phn NORTHERN SYDNEY
An Australian Government Initiative

Sydney North Health Network

Student Nurse Education Session

Strengthening Aboriginal Health Outcomes in Northern Sydney

- Closing the Gap
- Local Aboriginal Health Services
- Culturally Safe & Preventative Practice
- Reconciliation Action Plan

Melanie Gould-SNHN Indigenous Health Senior Coordinator

17th September 2026

SNHN.ORG.AU

SYDNEY NORTH Health Network

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Sydney North Health Network wishes to acknowledge Australia's Aboriginal people as the custodians of this land.

We pay our respect and recognise their unique cultures and customs and honour their Elders past, present and future.

phn NORTHERN SYDNEY
An Australian Government Initiative

www.snhn.org.au

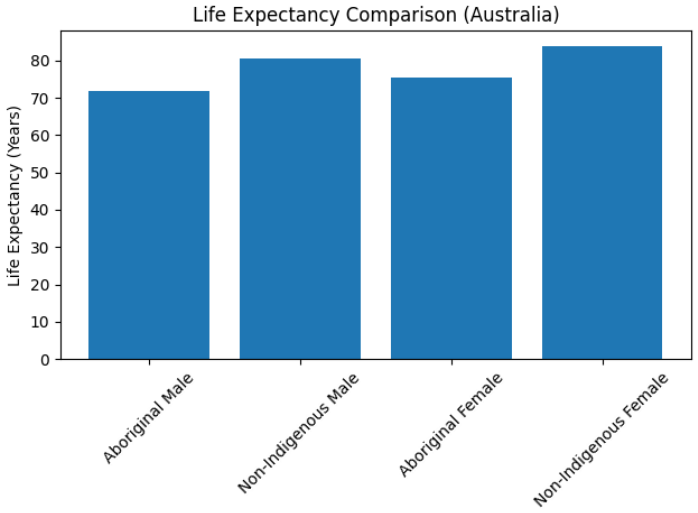
Why This Matters

Persistent health inequities

- Higher chronic disease burden
- Barriers to preventative care
- Structural determinants of health

phn NORTHERN SYDNEY
An Australian Government Initiative

Sydney North Health Network



Life Expectancy Comparison (Australia)

Source: Productivity Commission Closing the Gap Dashboard

Closing the Gap – National Reform

Key findings and implications

- A National Agreement on Closing the Gap enabled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islande people and government to work together to overcome inequity, developed in partnership with the Coalition of Peaks in 2020 after after extensive community consultation in 2019.

- A number of targets were identified by the partnership to work towards reducing the gross inequity.

- Latest report Feb 2025 (commencement 2005)

AIHW, Mar 2025

About the report

context

🧭 Context

- Many First Nations people live fulfilling lives
- Ongoing issues: inequality, trauma, racism

📘 About the Report

- Analyses 14 of 17 Closing the Gap targets
- Uses national data and statistical modelling
- Focuses on trends, influencing factors, and policy implications

phn NORTHERN SYDNEY
An Australian Government Initiative

Sydney North Health Network

CTG Report

Target progress

- Target progress
- (2024 status)

✅ On track:	⚠️ Improving, not on track:
Target 2 – Born healthy	Target 1 – Life expectancy
Target 3 – Early childhood education	Target 5 – Student learning
Target 8 – Economic participation	Target 6 – Further education
	Target 7 – Youth engagement
	Target 9 – Housing

