The Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives

Strategic Plan: 2013 - 2018

Unity and Strength through Caring
Contents

CATSINaM’s vision, values and principles..............................................2
  Our vision and purpose .......................................................................2
  Our core values ................................................................................2
  Our principals ..................................................................................3

Our strategic directions ........................................................................4
  Overview ................................................................................................4
  1: Profile of CATSINaM as a national peak body ..................................6
  2: Advocacy on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives .................8
  3: Recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in nursing and midwifery .........10
  4: Active involvement in research and workforce development projects ........................................12
CATSINaM’s Vision, Values and Principles

Our vision and purpose

Our vision is that:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives play a pivotal and respected role in achieving health equality across the Australian health system for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

We describe our purpose as follows:

CATSINaM honours an holistic and culturally safe approach to achieving optimal health and wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. We develop and promote strategies to ensure that this holistic and culturally safe approach is understood and applied by nurses and midwives working in Australia.

Our core values

- Respect
- Confidentiality
- Accountability
- Honesty
- Fairness
Our principles

• We are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples before we are nurses and midwives.

• We are first nation’s peoples and intend to maintain our cultural heritage.

• We recognise that we are on a lifelong journey with cultural obligations and commitment to our communities.

• We challenge the western health model in which nurses and midwives live and work, as this model promotes separation, hierarchy and power struggles; it denies the emotional, social, spiritual and political aspects of health in our holistic way.

• The philosophy that promotes all peoples as equal, or to be treated the same, denies difference and cultural identity.

• Justice and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history is a requirement of reconciliation.

• We are the experts in our own health and believe our experience and worldview challenges these models. Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can learn and benefit from our experiences.

• Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives are forced to live a ‘double life’. This living between two worlds and two cultures causes internal conflict. We see this as a continuation of the assimilation process and support all measures to reverse or challenge this process.
Our Strategic Directions

Overview

Our Strategic Directions for the next five years focus on four central areas: the profile of CATSINaM, advocacy, recruitment and retention, research and workforce development projects:

1. **Strategic Direction 1**
   Elevate the profile of CATSINaM as the national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives

2. **Strategic Direction 2**
   Strengthen our effectiveness in advocating on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives

3. **Strategic Direction 3**
   Strengthen our effectiveness in supporting recruitment/retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives

4. **Strategic Direction 4**
   Increase our active involvement in research and workforce development projects that realise the CATSINaM vision
The work to address the Strategic Directions is outlined below. Each Strategic Direction has objectives and several key strategies that will be implemented to achieve the objective over the next five years. While strategies are listed under one Strategic Direction for convenience, some strategies also contribute to the desired outcomes for other Strategic directions.

Indicators are listed in order to determine how well CATSINaM is progressing under each Strategic Direction. They are divided into ‘process’ and ‘impact’ indicators.

- **Process indicators** are used to judge the effectiveness and appropriateness of strategies, and focus on issues of satisfaction, quality, audience and reach. They are not necessarily ‘linear’, as there does not always need to be a separate process indicator for each strategy.

- **Impact indicators** are used to judge progress toward or achievement of objectives and focus on difference or change. They are not necessarily ‘linear’, as there does not always need to be a separate impact indicator for each objective, and on occasions there needs to be more than one impact indicator for one objective.
Profile of CATSINaM as a national peak body

The work under Strategic Direction 1 is focused on the following three objectives:

**Objective 1.1:** To improve the recruitment and retention of our Members.

**Objective 1.2:** To increase our Member communication, support and engagement.

**Objective 1.3:** To increase external stakeholder awareness of CATSINaM as the national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives.

