

Northern Health Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

2026-2029



Northern Health acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land, the Taungurung and Wurundjeri people, and pays respect to Elders past, present and future.



Northern Health

What's in our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2026-29

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from Our Chief Executive	3
What is Equity, Diversity and Inclusion?	4
Equity	4
Diversity	4
Inclusion	4
Intersectionality	4
Why Equity, Diversity and Inclusion?	4
Celebrating our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion journey.....	5
Listening to Our People	5
Our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Vision	6
Our guiding principles.....	7
Strategic Alignment.....	7
Our Commitment to Action.....	8
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Framework.....	9
Action Plans	10
Measuring our Success	10
Governance.....	11
Considerations in the Development of this Plan	12
National Safety and Quality Health Service	12
Safer Care Victoria - Partnering in Healthcare	13
Victorian Quality and Safety Capability Framework	13
Definitions	14

MESSAGE FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

At Northern Health, our strength is our diversity. Every day, across our campuses and services, we see the dedication, compassion and commitment of our staff in caring for one of the most culturally rich and rapidly growing communities in Victoria. Our patients and staff come from more than 150 countries, speak over 120 languages and follow more than 90 different faiths and beliefs. This diversity is something we are deeply proud of, because it enriches our care, our workplace and our community.

Our values of Safe, Kind and Together guide us in everything we do. Safety is more than clinical care. It means creating environments where people feel culturally safe, respected and able to be themselves. Kindness is not only the compassion we show our patients and families, but also the way we treat one another as colleagues, with empathy, understanding and support. Together speaks to the strength we gain when we listen, collaborate and build partnerships with our staff, our patients and our communities.

We celebrate diversity in all its forms, including age, disability, gender, sexual identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, cultural and linguistic background, ethnicity and religious or spiritual beliefs. Inclusion means that people from every background and identity feel valued and respected, with access to opportunities and resources to share their perspectives and talents. We reaffirm our commitment to equity, because everyone deserves to feel safe, included and respected.

We also recognise that each person's identity is unique and often complex. Intersectionality reminds us that no one is defined by a single label. This is why we commit to listening, learning and responding with empathy. Understanding the full picture of people's lives deepens our appreciation that every experience is different. Recognising these needs is part of delivering person-centred care, which is at the heart of high-quality care at Northern Health.

I am proud to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of this land. We honour their enduring connection to Country, culture and community, and we celebrate the invaluable contributions they continue to make across our health service and our society. While this strategy focuses on other priority groups, our work with Aboriginal communities continues through dedicated strategies and leadership. Our commitment to cultural safety remains a vital part of who we are.

The updated Workplace Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2026–2029 reflects our commitment to ensuring Northern Health is an inclusive, respectful and welcoming place for all. Thank you for the role you play every day in making Northern Health a health service and workplace where everyone belongs. Together, we are building a stronger, fairer and more connected future for our staff, our patients and the communities we proudly serve.

Chief Executive
Debra Bourne

Northern Health

WHAT IS EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION?

EQUITY

Equity means ensuring that everyone is treated fairly according to their individual needs and circumstances, and includes the principle of equal employment opportunity. Fairness does not always mean treating everyone the same; at times it requires providing additional support or adapting our approach to remove barriers. By recognising that some groups face greater challenges or vulnerabilities, and by tailoring our support to meet diverse needs, we can create fair access to care, fair opportunities at work, and fair participation in our community.

DIVERSITY

Diversity is about recognising our individual differences and the unique blend of knowledge, skills and perspectives people bring to the workplace. It includes characteristics such as cultural background and ethnicity, age, sex, gender identity and expression, disability, sexual orientation, religious or spiritual beliefs, language and education, as well as professional skills, working style, location and life experiences. Diversity also reflects the reality that people's identities are complex and can overlap in many ways, shaping how they experience work and care.

INCLUSION

Inclusion is about creating a culture where everyone feels valued, respected and able to fully contribute. It means removing barriers so that all people can participate in the workplace and have equal access to opportunities and resources. True inclusion goes beyond representation; it empowers people to share their skills, perspectives and lived experiences to shape decisions, improve outcomes and strengthen our organisation. Inclusion is reflected when our staff, patients and communities feel welcomed, supported and confident that their voices are heard.

