

## Abstract Form

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**Title of abstract:** Promoting participation in the National Cervical Screening Program to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women

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### Background:

Low cervical screening among Aboriginal women may contribute to the incidence of cervical cancer that is approximately twice as high and mortality about four times higher, when compared to non-Aboriginal women. With the changes to the National Cervical Screening Program, the NSW Cervical Screening Program (NSW CSP) identifies Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women as an at risk population group which requires targeted approaches to improve participation in the screening program to reduce the incidence of cervical cancer.

### Aims:

The NSW CSP aims to:

- engage with Aboriginal women, their communities and health professionals in NSW to increase awareness of and build knowledge about the National Cervical Screening Program;
- facilitate improved access and participation in cervical screening by Aboriginal women;
- support local initiatives and opportunities to improve cervical screening practices of Aboriginal women;
- provide a forum through the development of a network for Aboriginal workforce to share resources, discuss grant models and successful models of care;
- foster local partnerships and build a collaborative long term partnership with the Aboriginal workforce

### Method:

To increase cervical screening participation amongst this priority group a partnership has formed between the Commonwealth Department of Health, a nationally accredited training organisation, the NSW Cervical Screening Program, the Aboriginal community and the health workforce who work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. The NSW Cervical Screening Program attends each

training session to contribute to the discussion about the changes to the cervical screening program, visit local Aboriginal health agencies and seek voluntary members to join the Cervical Screening Aboriginal Workforce Network. The network provides an opportunity for those who have attended the training sessions to develop health care partnerships within their local communities or across the state to engage Aboriginal women in cervical screening.

**Results:**

17 training sessions have been attended by 160 participants throughout metropolitan, rural and remote NSW. The workshops have been attended by women's health nurses, registered nurses, Aboriginal health workers, Aboriginal liaison officers, practice managers, Aboriginal health practitioners, mothers and babies workers. In 9 months, the network has convened 4 teleconferences and a face to face forum in Sydney.

**Implications that impact on your project:**

The NSW CSP manages the network and this enables Aboriginal workers to share information about models that work at the coal face with partners as high as the National Cervical Screening Program in Canberra. This information sharing conduit reaches National and state program and policy makers and the networks they represent.