declaration to emphasise self-determination, empowerment and reconciliation. Every Life is an element of the Shifting Minds state strategy.
2018-2023	Achieving balance: The Queensland Alcohol and Other Drugs Plan 2022-2027	Queensland Government	<p>Achieving balance builds on Shifting minds The Queensland Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs, and Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan 2023–2028 and the Queensland Alcohol and Other Drugs Action Plan 2015–17, and guides Queensland’s effort to achieve greater balance across the three pillars of harm minimisation: harm reduction, demand reduction and supply reduction.</p> <p>It includes culturally responsive approaches to alcohol and drug support and treatment and recognises the role of cultural and social determinants – including inter-generational trauma and the impact of child removals and incarceration – in the development of harmful alcohol and drug use.</p> <p>While this strategy notionally expired in 2023 it continues to guide policy in the absence of an updated approach.</p>
2022-2027	Better Care Together	Queensland Government	A plan for Queensland’s state-funded mental health, alcohol and other drug services to 2027.
2023	HEALTHQ32: A vision for Queensland’s health system	Queensland Government	First Nations is one of seven key strategy areas under this overarching vision. The strategies were intended to be launched individually during 2023 but were unavailable in early 2024.
2016	My health, Queensland’s future: advancing health 2026	Queensland Government	Advancing health 2026 was developed to guide Queensland government investment and reorient the health system to be flexible and innovative in taking advantage of new technologies, while improving health outcomes for the whole population.
2022-2026	Bilateral Schedule on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention	Queensland Government, Commonwealth Government	<p>The Bilateral Schedule is the Queensland agreement under the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement, which sets out the shared intention of the Commonwealth, state and territory governments to work in partnership to improve the mental health of all Australians, reduce the rate of suicide toward zero, and ensure the sustainability and enhance the services of the Australian mental health and suicide prevention system.</p> <p>The Bilateral Schedule include Queensland-specific commitments including funding allocations and sites for service expansion.</p>