The impact indicators for determining progress in achieving these objectives are:

**Impact 1.1:** By 2018, at least 30% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives are CATSINaM Members.

**Impact 1.2:** There is evidence that CATSINaM organised or hosted activities:
- achieve a high participation rate of CATSINaM Members

### Strategies

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<tr>
<th>Process indicators</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Process 1A:</strong> The Membership Recruitment and Retention Strategy is inclusive of all states and territories, and enables access for people in diverse locations.</td>
<td>1.1 Develop and implement a national Membership Recruitment and Retention Strategy with existing, past and potential Members.</td>
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<td><strong>Process 1B:</strong> CATSINaM Members report:</td>
<td>1.2 Provide regular, current and relevant professional information to Members.</td>
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<td>• communication, professional information, assistance and/or referrals by the Secretariat are relevant and provided in a timely manner</td>
<td>1.3 Consult with Members on a regular basis in relation to:</td>
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<td>• consultation processes are respectful and effective</td>
<td>• professional support needs and priorities</td>
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<td>• CATSINaM activities reflect their needs and priorities</td>
<td>• policy priorities for CATSINaM</td>
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<td>• professional development incentives and support options are appropriate and effective.</td>
<td>• CATSINaM constitutional change (as required).</td>
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<td>1.4 Provide assistance, referral and advocacy for Members as required.</td>
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Strategies

1.5 Provide incentives and support for members to engage in professional development opportunities that reflect their needs and aspirations.

1.6 Develop and implement a new CATSINaM Communication Strategy that guides the promotion of CATSINaM and its work to a range of external stakeholders.

1.7 Promote the value of the scope and role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives across all health sectors.

Process indicators

Process 1C: The CATSINaM Communication Strategy:

- promotes consistent and positive messages about CATSINaM and its Members
- successfully reaches CATSINaM’s full range of stakeholders
- supports CATSINaM’s active involvement in nursing and midwifery, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health campaigns.

Process 1D: Stakeholders in all health sectors report they:

- understand the scope and role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives
- appropriately deploy Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives in line with their scope and role.

Rationale

Achieving an elevated national profile for CATSINaM is dependent on three matters.

- First, we need to build the size and distribution of our membership so we represent a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives across Australia, and can gain a fuller appreciation of their professional needs and the range of contexts in which they work.

- Second, a greater level of regular communication, support for and strategic engagement with our Members will ensure we develop a well-grounded understanding of the range of priorities, issues and aspirations of our Members, and a well-informed approach to providing direct professional development and support opportunities.

- Third, we need to ensure that the wider range of stakeholders across the health sector know who CATSINaM is, what we do and how we can provide guidance to them (the focus of Strategic Direction 2 and 3) on the scope and role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives.

These three matters are interlinked. As our Members experience CATSINaM engaging with them in a more frequent and focused manner, and see CATSINaM being more frequently recognised and sought out by a range of stakeholders in the health sector, they are more likely to stay Members and encourage their colleagues to become Members.
Strategic Direction 2
Strengthen our effectiveness in advocating on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives

Advocacy on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives

The work under Strategic Direction 2 is focused on the following two objectives:

**Objective 2.1:** To increase the capacity of CATSINaM Directors and Members to represent CATSINaM in our advocacy work.

**Objective 2.2:** To strengthen existing and establish new partnerships that enable CATSINaM to advocate on:

- the importance, role and cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals
- improving health outcomes and cultural safety in health systems for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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<td>2.1 Develop, implement and regularly review the CATSINaM Policy Framework as a basis for our advocacy and representation work.</td>
<td><strong>Process 2A:</strong> CATSINaM’s policies and/or position statements are publicly available and regularly reviewed.</td>
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<td>2.2 Provide and/or access opportunities that support the development of CATSINaM Directors, Staff and Members as leaders in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, and in nursing and midwifery (links with Strategy 1.5).</td>
<td><strong>Process 2B:</strong> CATSINaM Members and Directors report that CATSINaM provided or promoted leadership development opportunities assist them to be more confident in being representatives and undertaking advocacy work.</td>
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<td>2.3 Communicate and work with key Federal Ministers and their advisors on a regular basis.</td>
<td><strong>Process 2C:</strong> CATSINaM receives timely responses to their communication, and regular opportunities to work with key Federal Ministers, their advisors and Government agencies.</td>
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<td>2.4 Develop and maintain relationships and partnerships with a range of government agencies and other stakeholder and health professional organisations, and provide them with information and expert advice.</td>
<td><strong>Process 2D:</strong> CATSINaM is represented in a wide range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health activities, organisations, committees, working groups and curriculum development projects at state and/or national levels.</td>
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<td>2.5 Represent CATSINaM on relevant committees, Boards, working groups, campaigns and projects.</td>
<td><strong>Process 2E:</strong> All nursing and midwifery programs leading to registration or endorsement include content on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, history, culture and cultural safety that meets the 2012 RN Accreditation Standards as a minimum benchmark.</td>
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<td>2.6 Advocate for mandatory Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content on health, history, culture and cultural safety in:</td>
<td>- all training programs leading to registration or endorsement</td>
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<td>- all training programs leading to registration or endorsement</td>
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The impact indicators for determining progress in achieving these objectives are:

