



OUR PEOPLE, OUR STRENGTH:

**Building the Tackling Indigenous Smoking
Health Promotion Workforce**

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the many nations across Australia and pay our deepest respects to Elders past, present and to the youth who will be our future leaders. We recognise the enduring connection that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have to land, waters, skies, and culture.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who generously shared their stories, experiences, and insights to help shape this Workforce Framework. Your voices, lived wisdom, and cultural knowledge have guided and grounded this work.

This Framework stands as a reflection of your leadership, resilience, and unwavering commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of our communities. It honours the strength of those who came before, the courage of those working today, and the hope carried forward by future generations.

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Tackling Indigenous Smoking National Coordinators Foreword



PROFESSOR TOM CALMA AO – FAA FASSA FAHA

Kungarakan and Iwaidja

As a lifelong advocate for the health and wellbeing of our people, I am proud to support *Our People, Our Strength: Building the Tackling Indigenous Smoking Health Promotion Workforce*. This framework represents a significant step forward in strengthening and empowering a skilled, community-led workforce dedicated to reducing the impact of tobacco-related harm in our communities.

Tobacco use continues to be one of the leading contributors to the health gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians. Addressing this challenge requires culturally informed, strengths-based approaches grounded in self-determination and led by our communities.

This framework builds on the foundations of the Tackling Indigenous Smoking (TIS) program and recognises that meaningful workforce development goes beyond training. It calls for strategic investment in career pathways, recognition frameworks, and systems that improve recruitment, retention, and performance—particularly in remote and underserved areas.

The result is a practical, forward-looking roadmap that reflects the lived realities of TIS workers and charts a clear path toward professional recognition, accredited study options, and ongoing capability development.

It is my hope that this framework not only guides future workforce strategies but also stands as a testament to the dedication, resilience, and innovation of the TIS workforce—our people, our strength.

¹ The Tackling Indigenous Smoking (TIS) program is a national population health initiative funded by the Australian Government that aims to reduce tobacco-related harm among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through locally-led, culturally appropriate approaches.



MESSAGE FROM EILEEN VAN IERSEL – NATIONAL PROGRAM MANAGER NBPU TIS

Arrernte/Luritja and Anmatjere

As a proud descendant of the Arrernte/Luritja and Anmatjere language groups of Central Australia, my career has been grounded in improving the health and wellbeing of our people. Across roles in child protection, justice, education, housing, and health, I've seen how culturally safe, community-led approaches are key to creating lasting change.

Since 2015, the National Best Practice Unit (NBPU TIS) has delivered high-quality, evidence-based training and resources grounded in a population health approach to strengthen the TIS workforce. In 2024, I had the privilege of travelling to 26 TIS grant recipients across the country. One theme stood out above all: workforce development and the retention of First Nations staff.

Too often, we heard passionate workers refer to themselves as “just a TIS worker” —a phrase that reveals the divide between formally qualified staff and the invaluable frontline TIS workforce. But what must be celebrated is that these workers are the heart of our health response. They are the trusted messengers who provide life-saving, evidence-based information about how tobacco impacts all cancers and chronic diseases in our communities.

Through years of listening to TIS staff and community leaders, one truth became clear—training alone is not enough. Workers have called for accredited qualifications, recognised career pathways, and access to further study that reflects their skills in health promotion, outreach, and engagement. These needs were echoed by Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations nationwide.

My hope is to see more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people starting and growing in TIS careers—backed by strong support systems at every stage.

Please continue to share your feedback—good or bad—with us here at National Best Practise Unit.





MESSAGE FROM KERINDY CLARKE – NATIONAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ADVISOR NBPU TIS

Worimi and Gamilaroi

As the National Workforce Development Advisor, it has been a privilege to walk alongside TIS teams and partner organisations over the past 12 months. I've had the honour of hearing your stories—your passion, your dreams, your aspirations, and the incredible strength and innovation you bring to this work.

Thank you for being so generous with your time, your knowledge, and your solutions. I also want to acknowledge the systemic and day-to-day barriers many of you continue to face. Your insight has deeply shaped the foundation of this Workforce Framework and will continue to guide its evolution.

Looking ahead, the next 12 months are dedicated to co-designing the National TIS Workforce Implementation Plan with you—the workforce. This process begins with a national baseline survey, followed by a working group of TIS practitioners, RTOs and Universities to map out qualifications and training pathways. We will then consult with the broader workforce to shape an action plan that is practical, grounded, and nationally endorsed.

If you're interested in being involved in this co-design journey, I warmly encourage you to reach out and express your interest. Your voice matters, and this work cannot be done without you.





