Central Coast Local Health District
Aboriginal Workforce Programs 2015 – 2016 Plan
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<td>February 2016 intake</td>
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<td>Established - expand numbers</td>
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<td>Aboriginal Health Practitioners transition program</td>
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<td>Cultural Respect</td>
<td>Respecting The Difference - Online</td>
<td>All staff</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Respecting The Difference - Face to Face</td>
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<td>Cultural Audits of the Health Service Environment</td>
<td>20 Audits conducted</td>
<td>June 2016</td>
<td>Audit Trialled</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cultural spaces (rooms &amp; gardens)</td>
<td>Incorporated into new plans</td>
<td>June 2016</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Elders in Residence</td>
<td>At least 2 elders</td>
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<td>Acknowledgement of Country Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Winanya-li Newsletter commenced in 2011</td>
<td>Page in every Staff newsletter</td>
<td>June 2016</td>
<td>Stalled - combine with staff newsletter</td>
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School Based Employment Programs

Ngura Program
Ngura means ‘Our Place’. It is a program initiated by Wyong Shire Council and has been run since 2010 in partnership with the Council and local schools in the Wyong Local Government Area. The program teaches local high school students about Aboriginality and culture. The students also achieve their Bronze Medallion in Surf Lifesaving. The program runs for 4 hours/week over 10 weeks and is facilitated by Mr Matt Sonter from the Council. Mr Sonter is a Gamilaroi Aboriginal man who had a distinguished rugby union career including playing internationally and representing Australia. Mr Wayne Merritt is the Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator for Central Coast Local Health District (the District). Mr Merritt is a Wiradjuri man who has operated in the Aboriginal employment industry for over 20 years. Mr Merritt facilitates the employment modules of the program.

The District sponsors an employment and technology module within the program. The District has purchased laptops with wi-fi capability and the students are assisted to engage with technology to search employment job sites. The students discuss employment initiatives within NSW Health including cadetships, traineeships and mainstream employment entry into the District. The sessions enable linkages to employment strategies and teaches students practical skills to gain employment and better engage and utilise technology. Students are supported to prepare an application for a NSW Health position of their choosing as one of the activities completed during their studies.

Since 2010 there have been approximately 400 students graduate the program. The District considers the program a key component of community social responsibility and engagement and believes that the early engagement with students will serve to create a talent pipeline for students as they complete their secondary studies.

Reconciliation Cup Day
Since 2009 the District has participated as the major sponsor for the annual Reconciliation Cup (Pelicans Touch Football) Day. The day is jointly run in partnership with Wyong Shire Council and local high schools. The day involves a round robin of touch football competition between 10 local high schools. From 2016 the competition will also expand to include schools from Gosford Council Local Government Area.

The District provides personnel from Health Promotion and Workforce Directorate teams, to serve as match referees, grounds maintenance, food preparation and service (and provides the catering for lunch and morning tea). In doing so, the District promotes key health promotion messages to local students and families – eg smoking cessation, sexual and mental health information. In addition, Aboriginal employment messages are promoted on the day. These messages have direct linkages to local population health metrics and are correlated to Close the Gap activities.
VET in schools
Since 2005 the District has operated a successful Certificate III level program Health Services Assistant (Acute) to educate and train prospective Assistant in Nursing (AIN) students. The program is delivered in house using the District’s educators through the Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and the Board of Studies. The course (on average) offers 20 student places per annum.

As the District is positioned to become one of the largest providers for the Health Services Assistant (Acute) course in the region significant scope exists to educate a greater number of Aboriginal students for AIN roles and place them either internally (within the District’s facilities) or externally within the region.

The principal intake for this program occurs at the annual careers market for high school students held usually in Cooranbong. The 2015 intake has already occurred although a designated number of identified places for Aboriginal students could be considered for the 2015 selections for intake onto the 2016 course.

Recruitment and Attraction Strategies

Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator
The District employs an Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator (AEC) to offer an important connection between community and employment outcomes. The role requires the establishment of strong relationships with Aboriginal people and ensuring that the District’s employer value proposition is attractive to Aboriginal people. The District aspires to be an employer of choice for Aboriginal people and the AEC role is integral to achieving this aim.

