

# Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training Evaluation



Tiahna Franks, Northern NSW Local Health District  
[elizabeth.mitchell@gsahs.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:elizabeth.mitchell@gsahs.health.nsw.gov.au)

## Aim:

This study aimed to determine the level of Cultural Awareness among staff in the North Coast Area Health service. This study also sought to evaluate the effectiveness of the current system for training them in Aboriginal Cultural Awareness in improving relevant Knowledge, Attitudes, Understanding and Behaviour.

## Method:

Richmond Network health staff were encouraged to participate in this quantitative cross sectional study using a web based survey. During the formative phase of the survey questionnaire, consultations were made with local elders, Aboriginal Cultural Awareness trainers and Aboriginal Health Workers. Domains used in the survey were created to gather information considered relevant to the study aims.

## Results:

Participants of the survey who have attended some form of Cultural Awareness training (CAT) have significantly higher Cultural Awareness scores compared to those not trained, with the effect being 2.7 points ( $Z=4.219$ ,  $P<0.0001$ ). Results also show that within the Richmond Network, those who attended a *full-day* course attained a higher overall score (1.3 points higher,  $Z=4.211$ ,  $P<0.0001$ ) than those who attended three half hour sessions ( $3 \times \frac{1}{2} \text{ hour}$ ). However, results also show clear signs of overt racism amongst staff responses to the survey questions.

## Conclusions:

The current profile of staff Cultural Awareness in the Richmond Network indicates that there is considerable room for improvement. Whilst training can significantly improve Cultural Awareness, it should be viewed as one contributing factor amongst a package of necessary strategies to deliver culturally appropriate services. It is evident from the survey results and various racist comments throughout the survey that the Area Health Service has not yet reached a high level of Cultural Competence.

## Implications:

It is vitally important that the health service reassess its dependence upon, and promotion of CAT as the primary means of achieving the ongoing safety and security of its Aboriginal staff and clients.

*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'*

Tiahna is an Endorsed Enrolled Nurse working at Lismore Base Hospital and has also recently been employed as one of the Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officer's for Lismore Base Hospital. She is a participant in the Rural Research Capacity Building Program which has assisted to fund this research project.



[www.ruralceti.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ruralceti.health.nsw.gov.au)