MESSAGE FROM DR PENNEY UPTON – RESEARCH & EVIDENCE LEAD, NBPU TIS

Since its launch in 2015, the National Best Practice Unit Tackling Indigenous Smoking (NBPU TIS) has provided training in essential program skills to the Tackling Indigenous Smoking (TIS) workforce. While this capability-focused training has been consistently well received and recognised as valuable, TIS staff have increasingly expressed the need for access to accredited qualifications that support professional recognition, career progression, and long-term capacity building.

TIS workers expressed frustration at the lack of relevant accredited qualifications in community outreach with a focus on population level health promotion. Informal conversations reinforced the need for a nationally recognised program of study, similar in structure to the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice certificates, but with a non-clinical focus.

This feedback aligned with the NBPU TIS team's practical experience and knowledge of workforce development, particularly the benefits of a strategic, system-level approach to workforce development for improving recruitment, retention, and worker productivity, even in challenging rural and remote contexts.

Recognising these workforce needs, NBPU TIS proactively advocated for the development of a dedicated TIS Workforce Development Framework, successfully securing the support of funders to undertake this important work. This support enabled us to conduct a comprehensive desktop review of existing vocational education programs alongside a national workforce survey. The framework presented here is the outcome of that investment and reflects the needs and aspirations of the TIS workforce.

What is Tackling Indigenous Smoking Program?

The Tackling Indigenous Smoking (TIS) Program is a vital initiative within the Australian Government's Indigenous Australians' Health Programme (IAHP), aiming to reduce smoking rates among First Nations communities.

This program aligns with national frameworks, including the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2021–2031, and the National Preventive Health Strategy 2021–2031.

https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2021/12/national-preventive-health-strategy-2021-2030_1.pdf

BACKGROUND

Established in 2010 as part of the Closing the Gap Agreement, the TIS program was designed with a focus on preventing smoking and e-cigarette uptake, promoting 'smoke free' communities, homes, cars, workplaces and other shared spaces and reducing chronic diseases caused by tobacco use.



TIS PROGRAM EXPANSION AND EVALUATION (2023–2027)

The TIS Program has expanded to cover 100% of First Nations communities, up from 76%, delivered by 26 organisations across 37 Indigenous Regions (IREGs) with formal partnerships.

With additional funding in 2023–24, the program now includes vaping prevention activities such as community events, educational resources, targeted messaging, and training workshops, all guided by data-driven insights to reduce First Nations smoking rates by 10% by 2030, aligning with the National Preventive Health Strategy.



Our People, Our Strength: Building the TIS Health Promotion Workforce

WHERE WE STARTED

Since 2015, the National Best Practice Unit – Tackling Indigenous Smoking (NBPU TIS) has played a pivotal role in supporting and strengthening the TIS workforce. Through high-quality, capability-focused training, NBPU TIS has helped build a culturally safe, community-led approach to tobacco prevention and cessation. This foundational training is consistently well received and remains central to the program’s success.

As the program evolved, TIS staff voiced a clear need for accredited, career-building qualifications that reflect their work in non-clinical population health, outreach, and engagement. Many called for education pathways like Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice certificates, tailored to TIS roles.

This feedback, echoed by Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, reinforced that sustainable workforce development requires more than training—it needs strategic investment in:

- Career pathways and professional recognition
- Culturally safe, responsive qualifications
- Better systems for recruitment, retention, and performance

WHERE WE’RE HEADED

The result is a practical, forward-looking framework that reflects the lived realities of TIS workers and charts a clear path toward:

- **Professional recognition**
- **Accredited study and upskilling options**
- **Long-term capability development**
- **Improved retention and progression for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff**

Currently in 2025, there are approximately **190 Aboriginal FTEs working in TIS roles nationally**. With this framework, NBPU aims to increase that number, create space for growth and ensure that every person in the workforce is supported—by their organisation, NBPU, and sector stakeholders working together toward a shared goal.

This framework is not just a guide for the future. It reflects the passion, commitment, and innovation of the TIS workforce—and a commitment to walk alongside them every step of the way.

CONSULTATION TIMELINE AND FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

2022

NBPU conducted a national survey, asking TIS teams about existing qualifications, aspirations for further education, and the barriers they faced. The results clearly highlighted a gap in relevant, accessible qualifications aligned to TIS roles—and a desire for a more structured and supported development pathway. This initial evidence laid the foundation for a national workforce framework.

2024

To lead this critical work, NBPU established a dedicated National Aboriginal Workforce Development Advisor position. This role was tasked with designing a workforce framework and implementation plan grounded in the lived experience of the TIS workforce and shaped through consultation with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, TIS workers, and key sector partners.

2025

Between June 2024 and April 2025, the Workforce Development Advisor consulted with over 20 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations. These engagements, along with earlier survey results and program data, informed the development of four key strategic priorities. These strategies will underpin the co-design of a National TIS Workforce Implementation Plan—working collaboratively with Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), universities, and the broader workforce.