The AEC is responsible for the development of strategy and implementation of employment programs. The District’s Aboriginal employment participation rate has grown from an average of 0.8% of its workforce in 2012 to over 3% of its workforce in 2015. This represents over 4% of the labour market of employment age within the Aboriginal population on the Central Coast.

The AEC also offers important cultural support for Aboriginal people.

1 Australian Bureau of Statistics – Census 2011
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Supported Recruitment (Identified and Targeted)

Identified positions are positions which require an Aboriginal person to perform the duties. Exemptions are available under s.14(d) of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW) which may be claimed when Aboriginality is a genuine occupational requirement.

Targeted positions provide preference for Aboriginal applicants above other applicants. These positions are generally advertised with a notation that Central Coast Local Health District supports diversity and equal employment opportunities. The District particularly welcomes applications from people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

The District has successfully operated a streamlined recruitment process for Aboriginal applicants which offers meritorious selection and ‘speed to market’ for recruiting managers. The process is managed in house by the AEC and results in a prequalified pool of Aboriginal applicants being made available (usually for immediate commencement) without the service needing to recruit via traditional selection methodologies.

The Ministry of Health has also launched its ‘Stepping Up’ resource which offers a range of information and contacts to support Aboriginal applicants to navigate the recruitment and onboarding systems used within NSW Health.

In July 2015 the District has also commenced a relationship with Yarn’n. The Commonwealth funded provider specialises in Aboriginal employment and has successfully sourced candidates for other Local Health Districts in the metropolitan Sydney region. The agency has a local resource who also resides locally and is known by the Aboriginal community. The agency will initially commence offering qualified administration staff for placement and intends to support recruitment across other roles.

Eligibility List Strategy

The AEC has a principal role in establishing, screening and managing candidate application pools. The District has successfully placed over 35 staff into administration roles. The method involves a streamlined selection process which supports merit based selection. Candidates are then matched to suitable vacancies as and when they may arise.

The strategy has increased ‘speed to market’ for recruiting managers and still enables appropriate selection. The roles in scope include Administration Officers generally Level 2 or Level 3. Advertising is currently active for all levels of Administration officer and covers all employment status types from casual to permanent part time or full time.
**Traineeships**

**School Based Aboriginal Traineeships (SBAT)**

The average age of Aboriginal people in the Central Coast is 20. With a comparatively young age in community (compared to 41 for non-Aboriginal people in the Central Coast region) this program recognises that young people are vital to engage as part of the District’s future workforce needs.

The SBAT program commenced in 2014 with an original intake of 5 students (4 completed the course and have been permanently appointed within the District). The 2014 students were placed in roles within the Workforce and Culture Directorate (Customer Service and Recruitment) and within the District’s Health Information Services.

As at June 2015 1 student was permanently placed (full time) where she was on her SBAT placement in Health Information, 2 students articulated onto an Adult Traineeship and will complete a 2 year operational rotation within Corporate Services (including linen, waste, environmental, Patient Support Assistant and CARPS controllers) whilst studying a Certificate IV in Frontline Leadership and Management. The fourth student will be placed within the Recruitment service where she undertook her SBAT placement.

The students studied a Certificate III Health Services Assistant qualification and delivery occurred with the Hunter Institute of TAFE as the education provider. The program requirements included:

- 100 days of work over a 2 year duration (average of approximately 1 day/week)
- Attendance at TAFE for approximately 3 hours each week
- Studies count towards 4 units of study for the student’s Higher School Certificate and may count towards an ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admission Rank) if desired
- Accredited by the Board of Studies.