**Impact 2.1:** CATSINaM Directors and Members are more effective and regularly involved in representing CATSINaM and undertaking advocacy work at local, state or national levels.

**Impact 2.2:** There is a steady increase in partnerships with external stakeholders that:
- are consistent with CATSINaM values and advocacy priorities
- result in meaningful health and cultural safety outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals (including CATSINaM Members), and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

**Rationale**

Our advocacy work will be based on CATSINaM policy position papers and position statements that are developed through our policy framework, and reflect the contemporary health environment in which we operate. We will develop policy position papers on newly identified and emerging, as well as existing priorities, i.e. the importance, role and cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals, and the need to improve health outcomes and cultural safety in health systems for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

CATSINaM’s policy position papers and position statements will provide a platform for our advocacy and partnership work at multiple levels, whether it is undertaken by CATSINaM Directors, Staff or Members. It will define when and how we represent our Members, the basis on which we enter into partnerships with other stakeholders, and the focus of our message. In order to become more effective, we will work with our Directors, Staff and Members to enhance their leadership skills in being representatives of and advocates for CATSINaM.

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<td>• continuing professional development (CPD) leading to ongoing registration or endorsement.</td>
<td>Process 2F: Educational institutions and employers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives across all sectors are familiar with and have implemented CATSINaM advice on creating culturally safe working environments.</td>
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<td>2.7 Advocate for enhanced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content on health, history, culture and cultural safety in future reviews of all accreditation standards leading to enrolment, registration or endorsement.</td>
<td>Process 2G: CATSINaM has expert input into the production of a definitive and academically robust guide for teaching and learning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, health, culture and cultural safety.</td>
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<td>2.8 Advocate for and provide advice on creating culturally safe working environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives.</td>
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<td>2.9 Lobby for and participate in the development of materials that advance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ health, and the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives.</td>
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<td>2.10 Actively engage in developing, publishing, distributing and promoting an academically rigorous interpretative guide for teaching and learning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, health, culture and cultural safety for all nursing and midwifery training programs (undergraduate, post-graduate and CPD).</td>
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Recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in nursing and midwifery

The work under Strategic Direction 3 is focused on the following two objectives:

**Objective 3.1:** To expand our influence in supporting the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in nursing and midwifery.

**Objective 3.2:** To increase access to professional development and cultural safety support strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives, as students and qualified professionals.

The impact indicators for determining progress in achieving these objectives are:

**Impact 3.1:** CATSINaM is identified as a respected and ‘first port of call’ source of information and expertise on recruiting and retaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in nursing and midwifery.

### Strategies

**3.1** Develop, advise on and participate in strategies with relevant stakeholders that increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander:

- students in nursing diploma, and nursing and midwifery undergraduate programs
- nurses and midwives undertaking post-graduate, doctoral and post-doctoral programs
- students completing courses leading to endorsement as Nurse Practitioners (NP) and Eligible Midwives (EM).

**3.2** Develop, advise on and participate in strategies with relevant stakeholders that increase the number of formal graduate year program placements available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nursing and midwifery graduates.

### Process indicators

**Process 3A:** CATSINaM receives regular invitations to and/or positive responses to their offers to work with funding bodies, education and employer organisations in addressing recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives.