WHAT IS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT?

Workforce training and workforce development are often talked about together, but they mean different things. Training usually helps you build skills for the job you're doing now. Workforce development, on the other hand, is about long-term growth—it supports you to build skills that help you take on new opportunities and move forward in your career.

Workforce development looks at the bigger picture. It focuses on building up individuals, services, and systems to make our health workforce stronger, especially in remote and challenging settings.

The aim is to provide the employee with transferable skills relevant to their career, creating professionals ready for the next position of responsibility. The focus of development is capacity building

Programs like mentoring, professional development, and networking show that your role is valued. These supports help keep people in the workforce and create clearer pathways to grow your career.

Importantly, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices must lead this work. When Aboriginal people oversee decisions about our futures, it supports self-determination. Aboriginal-led co-design makes sure our lived experiences are at the centre, not pushed to the side.

The aim of this framework is to build systems that are broad and comprehensive, targeting individual, organisational and structural factors and aiming to strengthen the workforce at a strategic level.

It focuses on clear career pathways, leadership opportunities, and valuing your role. Aboriginal-led co-design and decision-making are key to self-determination. By centring our voices and lived experiences, we create better outcomes and stronger partnerships across TIS services, with governance that reflects and respects community.



Four Key Strategic Priorities

1. ESTABLISH AN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN TO SUPPORT, GROW AND RETAIN ABORIGINAL TALENT

Develop a consistent, culturally grounded approach to employing, managing, and growing Aboriginal talent in TIS health promotion. This includes a practical resource tool that identifies what drives success and what causes attrition. The goal is to build systems of continual improvement that support career progression and retention—not just recruitment.

2. STRENGTHEN ABORIGINAL HEALTH EXPERTISE THROUGH EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Increase access to formal qualifications and leadership opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff by strengthening pathways into training. Use workforce data to highlight underrepresentation at senior levels and create partnerships with universities and registered training organisations to improve access with this information on an online portal.

3. GROW CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS ACROSS THE TIS WORKFORCE

Create structures where Aboriginal employees feel safe to raise concerns, seek support, and co-design workplace conditions. Ensure teams are empowered to respond meaningfully to the cultural and emotional needs of Aboriginal staff to improve retention, wellbeing, and leadership development.

4. REMOVE BARRIERS TO CAREER PROGRESSION AND LEADERSHIP

Design a “no-gap” model where employment conditions do not limit career growth. Ensure Aboriginal staff have equitable access to senior roles and pathways, regardless of where they start. This supports long-term workforce sustainability and reflects the value of lived experience in Aboriginal leadership.



Workforce Perspectives and Insights

ACKNOWLEDGING THE BARRIERS

Workforce development for Aboriginal staff, particularly in the Tackling Indigenous Smoking (TIS) sector, involves navigating several challenges and priorities. Access to professional development opportunities is essential for building capacity, but various barriers can limit participation.

Consultation and survey identified consistent themes for TIS Workforce in accessing accredited qualifications in the past this included:

- **Time:** this appeared to be a leading barrier, with the main challenge focused on how to balance competing priorities of study, work role, family and community commitments.
- **Cost:** courses can be expensive, and individuals may have other financial commitments to prioritise. Without financial support from their organisation, access to subsidised training, or a student loan, further study may be out of the reach of many employees.
- **Resources:** not everyone has access to the resources required to support further training such as a good internet connection, use of a computer, tablet or laptop, and a quiet space to study.
- **Organisational Support:** study leave or protected study time was not always available to staff.
- **Accessibility:** responses typically indicated that either relevant training programs did not exist, or courses were hard to access due to distance (i.e., only delivered in other states or in metropolitan areas). It was also noted that for some people lack access related to expectations around language, literacy and numeracy.
- Finding accredited training providers, nationally and the need to offer contextualised programs that reflect the unique needs of the workforce and their communities.



KEY DRIVERS

The enablers of workforce development for the TIS workforce highlight the strengths of supportive structures and strategies. The NBPU will continue to advocate nationally for culturally responsive, context-specific training, leveraging partnerships with Training Organisations and universities nationally.



Culturally safe learning environments: Programs that embed cultural values, reflect Aboriginal ways of knowing and being, and are delivered by trusted educators or organisations.

Recognition of lived experience: Valuing and accrediting on-the-job learning, community knowledge, and cultural roles as part of formal training pathways.

Local role models and leadership pathways: Visibility of other Aboriginal Health Workers progressing into leadership, inspiring others to see what's possible.



Clear career pathways and progression frameworks: Defined opportunities to move from entry-level roles into senior positions or specialised areas (e.g., tobacco control, youth health).