In 2015 the program experienced its second intake of students and increased available places to ten places. Eight students were enrolled onto the program and have been placed in the following services:

- Recruitment – 2 students
- Workforce Customer Service – 1 student
- Aboriginal Health Service (Nunyara) – 1 student

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2 2011 Census – Australian Bureau of Statistics
ABORIGINAL WORKFORCE PROGRAMS – 2015 - 2016 PLAN

- Health Information Services – 2 students (1 Gosford, 1 Wyong)
- Multicultural Health – 1 student
- Theatres (Gosford) – 1 student

Students are again studying a Health Services Assistant qualification (with additional clinical modules being undertaken for the student placed in the theatre suite) which will offer articulation into other roles depending on the student’s career aspirations and development plans.

This plan will see the program continue to expand in each year with a goal of 20 places being available annually by 2017. This may include expansion of qualifications available to incorporate studies towards Allied Health Assistants or similar roles in future years.

Targeted Traineeships
Further to the eligibility list strategy and supported recruitment intake strategies (refer above), a workforce analysis has also been undertaken with the District’s Aboriginal workforce to identify opportunities to offer traineeships to Aboriginal staff. These traineeships may occur in services including Workforce, Finance, Environmental Services, Allied Health, Dental, Sterilising Services, and Administration. The District has offered 2 adult traineeships within Environmental Services (refer SBAT above) however wishes to expand other traineeships to other new or existing staff where practicable. The District has also offered an identified Human Resources Graduate position since 2014 and sponsored studies in Certificate IV Training and Assessment (TAE).

Dedicated Pathways Traineeships
The District has for some years offered traineeships in Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol. The former has been recurrently funded and the latter funded via term limited funding. Students undertake a 3 year Bachelor Health Science (Indigenous Health) degree qualification but previously have not had employment certainty upon completion. The course is now offered through Charles Sturt University and students complete either a Bachelor Health Science (Mental Health) or Bachelor Health Science (Co-morbidity). The District has had 5 students enrol in the Mental Health qualification and 1 student in the Co-Morbidity qualification. There are a further 3 students who have completed a Certificate IV in Aboriginal Alcohol and Other Drugs Work. There is also a Diploma qualification available.

The District is intending to expand the program to commence 2 students annually to rotate throughout both Drug and Alcohol and Mental Health to achieve an improved exposure and education in co-morbidity presentations and treatment. The District will therefore be recruiting up to 6 students over a rolling 3 year basis (ie 2 per annum) across both services. Recruitment will commence in September 2015 for the 2016 intake to support an additional 2 rotational trainees.
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The District has also supported students to participate in the Aboriginal Population Health Training Initiative (APHTI). Over a 3 year period the students complete studies and undertake a rotation amongst the Public Health Unit, Aboriginal Health Service and Sexual/Youth Health Services. On completion the student achieves a Masters in Public Health. The positions have been funded from within existing establishment (and were filled with existing employees). The students are supported to rotate through the various services whilst on their course of study to supplement their learning. The model has operated successfully and the possibility exists to offer similar programs under a rotational approach from within existing establishment in future years.

Aboriginal Health Practitioners Transition Program

The District plans to explore the articulation of existing Aboriginal Health Workers (AHW), employed under Aboriginal Health Education Officer Award, to an Aboriginal Health Practitioner (AHP) role/s. This newly registered profession (since 2012) with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) offers improved opportunities for clinical redesign and an expanded approach to holistic care for clients. AHP’s have expanded scope of practice and deliver holistic clinical care in a manner not contemplated (nor previously industrially considered) as an AHEO. The qualification requirements are Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care (Practice) and the District is exploring delivery of this curriculum in partnership with TAFE. The course has previously been delivered within NSW Health to Local Health Districts including Western NSW LHD (by Western TAFE). Hunter TAFE have access to the course content and are able to offer the curriculum under an Adult Traineeship pathway.

Targeted Cadetships

NSW Health offers a Statewide cadetship program for nursing and midwifery and Allied Health undergraduate students. The program offers a study allowance to assist with education expenses and work placements (usually for 12 weeks) as a semi skilled worker (for example nursing students usually undertake block placement work as an Assistant in Nursing on study breaks from University). The programs offer articulation into permanent employment upon graduation.