INTERSECTIONALITY

Intersectionality is a way of understanding how different aspects of a person's identity, such as gender, culture, race, class, sexuality or ability, can overlap to shape their experiences of inclusion or discrimination. It recognises that systems of disadvantage often interact and compound, meaning that some people face multiple barriers at once. Intersectionality reminds us to see the whole person rather than looking at characteristics in isolation. By acknowledging the complexity of people's identities, we can better respond to diverse needs and create fairer, more inclusive workplaces and services.

WHY EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION?

A health service that is respectful, welcoming and fair, and that values individual differences, is the foundation of a positive culture of care. Equity, diversity and inclusion are central to how we serve our community, and by fostering a culture of respect we improve the experience of everyone who works with us, receives care from us, or partners with us.

When we treat everyone equally, we treat everyone the same. When we treat everyone equitably, we recognise individual needs. In a diverse community, people may need support in different ways. Equity asks us to acknowledge that everyone has different needs, experiences and opportunities.

Diversity is central to innovation. It brings new ideas, fresh perspectives and better ways of providing care. Inclusion is what allows this diversity to flourish. When we value diversity and inclusion, we see stronger engagement, better outcomes, greater innovation, and improved wellbeing for both staff and patients.

At Northern Health, when we talk about diversity, we are talking about the many people who use and deliver our services. Their different characteristics, backgrounds, abilities, beliefs and needs create unique opportunities and challenges, and enrich both our workplace and the care we provide to the community.

However, it is not enough to simply acknowledge and celebrate diversity. Inclusion means working with this diversity every day, creating a respectful culture where people feel welcome, and ensuring that patients, families and staff are actively involved at every stage of care.

CELEBRATING OUR EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION JOURNEY

Northern Health's commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion has been a long-running, system-wide approach with cultural responsiveness introduced since 2009, engaging consumers, clinicians and leaders. Continuing on this, our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy was introduced in 2018, with equity added as a key focus in 2020. Since then, we have strengthened the diversity of our workforce and continued to build a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for staff, patients and the community.

Some key achievements include:

- Diversity and Inclusion training module for Northern Health staff and consumers
- Community and staff consultations in developing and informing the Cultural Responsiveness Plan
- Celebrating Cultural Diversity Week
- Recognising culturally significant dates
- Models best-practice interpreting standards and fosters a culture of continuous improvement
- Refugee Study Day engaging consumers with lived experience
- Celebrating Pride Festival & March

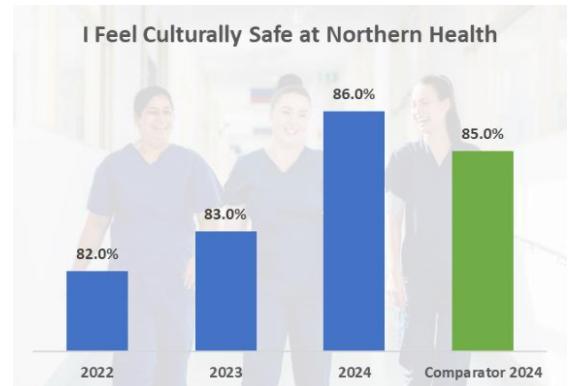
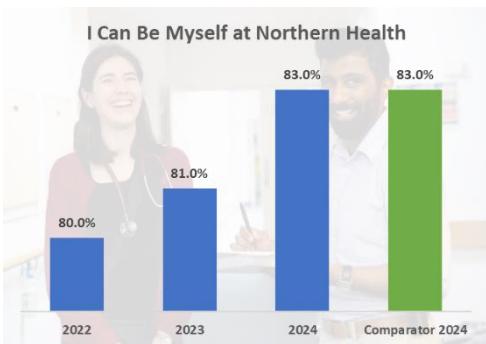
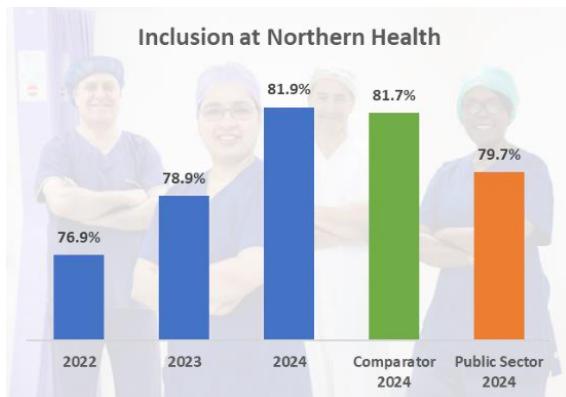
LISTENING TO OUR PEOPLE

The annual People Matter Survey, conducted by the Victorian Public Sector Commission, is a key way we hear from our staff about their workplace experiences. The survey reflects the public sector's commitment to creating a diverse and inclusive workforce. Building engagement and supporting diversity is not only about strengthening our culture, it is also an effective strategy for improving services and ensuring we reflect the community we serve.