Flexible delivery modes: Online, block release, and mixed-mode training options that allow workers to study around family and community responsibilities.

Secure employment and fair classification levels: Permanent roles and proper recognition within awards/enterprise agreements to build stability and value.



Peer networks and communities of practice: Spaces to connect with other Aboriginal TIS Workers, share challenges, and celebrate success.

Leadership support and advocacy: Managers who actively advocate for staff development and create space for growth, feedback, and recognition.

Workplace wellbeing initiatives: Support for emotional, social, and cultural wellbeing—including debriefing, self-care leave, and cultural supervision.



Snapshot of our TIS Workforce Qualifications

Our current TIS workforce holds a diverse range of qualifications across multiple industries, reflecting both lived experience and formal learning pathways. This breadth highlights the workforce's strength, adaptability, and readiness for continued growth through recognised, non-clinical health promotion pathways.

CERTIFICATE I

- Engineering
- Land Management

CERTIFICATE II

- Engineering
- Horticulture
- Tourism Operations

CERTIFICATE III

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care (Health Industry Training)
- Aboriginal Mentoring
- Community Services
- Fitness
- Sports Coaching
- Civil Construction Plant Operations
- Individual Support
- Sport & Recreation
- Hospitality
- Retail (Business)
- Indigenous Primary Health Care
- Aboriginal Tour Guide Specialist
- Health Services (Assistant Nursing)
- Allied assisting health

CERTIFICATE IV

- Fitness
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health
- Aboriginal Health Practitioner
- Community Services
- Aged Care
- Disability Services
- Home and Community Care
- Alcohol and Other Drugs
- Education
- Business
- Rail Infrastructure
- TAE
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care
- Primary Health Care



DIPLOMA

- Business
- Youth Work
- Management
- Leadership and Management
- Community Services
- Beauty Therapy
- Clinical diploma associate
- Indigenous Health Advance Diploma
- Project Management
- Primary Health Care

ADVANCED DIPLOMA

- Management Learning
- Bachelor of Arts
- Educational Theatre

UNIVERSITY

- Health Promotion
- Bachelor of Nursing
- Post Grad Health Promotion
- Bachelor of Health Sciences – Majoring Health Promotions
- Graduate Certificate to International and Community Development
- Bachelor of Health Science
- B. Ed (PE/Science)
- M. Science
- Graduate Diploma in Public Health
- Graduate Diploma Indigenous Health Promotion



Our People, Our Strength: Verhonda Smith-Robins

Apunipima Cape York Health Council



Verhonda Smith-Robins (also known as Bonnie) is a proud Wangkumara woman whose journey through health promotion and smoking prevention spans several years and locations. Starting her career in health and wellbeing at the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS), she later took on roles back home in Bourke NSW during the height of COVID-19 before settling into her current position in Cairns, where she has worked as a TIS Health Promotion Officer for the past three years.

In her current role, Verhonda thrives on grassroots engagement—connecting directly with community, hearing personal stories, and empowering people to make healthier choices. She describes one of the most fulfilling aspects of her work as the opportunity to witness and celebrate living, thriving culture in remote regions: through language, dance, and tradition.

Verhonda attributes her professional growth to both formal education and lived experience. She has pursued a Bachelor of Arts (History and Indigenous Studies), a Graduate Diploma in Public Health, and is currently completing a Graduate Diploma of Indigenous Health Promotion and working toward her Master's. Beyond academia, she credits her development to “having a crack,” asking questions, and reflecting on how to translate knowledge in ways her own family would understand and value.

Early in her TIS journey, Verhonda faced challenges accessing training—particularly when Quit Skills training was defunded. She filled those gaps through self-directed learning and team support. Over the years, she has challenged herself by stepping into leadership roles, such as backfilling a team lead position and adapting to the needs of each workplace.

When reflecting on what she would tell her younger self, Verhonda shares:

“Prioritise your wellbeing and prioritise a healthy work-life balance. Be confident in your abilities, trust yourself, and don’t let your age make you doubt what you can bring to the table”

While Verhonda has always been supported to pursue further study, sometimes balancing education with workload and life responsibilities hasn’t always been easy—challenges many can relate to.

To new TIS staff, she offers this advice:

Be creative in how you deliver TIS messaging—find ways to make it meaningful and relevant to your community. Don’t be afraid to speak up and share your ideas. Take the opportunity to connect and build relationships with TIS workers at jurisdictional and national workshops. Find inspiration from other TIS teams, there’s so much deadly work being done across the country.



