

# DIVERSITY INCLUSION BELONGING

## CASE STUDY: Aboriginal Oral Health Scholarships Program



Rural and remote Aboriginal people experience higher rates of oral disease associated with limited access to dental and oral health practitioners. The NSW Ministry of Health funds an *Aboriginal Oral Health Scholarships Program* which aims to increase the number of Aboriginal people trained in oral healthcare to help improve dental health in Aboriginal communities. A number of graduates have been employed by NSW Health since the start of the program.

The Program offers financial assistance for Aboriginal people to study Certificate III and IV in Dental Assisting, and Certificate IV in Dental Radiography. Each scholarship also provides the following over the course of two years: one-to-one mentoring, online and face-to-face course fees, a laptop computer, prepaid internet access, weekly telephone and/or video support, and career and education planning.

Since commencement of the Program in 2014, over 100 students have graduated, with a further 31 students enrolled in 2019. Many students return after having completed a Certificate III to undertake the Certificate IV and a qualification in Radiography. The program has a course completion rate of around 93%. Past students have gone on to complete additional qualifications such as a Diploma in Dental Technology and a Bachelor of Oral Health.



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