

## **Increasing Diversity and Inclusion in a Publicly Funded Drug and Alcohol Service: An Efficient and Structured Approach**

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**Introduction / Issues:** Publicly funded services provide assistance for all members of the community. Nevertheless, some members of the community face significant barriers to accessing, and remaining engaged in, clinical services. South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) Drug and Alcohol Services sought to use a structured approach to better understand the needs of, and to improve response to, diverse communities.

**Approach:** Three audits were completed by a group of clinicians covering a range of items relating to working with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community (Aboriginal Cultural Engagement Self-Assessment Tool, NSW Health), the LGBTQ community (Health + Wellbeing Equality Index, Pride in Health + Wellbeing), and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities (SESLHD Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Self-assessment).

**Key Findings:** Many gaps were identified across the three audits. Over-arching themes, such as education and visibility, were noted. Workplans were constructed to address individual gaps and themes. Some issues are out of the scope of the services, with advocacy planned at higher levels (e.g. state-wide).

**Discussions and Conclusions:** All people deserve access to culturally safe and appropriate healthcare. Different communities have varying barriers and needs when accessing services. By completing all three audits together, the identifications of overarching themes allowed streamlined strategies to improve access, engagement, and treatment retention in the context of no new resources.

**Implications for Practice or Policy:** Addressing the needs of diverse communities requires nuance. Nevertheless, concurrently completing and addressing audits provides an efficient use of limited resources.

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