At Northern Health, survey responses provide valuable insights into how different groups of staff experience their workplace. This includes perceptions of equal employment opportunity, discrimination, fair and reasonable treatment, and our overall diversity and inclusion climate. Survey data also helps us to identify gender-based patterns, such as differences in access to career opportunities, perceptions of fairness in promotions and recognition, and experiences of flexible work.

These results guide our ongoing work to create a safe, respectful and inclusive organisation where everyone feels they belong.

Since the launch of the 2020-24 Workplace Equity Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, Northern Health's performance in the annual People Matter Survey conducted by the Victorian Public Sector Commission has continued to improve.



Northern Health staff recognise Equity, Diversity and Inclusion as:

- *We are all equal as human beings, even though we have varied life stories and come from different places*
- *Equity is a fundamental principle in the health care we provide*
- *Patients, families and friends and staff are supported in their respective roles*
- *Everyone can feel safe and included at Northern Health*
- *We genuinely listen to each other. The experiences people have at Northern Health are valued, and feedback is encouraged and welcomed. Feedback, including constructive criticism, helps drive positive change*
- *Our health service enables people to be their best. We do this in partnership with others, working together as partners in care*
- *All our staff are sensitive, caring and culturally competent*
- *Our approach to diversity, safety and inclusion makes Northern Health an employer of choice*

OUR EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION VISION

Our goal at Northern Health is to reflect the diverse community we serve and to create a workplace where everyone feels included. We embrace the individual skills, experiences and perspectives that our staff bring and harness these to deliver the best possible patient experience and service outcomes.

We want our people to feel included, connected and respected. This means all staff have access to equal employment opportunities and can fully participate at work. We aim to attract and retain a diverse workforce who can build successful and meaningful careers at Northern Health.

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We will achieve this by unlocking our people's potential through contemporary people practices, creative thinking and a strong commitment to equity and inclusion.

We also recognise that some groups are under-represented in healthcare participation and over-represented in clinical risk. Through our strategy, we are committed to supporting our staff and consumers regardless of their indigeneity, age, ethnicity, gender identity, disability, race, sexual orientation, religion and any other attributes. Furthermore, Northern Health will report publicly on our progress towards achieving the goals of this Plan.

We recognise the significant intersectionality across our priority areas and will collaborate across action plans to respond to the needs of each group. For example, there is considerable overlap between the experiences of culturally and linguistically diverse people and refugees and asylum seekers, who may also have complex health needs linked to disability.

Everyone at Northern Health, including staff, patients, carers, visitors and community members, shares responsibility for building a diverse and inclusive environment. This means creating a place where everyone feels safe, respected and able to be their true self.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Relationships
- Respect
- Opportunities
- Governance

By applying these principles when engaging with our workforce, patients and key stakeholders, Northern Health will continue to build an equitable, diverse and inclusive environment where people feel valued, connected and supported.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Northern Health's commitment to strengthening our approach to equity, diversity and inclusion is reflected in the Northern Health Strategic Plan 2023–2027 (2025 update), which commits to providing safe, kind and together care, with an emphasis on inclusivity, workforce empowerment and community engagement.

This Strategy also aligns with key state and national frameworks that guide equity, diversity and inclusion across the health system, including:

- National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards (NSQHS)
- Safer Care Victoria Partnering in Healthcare Framework
- Victorian Quality and Safety Capability Framework
- Multicultural Health Action Plan 2023–2027 (Victoria)
- Inclusive Victoria: State Disability Plan 2022–2026
- Pride in Our Future: Victoria's LGBTIQA+ Strategy 2022–2032
- National Action Plan for the Health and Wellbeing of LGBTIQA+ People 2025–2035
- Aged Care Diversity Framework

By aligning with these, Northern Health ensures that our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy is consistent with broader state and national priorities, while remaining responsive to the unique needs of our staff, patients and community.