The University of Newcastle confirms that it has the largest cohort of Aboriginal students in Australia (some 1000+ students). However promotion of the cadetship has proven problematic and the Statewide allocation system sometimes sees local candidates studying at Callaghan campus (at Newcastle) directed towards alternate Local Health Districts for placements.

The District intends to continue to foster relationships with the University and the District will directly engage candidates outside of the Statewide allocation methods and advise to NSW Health of the placements it has made for entry onto the program. The District will continue to foster strong relationships and cultivate promotion of the program in an endeavour to recruit more candidates onto the program.
Manager Support Training
Discussion has commenced about how to best support new Aboriginal employees and trainees across the business. The conversations have noted that support tends to be delivered usually by the immediate line manager and/or colleagues within the service with variable success. It has been noted that traineeships which offer the best prospect of success provide a structured support program (including supervision and cultural support) and offer the trainee with ready access to mentorship as mutually agreed.

It is planned to develop a training program for managers to help develop the skills in managers to support Aboriginal employees and manage the cultural sensitivities and risks of racism.

Development/Career Paths

Focused Development Plans
As part of Caring for the Coast all staff are required to have goals and accountabilities that support the District’s strategic priorities of caring for our staff, patients, community, resources and future. Staff participate in establishing 30 and 90 day plans that detail the operational activities required to successfully complete their work. New performance templates are being piloted within the District that will incorporate these elements.

The District’s Aboriginal staff participated in a career planning activity at a recent Staff Network Day (see below). The workshop supported staff to identify career goals and offered three principal career streams including clinical roles, support roles or management roles for consideration. A number of partner organisations also attended the workshop to facilitate discussion on how employee career aspirations could be achieved and staff were requested to undertake action planning on completion of the workshop to ensure that their career goals were documented into an implementation plan.

It is planned to continue this work in upcoming Network Days and other forums when applicable. In particular it is hoped that this conversation will identify staff engaged as Aboriginal Health Workers who may be suitable for translation into Aboriginal Health Practitioner roles (see also Aboriginal Health Worker Supervision below)
**ABORIGINAL WORKFORCE PROGRAMS – 2015 - 2016 PLAN**

**Aboriginal Staff Network Days**
The District offers twice annual Aboriginal Staff Network Days. The days have been held since 2012 and offer staff a paid work day to network with other Aboriginal staff in a culturally safe and appropriate environment. The days are usually themed around a particular focus and previous events have focused on health service updates; career progression and development; cultural training and appreciation.

The staff report that they feel supported and have commented that these activities ensure the District’s goal of becoming an employer of choice for Aboriginal people will be realised.

The Public Service Commission have commenced a series of regional network days with staff from geographically based public sector agencies in attendance. The first such event was held in July 2015 for the Hunter Region which the District participated in. The District has offered to host the next event and suggested October 2015. This offers sufficient scope to expand the existing District staff network day to be a broader cross section of public sector employers and community.

**Mentor Program for Aboriginal Employees**
The District intends to offer increased support for its Aboriginal workforce by introducing a formalised mentoring program. The program will be administered by the Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator and supported by staff from the Education and Training Service. The program will provide development opportunities for existing staff wishing to support newer or more junior staff members, or alternatively staff members who may be able to benefit from the mentor’s skills.

Suitable matching of mentors and mentees will examine factors such as geography, career stage, service and occupational group. Mentees will be asked to explain what they are seeking in a mentor and what they hope to gain from the experience. Similarly mentors will be asked to explain what they may offer mentees and what they will gain from the experience. These factors will assist in establishing suitable and durable mentor/mentee relationships.

**Aboriginal Employees Careers/Pathways Intranet Page**
The District has commissioned a multimedia company to produce digital content for use on the District’s internet and intranet pages. The content will include categories linked to those detailed within this employment plan. The page/s will feature stories and narrative from Aboriginal staff and community members and be linked to interactive content to guide participants through the website pages.

