



Tallangatta Health Service
Diversity, Access
And Inclusion Plan
2023 - 2026



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Message from the CEO

Tallangatta Health Service's (THS) Diversity, Access and Inclusion Plan (the plan) has been developed with reference to Victorian and Commonwealth Standards and Frameworks which support the provision of care and services to diverse and disadvantaged groups in our society.

Tallangatta Health Service is located within the Towong Shire and has been providing local health services for over 100 years. Our services and programs are delivered on-site but also in homes and communities across a broad geographical footprint. It should not matter where you live in this community, as accessibility and inclusion are a consistent commitment and a consistent message.

Health equity is about everyone in the community having the necessary knowledge, skills and resources to achieve and maintain good health and wellbeing (Source: World Health Organisation). Tallangatta Health Service is committed to ensuring that access to our health services are equally available to people within the diverse society in which we live. People who have been identified with access and equity concerns are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent
- Socio-economically disadvantaged
- Living in rural or remote areas
- Living with a mental illness or intellectual disability
- Living with abuse or neglect
- Living with a physical disability (including communication deficits)
- Affected by discrimination, social exclusion or incarceration
- From cultural or linguistically diverse backgrounds, particularly refugees and survivors of torture and trauma.
- LGBTQIA+

The Diversity, Access and Inclusion Plan seeks to identify and address barriers to access and equity across all of our organisation's services. It aligns with our Strategic Direction 2018-27 vision, and strategic priorities, and sits alongside our Reconciliation Action Plan and Gender Equality Action Plan. We also reflect our alignment with the Victorian State Disability Plan (2022 – 2026) and its pillars and priority areas.

Tallangatta Health Service is very proud of the progress made in meeting the needs of patients, community and staff. We remain committed to implementing the specific actions included in this plan and will monitor progress and outcomes over the next 3 years. This will ensure the organisation continually improves its services and facilities with a view to delivering a truly accessible healthcare service for all of the community.



The Board and Executive have made a commitment to apply the principles of access and inclusion to the functions of the health service and this commitment flows down to each member of staff.

About Tallangatta and our region

Tallangatta Health Service (THS) is situated within the township of Tallangatta, which is located in the Towong Shire. Towong Shire is located in North East Victoria, about 300 kilometres north-east of Melbourne. The Shire covers a land area of over 6,600 km. Most of the population is spread across the Shire, mostly in rural townships. The largest township is Corryong, with 1,352 residents, followed by Tallangatta, with 1,175 residents.¹

The Towong Shire has an estimated resident population of 6,223 comprising 3,166 males and 3,059 females as reported by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) in 2021.

The median age of 52 is greater than the Australian median age of 38. 28.6% of the population are aged over 65. The largest cohort is aged between 55 and 64 years, at 17.9%. People aged under 34 make up 31.3%.

The median weekly household income is \$1,282 compared to the Australian median of \$1,746. The proportion of people who have completed year 12 is 55.6% compared to Australia wide figure of 66.7%.

THS offers the only primary care in this area, and our patient base extends more than 70kms from Tallangatta township. The closest health services are located in Wodonga, 40 kms away.

About Tallangatta Health Service

Tallangatta Health Service (THS) functions under the Health Services Act 1988 (VIC) and is delegated its functions by the Minister of Health. THS is a small rural health service funded by the Department of Health (State) to provide public health services, and it receives aged care funding from the Department of Health (Commonwealth). Our service operates within a Strategic Directions 2018-2027 framework with the vision of THS to '*Empowering People for Health*'.

Tallangatta Health Service employs 180 staff in a mix of full and part time roles (EFT 103). Of these, three staff members identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander persons.

Tallangatta Health Service is situated on one site and is located 30 minutes from the large regional centre of Albury-Wodonga and services a large section of the Towong Shire encompassing Tallangatta, Tallangatta Valley, Bullioh, Tallangatta South, Georges Creek, Dartmouth, Mitta Mitta, Granya, Eskdale, Old Tallangatta, Jarvis Creek and surrounds.

Core business includes Residential Aged Care (low and high care), Medical Clinic, Acute Ward, District nursing, Allied Health and other community programs.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021 Census.

<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/population-census/latest-release>



Our Vision

'Empowering People for Health'

To enable the best health possible, focusing on the individual's best interests, a person must feel empowered to make decisions. Empowering people is aimed at making each person in our community stronger and more confident, to give them authority in decision-making for health.

Our Values

Achievement of our vision relies on a positive culture. The values of Tallangatta Health Service will drive our culture and it is respected that the values will be "lived" by staff, volunteers and Board Directors. All members of the service will hold true to the following values.



Acknowledgement to the Traditional Owners

Tallangatta Health Service acknowledges the Traditional Owners of this land on which we stand and pay our respects to Elders, past, present and future, for they hold the memories, the traditions and the cultures of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Tallangatta Health Service has developed a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) to reflect our current position and introduce deliberate reconciliation initiatives going forward. Our starting point in this journey is a Reflect RAP given the organisational maturity.