OUR COMMITMENT TO ACTION

The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy was developed by the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, and endorsed by the Northern Health Executive. It outlines Northern Health's approach to strengthening equity, diversity and inclusion, and describes the governance arrangements, structures and strategies in place to support this work.

The Strategy provides a clear focus on promoting inclusion for all, with particular attention to recognised priority groups including, but not limited to, LGBTIQA+ communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, people with disability, and refugees and asylum seekers.

It has been developed with reference to state and federal anti-discrimination legislation

Commonwealth Legislation

- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Fair Work Act 2009
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012

Victorian Legislation

- Charter of Human Rights & Responsibilities Act 2006
- Child Wellbeing & Safety Act 2018
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Gender Equality Act 2020
- Medical Treatment Planning & Decisions Act 2016
- Mental Health & Wellbeing Act 2022
- Multicultural Victoria Act 2011
- Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004
- Racial & Religious Tolerance Act 2001
- Victorian Disability Act 2006
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 (Vic) (New OHS Regulations)

The framework structured around four priority domains for action. Four action plans have been developed with reference to these domains and suggested priorities, ensuring a balanced approach across strategy, implementation and continuous improvement.

The Northern Health Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Framework guides strategy, implementation and continuous improvement across four core pillars: Relationships, Respect, Opportunities and Governance.

We recognise the significant intersectionality across these priority areas and will collaborate across action plans to respond to the needs of individuals and groups.

Northern Health will ensure that the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan and associated Action Plans align with the overarching organisational Strategic Plan, sector standards and frameworks. All activities and initiatives will reflect best practice, remain responsive to industry trends, and be supported by clear lines of accountability. Progress will be monitored and reviewed regularly.

Relationships

Effective and respectful relationships with our staff, community and partners are fundamental to Northern Health being an equitable, diverse and inclusive organisation.

We will ensure that staff and consumers are meaningfully involved in service design, policy development and governance for all Equity, Diversity and Inclusion initiatives. We will increase visibility and commitment to people who are under-represented in healthcare participation and over-represented in clinical risk.

We will also strengthen connections with people who have lived experience, ensuring their voices shape intended experiences and outcomes. In addition, we will build stronger inter-agency partnerships and actively participate in health and medical initiatives with diverse community organisations across the Northern Corridor.

Respect

Northern Health will co-develop improvement and innovation activities and programs that draw on the culture, language and lived experience of our priority groups. Education and support programs will be designed and delivered in consultation with the people who use them, whether staff, patients, consumers or the broader community.

We will promote awareness of healthcare rights by providing accessible information for consumers and by ensuring staff have the knowledge and education they need on consumer rights and responsibilities.

We will foster a culture where staff feel safe and empowered to speak up about what makes a culturally safe workplace, with their voices heard and respected. At Northern Health, we believe that respecting diversity leads to stronger engagement, better staff experiences and improved outcomes for our patients and community.

Opportunities

To achieve our vision of creating a healthier future by working together, innovating and delivering great care, we need a workforce that reflects the diversity of the community we serve and a workplace that is inclusive and empowers everyone to contribute their best.

Northern Health will encourage staff to be proactive in developing their knowledge and skills so that the care we provide is responsive to the needs of every individual. We will promote anti-discrimination procedures and ensure there are clear and accessible processes in place for staff and consumers to report, monitor and address discrimination.

We will also explore research opportunities to design new and improved initiatives that address health gaps. Service development will include measurable targets and strategies to ensure that Northern Health is responsive to the needs of priority groups and vulnerable populations.

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In addition, Northern Health is committed to gender equity in opportunities. This means ensuring equal access to training, mentoring and leadership development for women, men and gender-diverse staff. It also includes monitoring and addressing barriers to promotion and career progression, particularly in areas where gendered segregation is most visible (e.g. women in lower-paid caring roles, men under-represented in nursing, or women's under-representation in senior leadership). Flexible work, parental leave and carer leave will be promoted as options accessible to all genders, not only women, so that caring responsibilities are shared and normalised.

Governance

Northern Health will strengthen the visibility of groups who are under-represented through the development and advocacy of structured strategic initiatives, inclusivity in procedures, practices and key documents, and representation on relevant working groups and committees.

We will identify and embed inclusive signage, symbols and communication practices across our campuses that promote and support accessibility and belonging for all.