www.snhn.org.au

CTG Report

Key Findings and Implications

- Target Progress
- continued

➢ 📉 **Worsening:**

➢Target 4 – Children thriving

➢Target 10 – Criminal justice

➢Target 12 – Child protection

➢Target 14 – Social & emotional wellbeing

➢ ➖ **No change:**

➢Target 11 – Youth justice

➢ ❓ **No new data:**

➢Target 13 – Family safety

www.snhn.org.au

CTG Report

Key Drivers & Strategies

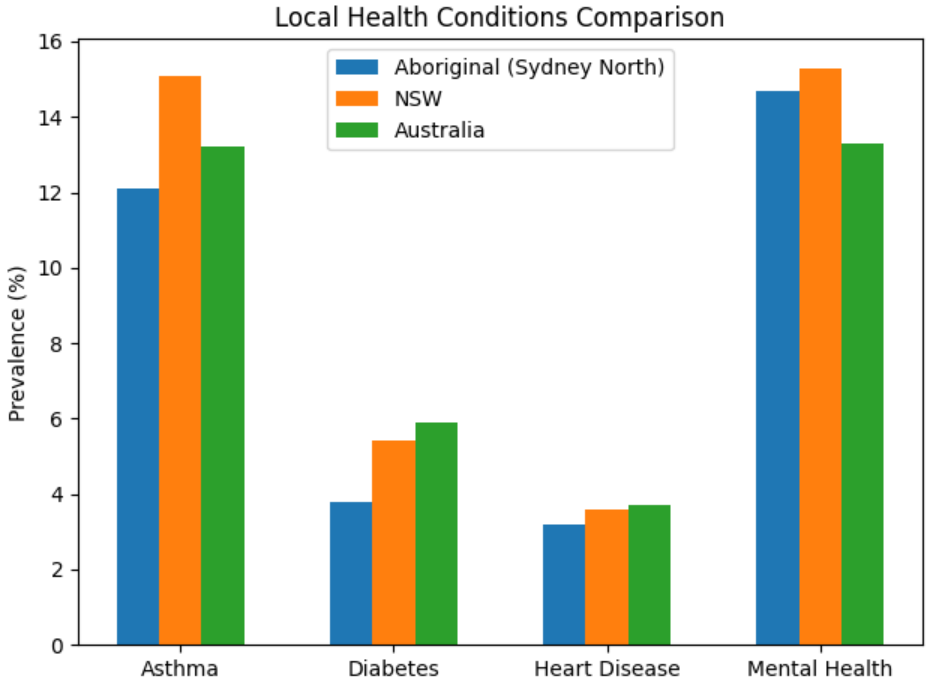
- Key drivers & strategies
- For improvement

➢ 📊 **Key Drivers**
➢ Common: Household income, financial stress, overcrowding, education
➢ Specific: Preterm birth, child development, food insecurity

➢ 🛠 **Strategies – 4 Priority Reforms**
➢ Shared decision-making
➢ Strengthening community-controlled organisations
➢ Government transformation
➢ Shared access to local data

Note: A life course approach is essential – early outcomes impact later stages across life.

www.snhn.org.au



Source: ABS Census 2021 QuickStats

Local Aboriginal Health Snapshot – Sydney North

Statistics

•Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people born in 2015-17 have a life expectancy estimated to be 8.6 years lower than that of non-Indigenous people;

•First Nations People are 5 times more likely to suffer from diabetes and 4 times more likely for chronic kidney disease compared to non-Indigenous Australians;

•Two-thirds of First Nations People have one chronic disease, and one-third suffer from 3 or more chronic diseases; and

•80 percent of the mortality gap between First Nations and non-Indigenous Australians aged 35-74 years is due to chronic diseases.

Source:https://antar.org.au/issues/closing-the-gap/health-equality/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Aboriginal Health Services in Northern Sydney

Culturally Safe Referral Pathways

phn NORTHERN SYDNEY
An Australian Government Initiative

Sydney North Health Network

- **Integrated Team Care (Grand Pacific Health)**-Supplementary support service for those living with Chronic Disease
- **Bungee Bidgel Aboriginal Health Clinic**-Hornsby GP Clinic
- **Caber-ra Nanga-Relationships Australia**-Social Emotional Well-being program
- **Odyssey House**—Mingu Yabun First Nations Drug and Alcohol Counselling and Support service
- **Nirrang Birrong**-Family Preservation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foster Care and Foster Care Support Programs, our mission is to nurture the cultural identity and connection of our children, young people and their families.

Cultural Safety in Nursing Practice

Respectful identification

- Strengths-based communication
- Family involvement
- Building trust

https://youtu.be/5NwkFhjHJ6c

SNHN Reconciliation Action Plan

Commitment to reconciliation- Reflect

What is a RAP?

Reflect RAP: Building strong foundations

Innovate RAP: Implementing change

Stretch RAP: Reconciliation leadership

Elevate RAP: Transformational change

Examples of SNHN's intent towards reconciliation:

FN Youth Art group- C:\Users\MelanieGould\OneDrive - SNHN\Attachments\Indigenous Art Group_2_Captions.

Connected Mobs- https://youtu.be/5NwkFhjHJ6c

phn NORTHERN SYDNEY An Australian Government Initiative

Sydney North Health Network

Proactive & Preventative Care

Essential priorities

715 Aboriginal Health Assessments

- Chronic disease management plans up to date (yearly or <)
- Recall and reminder systems
- Cultural safety training and and reflective monitoring of practice staff, post surveying, to identify.
- Transparent and regular communication (if possible)
- Ensuring a culturally safe physical environment
- Ensuring follow-up when further referral has occurred.