It is planned to ensure Aboriginal artwork and graphics feature on the pages to facilitate a warm and positive connection between the District and community which supports the objective of becoming an employer of choice for Aboriginal people.
**Aboriginal Health Worker Supervision Framework**

*Aboriginal Health Worker Guidelines for NSW Health* was published in May 2014. The Framework delivers a comprehensive discussion on defining the roles and accountabilities for Aboriginal Health Workers and how these interrelate with employment and education arrangements across NSW Health. In particular the Guidelines also refer to the *Decision Making Framework for Aboriginal Health Workers* which describes how to determine appropriate scopes of practice and supervision.

The District plans to offer increased education to staff and managers in how to use these tools effectively and ensure appropriate and safe clinical care continues to be delivered.

It is anticipated that the work is also likely to identify workers who may be suitable for cross skillling and translation into the registered occupation (and use of Protected Title) of Aboriginal Health Practitioner.

**Aboriginal Leadership Program/Aboriginal Clinical Leadership Program**

The NSW Public Service Commission (PSC) co-ordinates the *Aboriginal Career and Leadership Development Program*. The District has not been successful to date with applications for employees to attend this program and is continuing discussions with the PSC to expand access. The program is delivered over 6 days spanning 4 months by the Australian Graduate School of Management (AGSM) and usually involves a number of delivery modalities. The course is designed to support students to implement strategies to progress into executive and management roles within the public sector. The PSC is also contemplating development of a supplemental course targeted towards first time managers and supervisors.

The PSC has indicated in principle agreement to consider either commercially funded student places on the program (which would deliver the benefits of scaleability and sectoral exposure for student learning), or in the alternative facilitating sectoral procurement for the intellectual property (course content) for possible in house delivery.

The District could also expand the program to incorporate elements for clinical leaders and possibly apply this learning framework across NSW Health in partnership with HETI.

**Aboriginal Employee Scholarships**

A number of tertiary providers are presently offering supported scholarships to assist Aboriginal students with their tertiary studies. For example the University of Technology Sydney offers a *Bachelor of Primary Health Care* qualification (full time 3 year course) supported by up to 13 scholarships (with varying entry and selection criterion) to assist students working or planning a career working in community health for Aboriginal people.
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Similarly the University of Newcastle prides itself on being the University with the largest number of Aboriginal students in Australia. Students are supported by the Wollotuka Institute across a variety of courses of study.

The District will continue to expand partnerships with education providers and promote learning opportunities to Aboriginal staff.

Cultural Respect

Respecting the Difference

*PD2011_069 Respecting the Difference: An Aboriginal Cultural Training Framework for NSW Health* sets out the cultural training requirements for all staff to ensure culturally competent staff who are positioned to deliver culturally sensitive services for Aboriginal people, their families and communities. The training requires completion of a 2 hour e-learning package (available through HETI) of which 70% of the District’s workforce have completed (as at July 2015).

The District has also finalised its face to face content which incorporates both general and localised content. A provider has been engaged for a 6 month period to commence delivery of content in a ‘blended’ method (ie co-facilitation with an internal resource). A program co-ordinator position is presently being recruited to (as at July 2015) who will have carriage of course co-ordination and logistics, optimising enrolments and content management based on feedback from delegates. The workshop has been piloted with selected staff groups and received positive feedback. The program will continue to be monitored and evaluated as the rollout further progresses.

Cultural Audits of the Health Service Environment

As part of the tripartite Aboriginal Health Services Plan a recommendation action was made to complete cultural audits for the District’s facilities. The audit examined factors including visibility of artworks, totems and/or iconography to create a warm and welcoming environment to promote access for Aboriginal clients and their families. The original audit was completed in 2014 and in summary noted that scope existed to expand culturally appropriate symbols within the District’s facilities.