We will work alongside senior leadership to support their ongoing commitment to understanding and responding to the needs of our diverse communities. By modelling inclusive leadership at the highest levels, we will support the effective implementation of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion initiatives and create accountability for outcomes.

Our governance approach will align with sector-wide standards and frameworks, which guide our commitment to transparency, accountability and continuous improvement in equity, diversity and inclusion.

ACTION PLANS

Northern Health is deeply committed to fostering an environment that is equitable, diverse, and inclusive. This commitment is reflected in our ongoing efforts to strengthen practices across the organisation—whether through targeted training programs, transparent reporting mechanisms, or initiatives that cultivate a culture where every individual feels respected, valued, and empowered to thrive. We recognise that many individuals belong to multiple communities and identities, and we are dedicated to supporting those who sit at the intersection of these groups. Our approach is adaptive and responsive, ensuring that our policies and practices evolve to meet the diverse needs of our workforce and the communities we serve.

To support our approach, Northern Health has developed a suite of Diversity Action Plans, each designed to address specific areas of inclusion and equity. These plans outline clear goals, strategies, and accountability measures to drive meaningful change. Staff can access the full range of Diversity Action Plans via the Northern Health intranet. Members of the public can request for a copy via mydiversity@nh.org.au.

MEASURING OUR SUCCESS

The biases that perpetuate inequality are often unconscious and automatic. Without clear and robust measures to track equity, diversity and inclusion outcomes, there is a risk of reverting to ingrained habits and patterns of behaviour that limit progress. Northern Health is committed to supporting staff and consumers regardless of their indigeneity, age, ethnicity, gender identity, disability, race, sexual orientation, religion and any other attributes:

(i) Diagnosing risks and opportunities

Representation

- Percentage of employees from monitored groups (segmented data) compared with industry benchmarks and local demographics.

- Proportion of patients and carers from priority groups accessing Northern Health services compared with catchment demographics

Retention

- Comparison of average tenure for employees from priority groups with overall workforce averages. Segmented attrition data for voluntary and involuntary exits.
- Monitoring the continuity of care for priority groups, particularly in relation to identified barriers to access.

Selection

- Tracking appointments of candidates from monitored groups compared with applicants from non-monitored groups.
- Monitoring use of interpreting and translation services, and culturally responsive service design to ensure fair access.

Engagement

- People Matter Survey results for fairness, decision making and voice.
- Patient experience survey results, including questions on whether people felt respected, culturally safe and listened to during their care.

Adverse Event

- Tracking and comparing adverse events, complaints and incidents related to discrimination, bullying, harassment or occupational violence for both staff and consumers

(ii) Measuring progress

Progress will be tracked through Northern Health's governance structures, including:

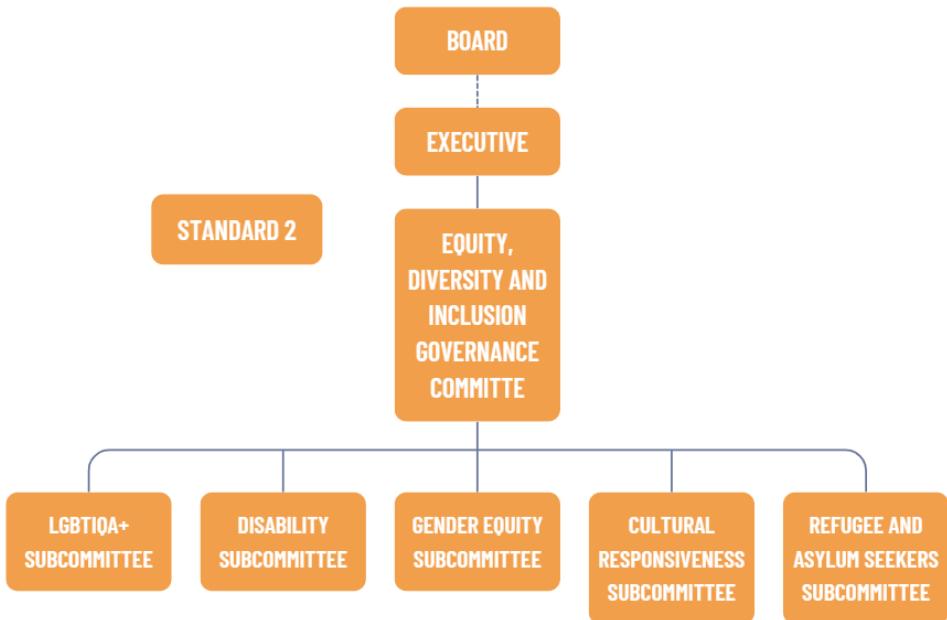
- Regular reporting to the Board, Executive and relevant Standards Committees.
- Implementing, maintaining and monitoring the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Framework.
- Provision of adequate financial resources to achieve agreed objectives and targets.
- Establishing accountability, capacity and capability for the effective management of EDI initiatives.
- Building a culture where staff and consumers experience fairness, belonging and respect.

