

Central Adelaide SEED Allied Health Aboriginal Cadetship Program

SEED stands for Success = Education + Employment + Development

Leanne Stewart, Sarah Macdonald, Samara Osborne, Lenore Bagnara, Trish Laccos, Ngara Keeler

Background

- It is important for health care organisations to create sustainable pathways for Aboriginal allied health professionals to enter the health workforce.
- Central Adelaide Local Health Network (CALHN) is South Australia's largest health network (LHN). Over the past year 1.1% (almost 5000) people who live in CALHNs region identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander¹.
- CALHNs diverse Aboriginal consumer profile includes more than 10,000 Aboriginal people (4% of CALHN's consumers) who are from metropolitan Adelaide, regional or remote South Australia and interstate areas rather than from with the CALHN catchment¹.
- The framework for the Aboriginal Allied Health Cadetship has been introduced based on the CALHN Seed Model: Success = Education + Employment + Development. The SEED program is part of our One CALHN, Many Pathways initiative "helping us build the next generation of Aboriginal health professionals" and is also the graduate pathway for our cadets.
- The Cadetship supports students to gain a professional employment experience to complement their studies, provides exposure to a world class health system in the largest LHN and helps CALHN to build the next generation of Aboriginal allied health professionals.
- The model is flexible and designed to complement and add value to student studies, whilst ensuring they are supported to fulfil cultural expectations.
- The CALHN SEED Model was developed by CALHN Principal Aboriginal Workforce Consultant, Lenore Bagnara.

Aim

- The purpose of embedding the Cadetship within the CALHN Allied Health Directorate is to (a) support Aboriginal students to gain relevant and practical paid experience in a culturally safe³ environment to complement their allied health studies and (b) create a sustainable pathway to build the Aboriginal allied health workforce, to provide culturally competent³ and responsive care that will better meet the needs of Aboriginal consumers.

Approach

- The Cadetship is one of the key strategies in the CALHN Allied Health Workforce Recruitment and Retention Action Plan.
- The Cadetship is open to students studying any of the following allied health or scientific professions: Social Work; Psychology; Exercise Physiology and Physiotherapy; Audiology and Speech Pathology; Nutrition and Dietetics; Occupational Therapy; Orthotics and Prosthetics; Podiatry and Medical Science.
- The Cadetship offers opportunity for movement and experience across CALHN health care settings. This provides individuals with unique opportunity to experience and develop a variety of skills across four clinical sites, including acute, sub-acute, outpatients and community. This approach supports the Cadet to identify areas of interest.
- Another key approach in the Allied Health Cadetship is the focus on flexibility in rostering to ensure that the Cadetship fits with their study commitment and offers a variety of employment experiences.
- The flexible work arrangements within the model are vital in continuing to build culturally inclusive work environments to support Aboriginal employees to better meet their work, family and cultural obligations.
- The initiative is promoted amongst community, partnerships with Universities and at employment expos.



Implementation

- The CALHN Allied Health Aboriginal Cadetship Program commenced in 2022. The Social Work Department lead the operational aspects of the program.
- Between 2022-2025, there has been 6 Cadets who have completed the program – 3 (Social Work); 1 (Physiotherapy); 1 (mixed – across Physiotherapy and Dietetics); 1 (Podiatry).
- Currently, there are 2 prospective Cadets interested in joining the program later in 2025.

Future Directions

- Work with allied health leaders to embed the program within each allied health discipline, with a focus on cultural safety³.
- Streamline attraction, onboarding and orientation process.
- Increase number and variety of cadetships offered across allied health.
- Consider how we can involve interested Cadets in working groups and committees where they have an interest.
- Refine and implement a consistent formal feedback and evaluation process.

Ngadluku kuma pirrkutidli – We are all part of the story

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to acknowledge that the CALHN SEED Model was developed by Lenore Bagnara, and for all of the support Lenore provided to the Social Work Department particularly in the initial stages. Additionally, support from all of the allied health professionals and leaders who have unreservedly supported the program and provided feedback and learnings that have contributed to the ongoing review and development of the Cadetship. We would also like to thank the Cadets for taking up the initiative and providing us with ways to improve the experience.

References

1. Listening, Caring, Healing Aboriginal Health Framework & Action Plan 2022 to 2027
2. CALHN Aboriginal Employment and Retention Strategy 2022-2026 and beyond
3. Appendix 3 Fundamental concepts to increase Aboriginal health knowledge and translation contained within Listening, Caring, Healing, page 53



Health
Central Adelaide
Local Health Network