The audit also examined appropriateness of access for other groups including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI), clients with a disability, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups and other diversity indicators.
ABORIGINAL WORKFORCE PROGRAMS – 2015 - 2016 PLAN

Cultural Spaces (Rooms and Gardens)
As part of the District’s redevelopment planning activities there are defined cultural spaces planned to be provided within the redevelopment. Similar spaces are already available at other NSW Health facilities and the redevelopment team have visited these sites. It is also noted that artworks have recently been procured for the maternity and birthing suite areas in the existing spaces at Gosford Hospital. The District plans to engage a local artist to oversee and co-ordinate production of artworks in partnership with local schools. School students will be invited to participate in producing Aboriginal artworks which can be displayed prominently in the District’s facilities – for example entrance halls, corridors and public spaces.

Elders in Residence
The District’s Aboriginal Staff Network day explored the possibility of creating an important new resource nominally termed ‘elders in residence’. The key concepts behind the proposal included that the occupants should be sufficiently experienced, accepted and respected members of the community and represent both males and females (ie at least 2 position holders – one male and one female). The staff noted that the role/s would require the occupants to be available primarily for staff to discuss issues of Aboriginality and offer cultural and mentorship support.

It is noted that the aspirations for the roles were broad and some views suggested that the position holders might also attend all formal (and in some instances informal meetings) to deliver Welcome to Country addresses, educate staff and be a liaison for any persons or occasions requiring expertise on matters of Aboriginality. It is suggested that this scope would be too large and not allow sufficient concentration nor focus of expertise. As other channels are in existence to provide support it is recommended that the elders in residence are episodically available (principally) for staff in a manner that maximises access (for example – allows for different shift patterns and work locations).

It is envisaged that the position holders may be considered ‘contingent workers’ rather than salaried employees substantively engaged with the District and could offer services to an agreed timetable for an established fee structure (in a similar manner to those provided by Chaplaincy services for example). Suitable terms of engagement would be negotiated and agreed with the position holders. It is noted that community representation will also be required to ensure community acceptance of the people selected to provide the service.

Acknowledgement of Country Policy
The District updated its Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country policy in 2015. The policy provides clear advice and guidance and the District plans to expand education and information in other forums. One such forum includes referencing content in the ‘Respecting the Difference’ training.
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Aboriginal flags at each facility
The District plans to fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags at its facilities. This will assist with appropriate messaging to the community at large about the District’s accessibility for Aboriginal people and their families. Further planning will need to occur and is being incorporated into the approach for the District’s redevelopment planning.

Winanga-li newsletter
Winanga-li means ‘to hear, to listen, to know, to remember’ and is the name for the Aboriginal newsletter which is distributed to all staff. The newsletter first issued in 2011 and is edited and co-ordinated by the District’s Aboriginal Employment Co-ordinator. As other communication channels have expanded (for example – regular staff updates in District newsletters) the Aboriginal newsletter has been published less frequently. It is recommended to include a regular update column within the District newsletter and report Aboriginal news and events (previously published in Winanga-li) in this space.

The combined approach would also show consistency of corporate messaging regarding Aboriginal employment and health information. It is suggested to retain the Winanga-li branding for the update pages to ensure connection to the Aboriginal community. The name was originally selected following suggestions from staff.

Aboriginal Liaison Officers
The District has one Aboriginal Liaison Officer (ALO). The role was first introduced in 1993 when the local Aboriginal population was approximately 3407\(^3\) in 1996 and grew to 4748\(^4\) Aboriginal people in 2001. The present incumbent has worked in a full time capacity since 1999.

9020\(^5\) Aboriginal people (2.89% of the Central Coast population) live on the Central Coast and it is suggested that demand for this role exceeds current capacity. With the District’s planned redevelopment, access to services is a key consideration which needs to be supported by appropriate care. As the role of the ALO often extends outside standard working hours and includes a large number of liaison hours ‘in community’ it is suggested that there is a caseload management issue which may not be fully quantified.

It is recommended to expand the number of ALO’s to at least 3 (1 at Gosford, 1 at Wyong and 1 mobile resource to be based centrally but flexibly deployed as required including cancer support liaison for example). It is also recommended to have a gender balance in the occupants.

\(^3\) Australian Bureau of Statistics – Census 1996
\(^4\) Australian Bureau of Statistics – Census 2001
\(^5\) Australian Bureau of Statistics – Census 2011