



**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander  
Employment and Career Development Strategy  
2022 – 2027**



## **Front cover artwork: Story title: Together**

The painting depicts that by working together we create a positive recruitment process that will attract future employees. Like the image of bees to honey, bees are workers that nurture the next generation to work in the colony to produce the beautiful honey. There has to be a clear pathway like in the green pathway, that leads towards the full circle of retention and career development within continuous circles. This pathway will support people who want to stay and develop their whole careers and be supported to develop their skills. Like the bees it's a continuous cycle with one goal.

About the artist: Local Darwin Aboriginal woman, Ms Norma Chidanpee Bengler, born to stolen generation parents Marathiel/Keytej, specialises in creating images in her unique personal style. This enables the translation of information and transfer of biomedical knowledge into stories and cultural messages.

# Director's Statement of Commitment

Menzies School of Health Research (Menzies) acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Owners, Custodians and cultural authorities of the lands and waters of Australia. We also acknowledge and pay our respects to the Larrakia and Arrernte Elders past, present and emerging, their people and their land upon which our offices are located.

We recognise and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, identities, beliefs, knowledges and deep connection with the land. We seek their wisdom and are committed to amplifying their voices in all that we do.

Menzies is strongly committed to building our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce. We understand and deeply respect the immense contribution that our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff have made and continue to make to our work and our research.

Menzies is a recognised national leader in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research, education and research training. This would not be possible without our dedicated and knowledgeable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. It is vitally important we continue to ensure our workforce is representative of the people with and for whom we work and that we amplify First Nations voices in all aspects of our work, including our research and professional staff, and our education and training programs.

Over recent years, Menzies has made significant achievements towards its goal of building its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce, including developing the only Australian accredited VET certificate in Community Health Research, offering multiple training programs, and creating innovative employment opportunities through research programs.

We continue to set and achieve high employment targets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, maintaining above 14% full time equivalent (FTE) of our Australian workforce for the past two years, and reaching 16% FTE in June 2022.



Professor Alan Cass, Director  
Menzies School of Health Research

Through this strategy and other key institutional plans, including our RAP and strategic plan, we aim to build upon our past achievements and strengthen our commitment to growing and supporting our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce.

This strategy identifies three critical focus areas:

Attraction and Recruitment

Access and Pathways

Retention and Career Development

Each of these focus areas plays an important role in ensuring our strategy is both responsive to the needs of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and able to increase the leadership and representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across every part of Menzies. We know that meaningful investment in the growth, development and career progression of our current and future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff is critical to our long-term success.

**Professor Alan Cass**

***Director, Menzies School of Health Research***



Menzies staff at the 2022 NAIDOC Week smoking ceremony

# Values

Our values underpin our commitment to the development and implementation of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and Career Development Strategy. Our values include:

- Quality:** We strive for excellence and rigour in everything we do.
- Integrity:** We are open, honest, and transparent, and maintain the highest standards of governance, accountability, and ethics.
- Relevance:** We concentrate on solving problems that matter; our work is informed by the health needs and shared priorities of the people and communities with whom we work.
- Partnerships:** We seek to partner with communities, health and other service providers, policymakers, and researchers.
- Innovation:** We embrace new approaches and technologies.
- Communication:** We maintain an ongoing dialogue with partners, stakeholders, and the local and national community during the research process, from conception through to completion and translation of results.
- Accountability:** We will monitor our progress through clearly stated measurable and achievable activities.

"I enjoy going out to renal services and telling people about the research that I am working on at Menzies, while also listening to their dialysis stories and journey."  
Henry Craigie, Project Assistant,  
Chronic Kidney Disease



# Purpose

Menzies values the contribution that Australia's First Nations people, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, bring to the organisation. Menzies respects and acknowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are complex and diverse.

Menzies celebrates excellence and recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's ways of knowing and doing and is committed to having a stronger representation of diverse views. The purpose of this strategy is to increase the leadership and representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples employed across Menzies.



"The goal of Menzies' Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and Career Development Strategy is to create a safe work environment that reflects the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in which we operate and serve."