Our Pillars

Five pillars provide a strong foundation to the success of Tallangatta Health Service:

- 1. Person Centred Approach**
The person will be at the centre of all we do and we will empower them in health decisions.
- 2. Evidence Based Decision Making**
Our decisions will inquire, looking for best practice to inform our decisions.
- 3. Sustainability**
Our decisions ensure that success can be maintained.
- 4. Culture of Excellence, Innovation, Learning & Development**
We will be the best we can be by embracing new ways.
- 5. Robust Clinical & Corporate Governance**
Our governance systems will provide assurance that we are providing the best care possible and that our strategic vision is being achieved.

Strategic Priorities

The **Strategic Direction 2018-2027** is based on four strategic priorities identified by Tallangatta Health Service and are critical to ensuring the service achieves its vision by remaining relevant and sustainable, and meeting the changing health needs of the community.

Strategic Priority 1

Our care is relevant, safe, high quality and responsive.

Strategic Priority 2

Our infrastructure is planned for future needs.

Strategic Priority 3

Our partnering with communities cultivates connections.

Strategic Priority 4

Our workforce is adaptive, skilled and compassionate.



Scope of the Diversity, Access and Inclusion Plan

The intent of this plan addresses all relevant aspects of the operation of Tallangatta Health Service including all sites, agency activities and the delivery of services, including but not limited to:

- Acute, Primary and Residential Aged Care services
- Recruitment, Employment and Induction processes
- Training and Education
- Delivery of campaigns, programs and events
- Community based health services

Glossary of terms

Ableism Describes discrimination based on a person's disability. Ableism interacts with other forms of discrimination, such as gender inequality, racism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and ageism. This creates multiple and intersecting forms of systemic discrimination for Aboriginal people, women, LGBTIQ+ people, multicultural people, older people and young people.

Aboriginal self-determination The ability for Aboriginal people to freely determine their political status and pursue their economic, social and cultural development. It also describes self-determination as a right that relates to groups of people, not only individuals.

Accessibility The extent to which people with disability can access something like an office, worksite or public area.

Co-design The process of involving people with disability in designing, delivering and evaluating a policy, program or service.

Disability Act The Disability Act 2006 (Vic) provides a whole-of-government and community response to the rights and needs of people with disability including a requirement to have four-year state disability plans.

Intersectionality Refers to a way of understanding a person with disability's unique experience of multi-layered and intersecting discrimination and disadvantage based on their personal characteristics, including age, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnic origin or race including the particular situation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability and culturally and linguistically diverse people with disability.

LGBTQIA+ Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and gender diverse, intersex and queer.

National Agreement of Closing the Gap Enables Aboriginal people and governments to work together to overcome the inequality experienced by Aboriginal people and achieve life outcomes equal to all Australians.

NDIA The National Disability Insurance Agency, which is the government agency responsible for the NDIS.



NDIS Jointly funded by the Commonwealth and state and territory governments, the National Disability Insurance Scheme provides access to disability supports for eligible people with disability.

Person-first language Person-first language puts the person before their disability – for example, ‘person with disability’. Person-first language is used to emphasise a person’s right to an identity beyond their disability.

Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability Seeks to understand the experiences of people with disability and recommend important safeguards. The commission is due to conclude in September 2023.

Safeguards Actions taken to prevent abuse and neglect.

Systemic Reform These are new areas of focus that will help the Victorian Government work differently to deliver inclusion and access and uphold rights. There are six areas:

- Co-design with people with disability
- Aboriginal self-determination
- Intersectional approaches
- Accessible communications and universal design
- Disability-confident and inclusive workforces
- Effective data and outcomes reporting

Universal design Making spaces, policies and programs that are inclusive, accessible and can be used independently by all people

Supporting Standards, Frameworks and Policies

- Department of Health 2009, Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights in Victoria
- Department of Health 2017, Language Services policy
- Department of Health 2009, Cultural Responsiveness Framework- guidelines for Victorian health Services
- Department of Health 2009, Well Proud. A guide to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex inclusive practice for health and human services
- National Safety & Quality Health Service Standards (NSQHS)- Sept 2012
- Aged Care Quality Standards
- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2021
- Victorian State Disability Plan 2022-2026
- RACGP Standards for General Practice 5th Edition
- Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, Interim Report 2020



Objectives of the Plan

Aim

To provide equitable access to the services and facilities provided by Tallangatta Health Service