We will measure annually via the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Survey, with a core focus on *Belonging*. This survey, alongside the Victorian People Matter Survey and Victorian Healthcare Experience Survey, will allow us to track both staff and consumer perspectives. Results will be consolidated and published in an Annual Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Report.

GOVERNANCE

The diagram below shows the governance framework that will oversee the delivery of the Plan. Each subcommittee will develop a three-year Action Plan in line with this framework. Each subcommittee will report quarterly on the progress of their Action Plan to the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Governance Committee.

The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Governance Committee will report progress against action plans to Standard 2 and the Northern Health Executive on a quarterly basis, and will provide papers on strategic initiatives as required.



CONSIDERATIONS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS PLAN

In developing the plan, the current Diversity and Inclusion Management at Northern Health, Northern Health's People Matter Survey results, compliance requirements relating to both legislative and National accreditation standards and the Safe Care Victoria Partnering in Healthcare Framework have been considered.

NATIONAL SAFETY AND QUALITY HEALTH SERVICE

The National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards consist of eight individual standards that cover governance, consumer involvement and key clinical areas of health service operations. The Standards provide a framework to assess whether the necessary systems are in place to ensure safety and quality, and whether continuous improvement mechanisms are being applied.

As part of Northern Health's commitment to diversity, inclusion, safety and quality, this Strategy focuses on the four most relevant Standards, with Standards 1 and 2 being mandatory.

Standard 1 Clinical Governance

Clinical governance, which aims to ensure that there are systems in place within health service organisations to maintain and improve the reliability, safety and quality of care.

Standard 2 Partnering with Consumers

Partnering with consumers, which aims to ensure that consumers are partners in the design, delivery and evaluation of healthcare systems and services, and that patients are given the opportunity to be partners in their own care.

Standard 5 Comprehensive Care

Comprehensive care, which aims to ensure that patients receive comprehensive health care that meets their individual needs, and that considers the impact of their health issues on their life and wellbeing. It also aims to ensure that risks to patients during their health care are prevented and managed through targeted strategies.

Standard 6 Communication for Safety

Communication for safety which aims to ensure that there is effective communication between patients, carers and families, multidisciplinary teams and clinicians, across the health care organisation, to support continuous, coordinated and safe care for patients.

SAFER CARE VICTORIA - PARTNERING IN HEALTHCARE

Safer Care Victoria is the statewide agency for healthcare quality and safety improvement. It works with patients, families and carers, clinicians and health services to monitor and improve the safety and quality of care across the public system. Safer Care Victoria has developed the *Partnering in Healthcare framework*, which supports consumer participation and person-centred care.

The framework outlines five interconnected domains for partnering in healthcare, with Equity and Inclusion being most relevant to this Strategy.

The *Partnering in Healthcare* framework suggests the following strategies for health services:

Ensure accredited interpreters are provided when needed.

- Monitor consumer-reported accredited interpreter provision through the Victorian Healthcare Experience Survey (VHES).
- Provide cultural safety and cultural responsiveness training for staff.
- Provide advocates for those with limited or no personal supports.
- Ensure diversity, culture and inclusion are organisational priorities.
- Build diverse consumer representation at all levels.
- Value consumers, including through remuneration.
- Develop more inclusive community consultation strategies.
- Ensure information is translated into various languages.
- Promote consumer awareness of healthcare rights.
- Ensure regional and rural consumers have access to VPTAS.

VICTORIAN QUALITY AND SAFETY CAPABILITY FRAMEWORK

Northern Health's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy is also aligned with the Victorian Quality and Safety Capability Framework, which sets out the essential knowledge, skills and attributes required to deliver consistently high-quality, safe and person-centred care.

