

# Building a culturally secure healthcare environment and leading by example:

The Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander early career speech pathologist position at Monash Health

**Hannah Thompson**

Kara Kara woman

Early Career Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Speech Pathologist

**Alice Robins**

Yuin woman

Community Speech Pathologist



We would like to acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the lands we live and work on, the Wurundjeri and Boonwurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waterways and culture; and that sovereignty was never ceded. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and future



# Abstract

The Monash Health early career Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander speech pathology position is a two-year, co-designed role. Two early career Aboriginal speech pathologists have now taken part in the program.

We will reflect on how the program meets individual learning needs, supports career development and recognises the integral role of culture in daily life.

This program has (1) increased workplace cultural awareness and culturally responsive practice; (2) provided a positive employment pathway; and, (3) increased the number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander speech pathologists in our department.

This position takes a health equity approach, understanding that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples delivering healthcare to their own people results in culturally safe and responsive practice, and can ultimately improve overall health outcomes. Supports for implementation and evaluation of similar roles are discussed.



# Outcomes

- **Two** early career Aboriginal speech pathologists have held this role: Alice & Hannah. Each have gone on to **permanent employment** at Monash Health
- The **co-created, flexible & iterative** nature of the role allowed it to meet **individual career development needs**:

 A portrait of Alice Robins, a young woman with long brown hair, smiling. She is wearing a dark blue patterned top. The background is a colorful Aboriginal artwork with orange, yellow, and black geometric patterns.	<p><b>Alice Robins</b> <i>Yuin woman</i></p> <p>FOCUS ON Research, quality improvement, policy and procedure development and advocacy work</p>	 A portrait of Hannah Thomson, a young woman with dark hair, smiling. She is wearing a black top. The background features the Australian flag and a blue and white flag.	<p><b>Hannah Thomson</b> <i>Kara Kara woman</i></p> <p>FOCUS ON Clinical development and cultural teaching in tertiary education</p>
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- The implementation of this position has anecdotally **increased workplace cultural awareness & culturally responsive practice**



# Addressing Health Inequities

- Healthcare needs to be **equitable, culturally safe & free from racism**
- This position creates a **co-designed, individually tailored employment pathway** for early career Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander speech pathologists
- Having a **culturally safe workforce** can facilitate the delivery of **culturally safe & responsive healthcare** and can ultimately **improve overall health outcomes**



# Implementation / Transition to Practice

- This role provides a **model** of a successful early career Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander role that can be implemented in **other professions** or **other health networks**
- Considerations during **implementation**:
  - How and by whom **cultural supervision / mentoring** will be provided by
  - How First Nations peoples' **ways of knowing, being & doing** will be represented & respected in practice
  - How to create and maintain **individual, departmental & organisational buy-in**
  - How **co-design & self-determination** will be supported
- Considerations during **evaluation**:
  - How to understand **individual, departmental & organisational** outcomes
  - The value of **longitudinal approaches** to evaluation