Informed by Experience: Stakeholder Perspectives

Since the project's inception, NBP UTIS has conducted extensive consultations with key stakeholders to strengthen the TIS workforce. This includes:

- **Government agencies:** Supporting alignment with policy and securing funding and system-level support.
- **Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs):** Co-designing culturally appropriate workforce pathways and encouraging framework adoption.
- **RTOs and Universities:** Engaging education providers to ensure qualifications meet workforce needs.

Initial discussions with NAATSIHWP's CEO received strong support, and preliminary findings were shared at the 3rd International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference (Lowitja Institute, 2023), where international feedback reinforced the global relevance of this work.

This consultation continues to inform the development of the National TIS Workforce Plan, ensuring alignment with current reform directions and community needs. The Plan brings together TIS worker voices, workforce data, and strategic planning into one national roadmap.

It also supports and aligns with several key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health policy reforms:

- *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework (2016–2023)*
- *National Agreement on Closing the Gap (2020)*
- *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan (2021–2031)*
- *Cultural Respect Framework (2016–2026)*
- *NAATSIHWP Scopes of Practice (2024)*





TIS Training Pathways: What fits our workforce?

Mapping Skills, Building Pathways: ATIS Workforce Development Summary

In 2024–2025, the National Workforce Development Advisor worked closely with TIS staff to map current and expired qualifications against actual job roles and skillsets. Through consultations with Registered Training Organisation (RTO) leaders and feedback from “a day in the life” of TIS workers and Coordinators, a comprehensive skills matrix was developed. This matrix reflects the day-to-day responsibilities of TIS roles—from community engagement and event delivery to program design, budgeting, data analysis, and strategic planning.

The insights gained were used to identify relevant training opportunities, recognising that workforce development can be approached flexibly—through either micro-credentials (skill sets) or full qualifications. This two-way approach supports staff to build their own career pathways based on their role and aspirations. Key training areas identified include smoking program delivery, digital technologies, community health research, and project management. Suggested qualifications range from Certificate III in Aboriginal Primary Health Care to advanced diplomas and graduate-level study.

This model demonstrates how career progression for TIS staff can be strengthened through tailored training aligned with lived roles and real-world responsibilities—and can be adapted by services to meet their local context.

LEARNING PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Statement to Attainment in Professional Development Planning

SKILL SETS (MICRO-SKILLS)

Develop, Implement and Evaluate Smoking Programs (Workforce, budgets, leadership, strategy and policy development)

Develop, Implement and Evaluate Smoking Community Projects (public speaking, marketing and media)

Use of Digital Technologies (CRM/PMS, AI in Health, Adobe, Microsoft Suite)

Research Community Health

QUALIFICATIONS

Certificate III Aboriginal Primary Health Care (Health Promotions)

Certificate IV Community Services

Certificate IV or Diploma Leadership and Management

PATHWAYS

Clinical - Cert IV Aboriginal Primary Health Care Practice to Degree in Nursing

Strategic Management (Program) – Advance Diploma Leadership or Degree in Business

Health Promotions (Project) – Dip of Project Management or Cert IV in Marketing and Communication

Research - Cert IV in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Theory and Practice

Graduate Diploma of Indigenous Health Promotion

Understand VET: Pathways to Build Skills and Grow Careers

Vocational Education and Training (VET)

offers nationally recognised qualifications that build practical, job-ready skills across a range of industries—including health promotion, leadership, and community engagement. Overseen by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), these courses are listed on training.gov.au and delivered by approved Registered Training Organisations (RTOs).

For TIS staff, VET provides flexible pathways to gain or formalise qualifications that reflect their real-world experience. It supports workforce development by offering training that aligns with current roles—from entry-level community engagement to advanced program management.

To improve access, foundation-level VET courses also address literacy and numeracy needs, helping create inclusive entry points for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers.

A recent review identified several highly relevant qualifications for the TIS workforce in areas such as Aboriginal Primary Health Care, Population Health, and Health Promotion. These courses form a strong base for professional growth and recognition and can be mapped to individual roles through micro-skills or full qualifications.

Where do I start? Foundation Courses for Every Stage

Addressing Accessibility and Advanced Training

Recognising literacy and numeracy barriers in VET qualifications, foundation-level courses from the **Foundation Skills Training Package (FSK)** are recommended:

1. **FSK10119:** Certificate I in Access to Vocational Pathways
2. **FSK10219:** Certificate I in Skills for Vocational Pathways
3. **FSK20119:** Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways



Level Up: Certificate III and IV Options for TIS Workers

A review identified 14 qualifications and highlighted six key Cert II–IV courses in Population Health and Aboriginal Primary Health Care as strong, relevant pathways for TIS workforce development and study.