Dr Sean Taylor  
Deputy Director Indigenous  
Leadership and Engagement

# Objectives

Menzies is committed to providing employment opportunities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across academic, research, professional, general and executive levels. Culturally responsive leadership provides inspiration to all staff, influences change and builds governance structures and workplaces that ensure staff members are encouraged, supported and free from overt and covert racism.

Menzies is committed to creating a culturally safe and inclusive working environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and creating sustainable employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the organisation.



L-R. Lydia Agius, Dr Sean Taylor, Professor Alan Cass and Niamah Walters, receiving her Certificate III in Laboratory Skill.

# Focus Area 1: Attraction and Recruitment

Menzies is dedicated to increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation across the organisation at all levels through ensuring Menzies recruitment policies, practices and advertising support the attraction and recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

- ⇒ Develop targets, strategies and a reporting framework for the recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- ⇒ Review our recruitment policy and practices, to support an increase in the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- ⇒ Develop and implement recruitment training for hiring managers that addresses issues such as recognizing and reducing cultural bias to support the recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- ⇒ Develop resources that support and promote Menzies as an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- ⇒ Develop an advertising campaign that attracts Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to Menzies.

L-R Taylah Church, Project Technician and Raelene Collins, Laboratory Assistant, have chosen to work part-time at Menzies, while completing their undergraduate studies.





L-R: Norlisha Bartlett, Emily Papadimos, Sian Graham, Katie Michell and Vanya Hampton from the Menzies Pandora study team attending 2021 NAIDOC Week events.

## Focus Area 2: Access and Pathways

Menzies will continue to develop, build, and enhance relationships and networks with relevant government, non-government and Aboriginal training organisations and peak Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professional bodies. This includes the STARS Foundation and Clontarf foundation, Group Training NT, Indigenous Allied Health Australia and Charles Darwin University. Menzies will continue to build on existing successful programs such as the Biyamarr ma traineeship program and the Menzies-Ramaciotti training centre program. Menzies Education team will continue to offer scholarships and training to post graduate students.

- ⇒ Develop programs and strategies that create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to obtain higher degree credentials, and to consider and pursue a career in health research or the health sector.
- ⇒ Maintain and build upon the Menzies traineeship and cadetship programs and promote entry pathways into university.
- ⇒ Commit to the employing and training Community Based Researchers on all relevant Menzies research projects.



L-R. Lydia Agius and Tasha Cole. "Different mentors can bring different values. The important part is having a mentor that motivates you, pushes you to do better and builds your confidence whilst having a good understanding of working with young people." Tash Cole.

# Focus Area 3: Retention and Career Development

Menzies will ensure workplace practices provide a supportive and flexible environment that enables Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members to meet professional and cultural obligations. Investment in the growth, development and career progression of our current and future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff is critical to long term success.

- ⇒ Ensure all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff complete an induction and orientation program that supports their employment at Menzies.
- ⇒ Ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff have a professional and career development plan in place.
- ⇒ Maintain an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff network that is a culturally safe and supportive environment that also contributes ideas and suggestion to improve Menzies workplace culture and environment.
- ⇒ Develop and implement mentoring and leadership programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.
- ⇒ Ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are supported to meet cultural obligations.
- ⇒ Develop resources and training to support culturally safe practices across Menzies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.



"I believe the Champions program can build the capacity of people living with Acute Rheumatic Fever and Rheumatic Heart Disease and in turn, strengthen the people around them and their communities".  
Maida Stewart, Champions4Change Project Coordinator with RHD Australia.

# Governance and reporting

Our goal is to ensure that the strategy is implemented according to timelines and that this is reported through relevant mechanisms to the Menzies Board and to all staff.

To achieve this, we will:

- ⇒ Develop annual action plans, with goals, resources, key performance measures and responsibilities outlined.
- ⇒ Establish a working group to oversee the implementation of the strategy and annual action plans.
- ⇒ Ensure that senior staff across the organisation demonstrate leadership and commitment by embedding goals and KPIs into operational planning.

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