**Process 3B:** The mentoring program is accessible to CATSINaM Members in different geographical locations.

**Process 3C:** CATSINaM Members report high satisfaction with how the mentoring program:

- meets their support needs
- provides access to suitable mentors
- provides support options for different stages of their professional life
- contributes to their professional growth and cultural safety.
Impact 3.2: Relevant funding bodies, education and employer organisations report that CATSINaM has had a positive influence in increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples:

- enrolled in vocational, undergraduate and post-graduate education, and continuing professional development programs
- successfully completing nursing and midwifery programs in parity with national population statistics (i.e. 3% of all Australians)
- practising and retaining employment in all sectors of the health system.

Impact 3.3: There is evidence that CATSINaM provided and/or promoted professional development and cultural safety support strategies:

- extend the range of professional development and support available to CATSINaM Members
- contribute positively to the cultural safety and professional growth of CATSINaM Members.

Rationale

A long-standing and ongoing priority for CATSINaM is the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in nursing and midwifery. Alongside other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in health, in both health professional and other service support positions, our presence as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives makes a major contribution to enhancing the cultural safety and health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples using health services. However, without cultural safety for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce or potential workforce, it is difficult to ensure this occurs as an expected and part of the health service experience. It will also have a negative impact on recruitment efforts.

Further, CATSINaM believes that the retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives will be influenced by the availability of professional development options that are designed on the basis of their unique needs, an approach that is currently not commonly adopted.

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| 3.3 Develop and implement a mentoring program that supports professional growth and cultural safety of CATSINaM Members at different stages of their professional life, i.e. as student in basic and post-basic training programs, and as practising nurses and midwives. | Process 3D: CATSINaM Members report that CATSINaM provided and/or promoted professional development options:  
  - reflect their needs and priorities  
  - are of high quality. |
| 3.4 Identify and promote, and/or develop and implement professional development options that reflect the needs and priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives, including in partnership with other stakeholders. | |
Active involvement in research and workforce development projects

The work under Strategic Direction 3 is focused on the following two objectives:

Objective 4.1: To increase our influence on research in nursing and midwifery and/or Aboriginal health that is undertaken by other stakeholders.

Objective 4.2: To increase our involvement with designing and implementing workforce development projects.

Strategic Direction 4

Increase our active involvement in research and workforce development projects that realise the vision of CATSINaM

Strategies

4.1 Consult with Members on research and workforce development project priorities for CATSINaM.

4.2 Encourage and support Members in undertaking research projects and presentations.

4.3 Develop proposals and secure funding to implement workforce development projects that are consistent with CATSINaM’s vision and purpose, including in partnership with other stakeholders.

4.4 Actively support, advise on and guide research projects in nursing, midwifery, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health that are undertaken by other stakeholders.

Process indicators

Process 4A: CATSINaM Members report:
- consultation processes are respectful and effective
- CATSINaM research and workforce development activities reflect their priorities
- CATSINaM provided or promoted support to engage in research assists them to be more confident and actively involved.

Process 4B: CATSINaM’s capacity and expertise to undertake workforce development projects is recognised by funding bodies, collaborators (existing or potential) and relevant stakeholders involved with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce matters.

Process 4C: CATSINaM receives regular invitations to and/or positive responses to their offers to provide expert advice and/or participate in research regarding nursing, midwifery, and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.
The impact indicators for determining progress in achieving these objectives are:

**Impact 4.1:** CATSINaM’s priorities are increasingly reflected in the focus and outcomes of research that impacts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives, and/or Aboriginal health.

**Impact 4.2:** CATSINaM is regularly funded to undertake workforce development projects regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nursing and midwifery, including in partnership with other stakeholders.

**Rationale**
Since inception, CATSINaM has sought to be involved in both research and workforce development. Active involvement in both has been tempered by our capacity as a small organisation. Despite this, we have big aspirations and both research and workforce development projects can play a role in helping us realise them – either through our own efforts or through collaborative work with other relevant stakeholders.

Over the next five years, it is timely for CATSINaM to explore how it can expand its active involvement, and therefore its capacity, in this area. This can occur at several levels – advocacy on CATSINaM priorities (as per Strategic Direction 2), collaborating with research bodies and consultancy groups, undertaking self-initiated research and workforce development projects and/or commissioning research and workforce development projects.