Aboriginal and/or
Torres Strait Islander
Primary Health Care



Population
Health

Aboriginal and/or
Torres Strait
Islander Primary
Health Care Practice



Aboriginal and/or
Torres Strait
Islander Primary
Health Care
Management

Population
Health



Indigenous
Environmental
Health

Indigenous
Environmental
Health



Aboriginal and
Torres Strait
Islander
Research
Theory and
Practice

Indigenous
Environmental
Health

Aboriginal and/or
Torres Strait
Islander Primary
Health Care



Population
Health

Event
Management

Aboriginal and
Torres Strait
Islander
Governance

Leadership in
Management

Community
Development

Your Story, Your Strength: Pathways Beyond VET

The NBPUTIS acknowledges that our incredible TIS Workforce is made up of individuals at many different stages of their education and career journey and if you're considering advancing your qualifications through university study, the following options may support your growth in the TIS field and beyond:

Undergraduate and Postgraduate Study Options as of 2025:

- Bachelor of Health Science (Indigenous Health) – Charles Darwin University, Southern Cross University
- Bachelor of Science (Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing) – University of Western Australia
- Graduate Diploma in Indigenous Health Promotion – University of Sydney

- Graduate Certificate in Aboriginal Health in Rural Communities – University of Melbourne
- Specialist Certificate in Empowering Health in Aboriginal Communities – University of Melbourne
- Master of Indigenous Health – University of Wollongong
- Master of Public Health (Indigenous Health Specialisation) – University of Melbourne

Your education journey is your own, and there is no one pathway. If you're interested in learning more about these options or need support to explore your next step, please reach out.

TIS Professional Development Plan (PDP)

1. About me
Name: Click or tap here to enter text.
Current Role / Position: Click or tap here to enter text.
Workplace / Organisation: Click or tap here to enter text.
Start Date in current Role: Click or tap here to enter text.

2. My strengths and passions
What am I good at? What do I enjoy? What cultural, community or lived experiences do I bring to my work?
Click or tap here to enter text.

3. My development goals

Goal	Why is it important to me	By when?
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

4. Training, study or learning I'm interested in

Type	Course/ Topic	Provider (if known)	Support needed
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

5. Support I need

- ☐ Study leave / flexible hours
- ☐ Help with enrolment or applications
- ☐ Mentoring or cultural support
- ☐ Financial support (fees, travel, etc.)
- ☐ Someone to yarn with regularly
- ☐ Other: Click or tap here to enter text.

6. People who can support me
Click or tap here to enter text.

7. Cultural responsibilities and support
Many Aboriginal staff carry responsibilities within their communities or are often looked to for cultural advice or support in the workplace. This section is a space to talk about what that looks like for you and how the organisation can walk alongside you.

- What cultural or community responsibilities do you have outside of work that we should know about? Click or tap here to enter text.
- Are there times when your cultural responsibilities increase (e.g. Sorry Business, NAIDOC, community events)? Click or tap here to enter text.
- Do you feel like your cultural identity is recognised and respected in the workplace? Click or tap here to enter text.
- Are you often asked to represent, speak for, or support others as an Aboriginal staff member? How does that impact you? Click or tap here to enter text.
- What support would help lighten that load? Click or tap here to enter text.
- Additional comments: Click or tap here to enter text.

8. Check-ins & Progress

Date	What we talked about/ what changed	Next steps
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

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HOW TO USE THIS PDP FORM WITH YOUR STAFF

The Professional Development Plan (PDP) is a practical tool to support your team's growth. It helps staff set goals, identify training needs, and map out their career development. Use this form during regular one-on-one conversations or annual performance reviews to guide meaningful discussions about learning, wellbeing, and future opportunities.

Next Steps: Co-Designing the Implementation Plan

The next phase in developing the TIS Workforce Framework is to return it to the people it was built for—the TIS workforce. Through a co-design approach, we will work alongside staff, coordinators, and key stakeholders to develop the National TIS Workforce Implementation Plan. This plan will translate the framework's priorities into practical actions, timelines, and shared commitments that reflect the realities, strengths, and aspirations of the workforce on the ground.

1. Foundation and Engagement

- **Baseline Workforce Survey**
Launch a national baseline survey to capture current workforce data and insights.
Timeline: Complete by 30 June 2025
- **Recruit National Working Group**
Open expressions of interest to form a Working Group of 10–15 experienced TIS practitioners from across the country.
Timeline: August 2025

2. Initial Mapping and Scoping

- **Working Group (TIS Practitioners)**
Identify key workforce challenges and priority areas
Set terms of reference and a meeting schedule
Define action plan goals
- **Establish RTO and University Advisory Group**
Identify and engage key training providers
Initiate national forum to map relevant qualifications, delivery modes, and estimated costs
Collaborate with NBPU Comms Team to publish an online training pathways map
Timeline: Completed by December 2025