Objectives

- Better meet the needs and address barriers to persons with a disability who access Tallangatta Health Service as a visitor, consumer or staff member.
- Promote participation and inclusion in our local communities for persons with a disability
- Meet legislative requirements under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) and the Disability Act 2006 (Vic) in all areas of our service delivery including our role as a responsible employer
- Focus on practical, achievable and deliverable initiatives to enhance the physical and visual environment
- Highlight our commitment to gender equality and implement actions and strategies in our Gender Equality Action Plan
- Commit to providing a safe and inclusive environment to ensure LGBTQIA+ people can be themselves without fear of judgement or discrimination. This commitment extends to all visitors, consumers and staff
- Recognise that people who identify as LGBTQIA+ have unique health and wellbeing needs and it is important that they are empowered to communicate these needs to ensure person centre care is delivered
- Highlight our commitment to reconciliation and implement actions and strategies in our Reconciliation Action Plan to work towards providing a culturally safe environment for people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- Commit to increasing our cultural competence in order to provide a safe environment for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people

Monitoring, Review and Continuous Improvement

Our progress in implementing strategies and actions will be reviewed by the Leadership Team quarterly and by the Occupational Health, Safety and Environment Committee as scheduled.

Progress will be reported to the Board annually and key achievements celebrated through communication channels.

The plan is a living document and as such will be updated as indicated by activities or changes in legislation.



Communications Plan

The objectives of the Communications Plan are to:

- Communicate to staff the environmental achievements to date
- Generate involvement, participation and ownership for key initiatives and goals
- Promote to our consumers the role our Health Service plays in environmental sustainability
- Foster an environmental ethos for staff and consumers to identify sustainable practices

Communication activities and channels

- Local publications including Tallangatta Herald and Berringa News
- Weekly staff newsletter, the Snapshot
- Memo and email to all staff
- Occupational Health, Safety and Environment Committee
- THS Intranet
- THS Website and social media sites

Alignment with the Victorian State Disability Plan 2022 – 2026

To achieve an inclusive Victoria, the State has committed to a series of systemic reforms outlined below. Where applicable, THS will adopt and align with these principles.

Co-design with people with disability

We will work more with people with disability when putting together government policies, programs and services.

Aboriginal self-determination

We will work in partnership with Aboriginal communities to make changes and improve the lives of Aboriginal people with disability. We will make sure we listen and that Aboriginal people lead the change they want to see to the system.

Intersectional approaches

We will focus on how ableism connects with other forms of wider discrimination. We will consider this in all our policies, programs and services.

Accessible communication and universal design

We will work across government to put in place universal design principles in everything we design and build.

We will help government agencies to provide inclusive, accessible and targeted communications for people with disability.



Disability confident and inclusive workforces

We will make sure public sector workers understand disability and how to deliver inclusive services. This will include making sure everyone understands:

- the social model of disability
- how all forms of discrimination connect with each other
- how to work with Aboriginal people in a respectful way.

Effective data and outcomes reporting

We will improve the way we collect and use data about people with disability across government. This will make our policies and programs stronger and our reporting better.

Action Plan

| Area / Focus | Action / Strategy |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Promotion Changing attitudes | Utilise media opportunities and community publications to broadcast messages on inclusion Reflect on one's own culture, attitudes and beliefs about 'others' Encourage clear, value free, open and respectful communication Recognize and avoid stereotypical barriers Review THS forms to check language is inclusive Recognition and celebration of cultural events including Social Media promotion Update THS website to support and promote diversity CEAG membership to ensure diversity |
| Disability access | Consider Transport options to improve access to THS services and programs Welcome assistance animals into our facility Prepare materials and resources in a range of accessible formats Enable access to Auslan interpreters as required Improve physical access to buildings Maintain NDIS accreditation and train/screen staff |



| Area / Focus | Action / Strategy |
|---|--|
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander | Reconciliation Action Plan initiatives Increase cultural safety with visual images Provide cultural competence training for staff Make sure we always “ask the question” Work with partner agencies such as Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation and VACCHO Add artwork to uniforms Recognition of celebrations such as Naidoc Week |
| Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) people | Prepare materials and resources in other languages Enable access to interpreters Provide a welcoming environment and represent diverse cultures in our material Website links and support for CALD community |
| Employment | Grow a diverse workforce to build organisational capacity Implement Gender Equality Action Plan initiatives Collect and monitor data on staff diversity |
| Digital Inclusion | Access to telehealth Availability of devices such as iPads for consumers to borrow |
| Gender Diversity | Address sexual harassment through training Review our environment, consider toilet signage and removing gender specific references Inclusive language training for staff |
| LGBTIQ+ | Recognition of community and partnering with local groups LGBTIQ+ awareness training Application for specialisation verification through MAC Welcoming environment Inclusive language / forms Website links and support |





Education
religion or belief
values
beliefs
policy
access
equal
norms
rights
sex
agency
legislation
empowerment
gender
race
fair
class
justice
disability
ethnicity
diversity
age
status
poverty
anti-oppressive practice
sexual orientation
difference
opportunities
celebrate
youth work
society

