



## Evaluation of the Project: The Journey of Aboriginal Children and their Families throughout the Northern Child Health Network



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An evaluation was conducted of the Hunter New England and Northern NSW Local Health Districts' Aboriginal children and family's project. This project aimed to gain insight to improve the journey of an Aboriginal child and their family after a decision is made to transfer a child to a higher level of care outside their local community. The evaluation aimed to assess the effectiveness of the project and to make a contribution to organisational learning about cultural change.

The evaluation questions were:

- Were the project objectives met?
- Have the solutions been implemented?
- Is there a difference in the Aboriginal patient and family experience?
- Do Aboriginal staff detect a difference in the workplace?
- Do non Aboriginal staff detect a difference in the workplace?
- If a difference in the workplace is detected, what were the critical success factors that brought about this change?

Nine Aboriginal family and 27 key stakeholder interviews were conducted. A thematic analysis found that the project objectives were partially met, that most solutions were implemented to varying extents and improvements were detected by staff. Analysis of Aboriginal family interviews showed that they were happy with the care provided but that transport remained an issue across both health services.

In Hunter New England LHD there was greater spread and sustainability of the strategies implemented, but there was more family stress related to the journey than in Northern NSW LHD. Cultural Respect training had not yet reached many of the ward staff in HNE. This was suggested to be a major reason why change was not so apparent at the ward level. In Northern NSW there had been flexible Cultural Awareness training for clinical staff and good relationships built between non-Aboriginal staff and Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officers. Recommendations for the future were made.

*For the full report on this project visit our website, follow the link to the Rural Research Capacity Building Program and click on 'view completed projects'*

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