3. Co-Design and Drafting

- **Working Group (Phase 2)**
Draft the National Workforce Action Plan based on priority areas
Integrate baseline survey findings
Timeline: Complete by 30 June 2025
- **RTO/University Collaboration**
Finalise first version of the National TIS Pathways Map (qualifications + costings)
Timeline: December 2025

5. Drafting Principles and Approvals

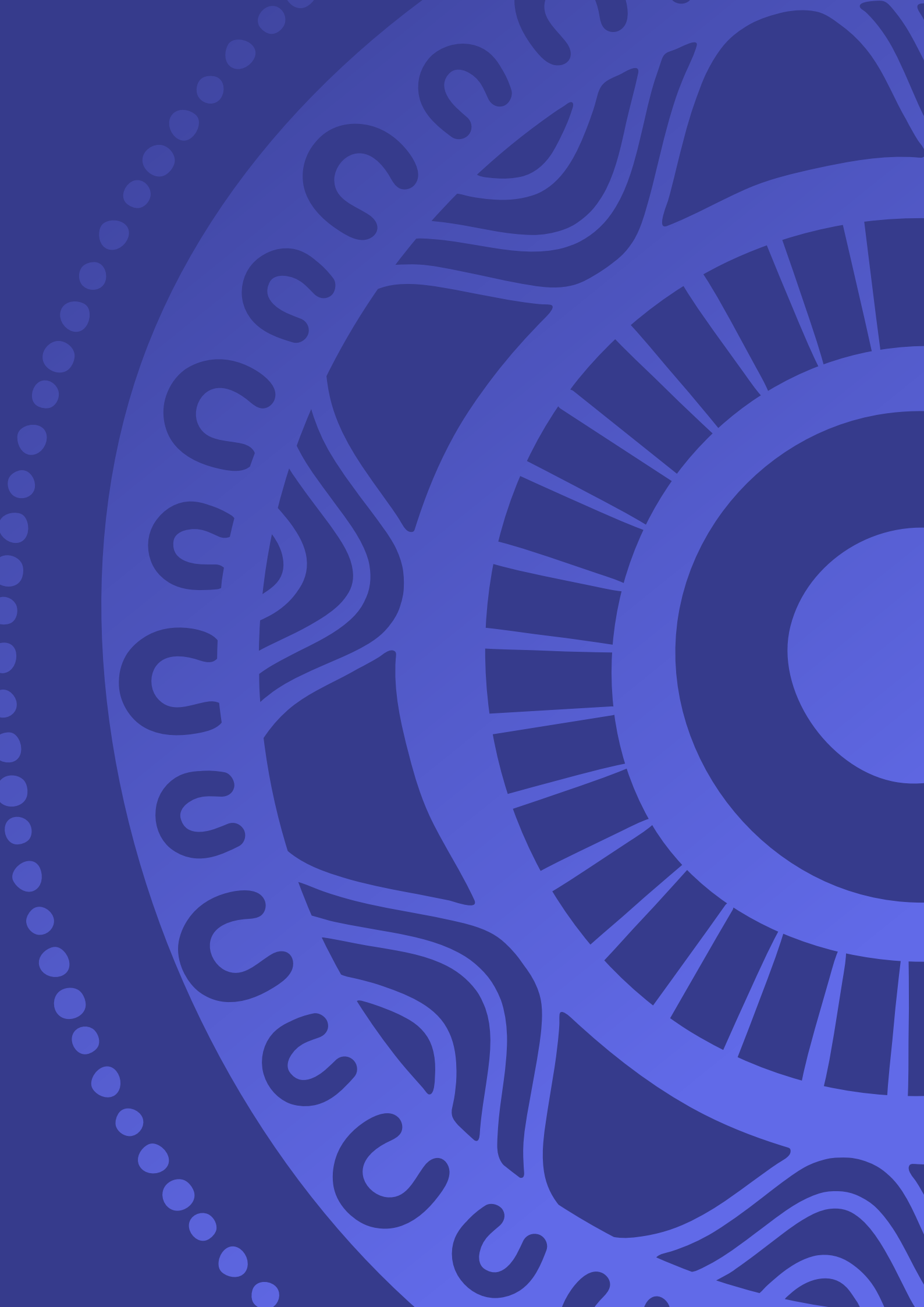
- **Develop Draft Workforce Development Principles for CEO Support**
Collaborate with CEOs, NAACHO, NAATSIWIP, and Professor Tom Calma AO
Seek endorsement of shared principles
- **Revise Action Plan and Pathways Map**
Incorporate consultation feedback
Finalise drafts for review and endorsement
Proposed launch at CEO workshop in 2026