The framework emphasises that quality and safety are shared responsibilities across the health system, spanning workforce and consumer partners. Its five domains of Partnering with Consumers, Safety Culture, Risk Management, Systems Approach to Quality and Safety, and Continuous Improvement mirror our commitment to embedding equity and inclusion in every aspect of care.

By building capability in these areas, Northern Health ensures that staff and consumers are empowered to meaningfully contribute to safety and quality, that diverse perspectives shape improvement, and that person centred, culturally safe care is the standard for all.

The Northern Health Framework builds upon these strategies and will continue to work with Safer Care Victoria to ensure consistency of practice.

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DEFINITIONS

A culturally safe and responsive workplace	A safe and culturally responsive workplace environment is one that acknowledges, respects and accommodates difference (Nat. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Assn).
Asylum Seeker	An asylum seeker is outside his or her country, has sought protection as a refugee, but whose claim for refugee status has not yet been assessed.
Disability	(UNHCR). The term 'asylum seeker' is often used interchangeably with 'refugee', but means something different under law. However, under international law, a person is a 'refugee' as soon as they meet the definition of refugee, whether or not their claim has been assessed. If they are found to be refugees, then they are 'recognised refugees'.
Diversity	There are many different kinds of disability and they can result from accidents, illness or genetic disorders. A disability may affect mobility, ability to learn, ability to communicate easily and may impact more than one modality. Disabilities may be visible or hidden, temporary or permanent and may have minimal or substantial impact on a person's abilities.
Gender Identity and Expression	Diversity can include characteristics such as cultural background and ethnicity, age, gender, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, language and education. Diversity also includes characteristics such as professional skills, working style, location, and life experiences (DHHS).
Inclusive culture	The varying social, economic and geographic circumstances of consumers who use, or may use, the services of a health service organisation, as well as their cultural backgrounds, disability status, religions, beliefs and practices, languages spoken, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, and sex characteristics (ACQSH).
Intersectionality	Gender is part of how you understand who you are and how you interact with other people. Many people understand their gender as being female or male. Some people understand their gender as a combination of these or neither. Gender can be expressed in different ways, such as through behaviour or physical appearance.
Refugee	Sex refers to a person's biological sex characteristics. This has historically been understood as either female or male. However, we now know that some people are born with natural variations to sex characteristics refers to a person's biological sex characteristics. This has historically been understood as either female or male. However, we now know that some people are born with natural variations to sex characteristics.
LGBTIQA+	An inclusive culture is one where everyone feels valued and respected and is able to fully contribute. It is about removing barriers to make sure everyone can fully participate in the workplace and have equal access to opportunities. Inclusion is about empowering people to contribute their skills and perspectives for the benefit of organisational performance and business outcomes (DHHS).
	Intersectionality is a theoretical framework for understanding how aspects of one's social and political identities (e.g., gender, race, class, sexuality, ability, etc.) might combine to create unique modes of discrimination.
	A refugee (as defined by The United Nations 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees) is: someone who has left their country and cannot return because of a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, or membership of a particular social group or political opinion (United Nations General Assembly [1951]).
	<i>Lesbian</i>

This refers to a woman who is romantically and sexually attracted to other women.

Gay

This refers to someone who is romantically and sexually attracted to people of the same gender identity as themselves. It is usually used to refer to men who are attracted to other men but may also be used by women.

Bisexual

This refers to a person who is romantically and sexually attracted to individuals of their own gender and other genders.

Transgender

The term 'trans' is a general term for a person whose gender identity/expression is different to their assigned sex at birth. A trans person may take steps to live permanently in their nominated sex with or without medical treatment.

Intersex

The term intersex refers to people who are born with genetic, hormonal or physical sex characteristics that are not typically 'male' or 'female'. Intersex people have a diversity of bodies and identities.

Queer

Queer is an umbrella term that means different things to different people. It is used by some people to describe non-conforming gender identities and/or sexual orientations.

Questioning

Questioning refers to people who are still exploring or questioning their gender or sexual orientation. People may not wish to have one of the other labels applied to them yet.

Ally

Ally is an umbrella term for an advocate for a minority community, that doesn't identify as part of that community.

Asexual

This refers to someone who does not experience sexual attraction. They may still experience feelings of affection towards another person.

+

The 'plus' symbol encompasses and acknowledges the diversity around describing, sex, gender identity and expression and sexuality.

Pansexual

Pansexual refers to people who are romantically and sexually attracted to people of all genders, not limited to biological sex, gender or gender identity.