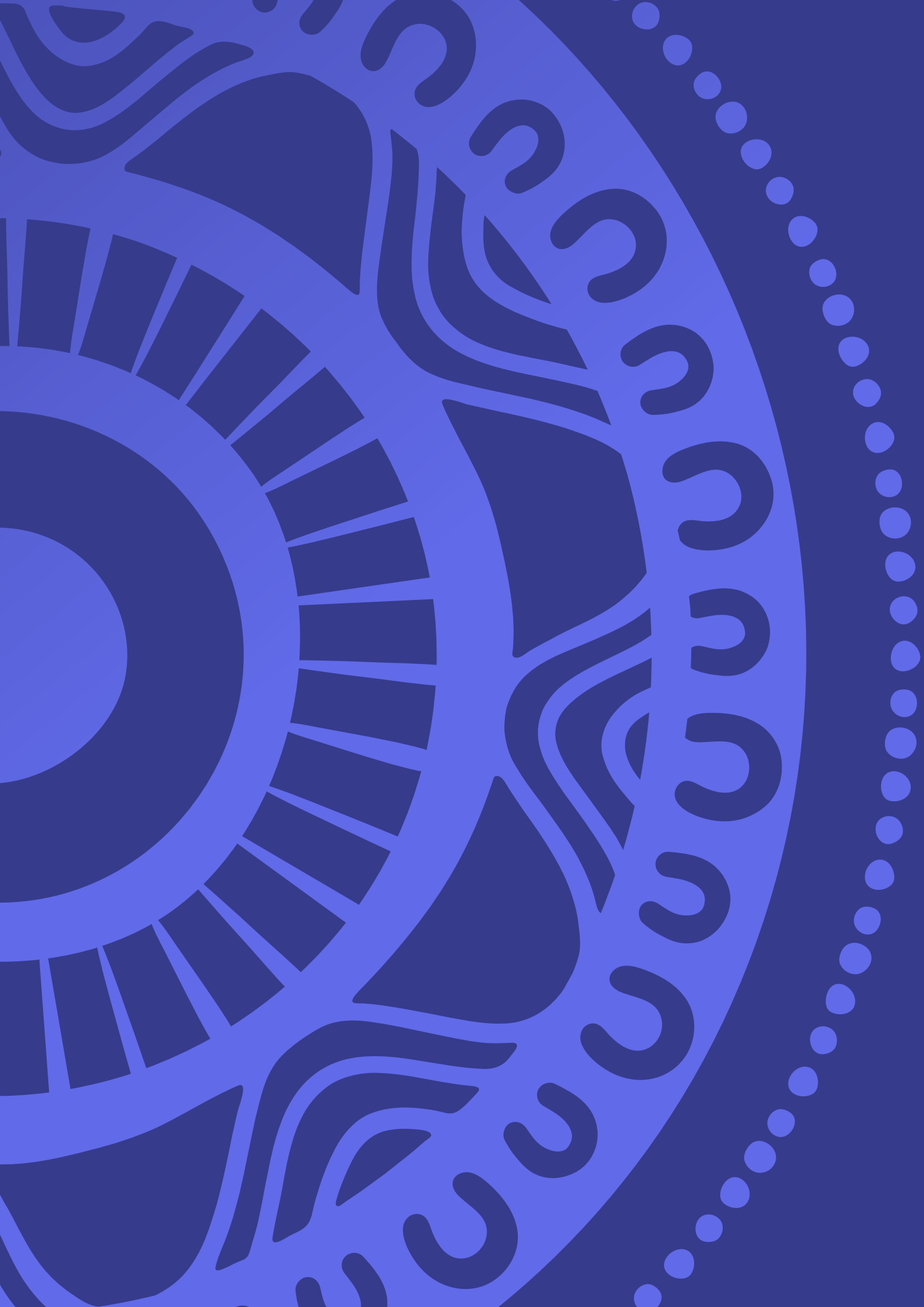
6. Finalisation and Launch

- **Endorse Final Action Plan**
Final approval by TIS Working Group and national partners
Prepare launch strategy for national workshop and communications rollout
- **Endorse and Disseminate CEO Principles**
Secure final sign-off from NAACHO, NAATSIWIP, and the Department (as required)
Share across ACCHOs and TIS-funded organisations
- **Launch the National TIS Workforce Pathway Map**
Publish online and promote nationally
Implement ongoing monitoring

4. Consultation and Feedback

- **Consult TIS Workforce on Draft Plan**
Conduct online focus groups or yarning circles with TIS staff and coordinators
Present draft action plan and pathways map
Collect feedback to validate and refine
Timeline: November 2025 – March 2026







Disclaimer:

This document is intended to inform and support ongoing discussions around the TIS Workforce. The content provided is for guidance only and may be subject to change as the project evolves. If you have any questions, feedback, or would like to be more involved in this work, please contact us at TISWorkforce@nintione.com.au