

**Legislative Assembly Community Services Committee
Inquiry into support for new parents and babies in NSW
Response to Question on Notice
Hearing 4 June 2018, Sydney**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait midwives in NSW

[Mr DAVID HARRIS]—

QUESTION:

- (1) Would you be able to supply the Committee with the figures on [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander] midwives at some point down the track?

Transcript p16:

Mr DAVID HARRIS: A couple of questions to Health first of all. What strategies are in place to enhance recruitment of Aboriginal health workers and, in particular, midwives?

Dr LYONS: I think this is a really challenging area for us. We are very committed to increasing the Aboriginal workforce and, in particular, looking at how we can increase the number of Aboriginal people who are employed in health professional roles. We have had significant increases in the number of people who are employed in those roles, but it is an ongoing challenge. I was going to indicate the sorts of numbers of increases. I have some figures here, which I am looking to access so I can give you some specific numbers. At June 2017, NSW Health employed 3,100 Aboriginal staff, which included 93 doctors and 793 nurses. I do not have the number of midwives broken down but there are 69 currently enrolled in programs to support developing skills in those areas. So it is, I think, an area of focus for us. There is no doubt we can do very much more in that regard and we are committed to increasing Aboriginal employment across the State.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Would you be able to supply the Committee with the figures on midwives at some point down the track?

Dr LYONS: Certainly.

ANSWER:

- There are currently 50 midwives working in NSW Health who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
- NSW Health's *Aboriginal Nursing and Midwifery Strategy* (the Strategy) supports the recruitment of Aboriginal nurses and midwives, in line with its focus on increasing the Aboriginal workforce.
- The Strategy's cadetship program provides students with a study allowance, book allowance and a paid work placement each year.

- Since the Strategy commenced in NSW in 2004, 150 nurses and midwives have graduated, including 90 registered nurses, 46 enrolled nurses and 14 registered midwives.
- There are currently 47 nursing and midwifery cadets enrolled in the program, of which 7 are student midwives.
- The Strategy also includes undergraduate scholarships, which are an alternative to the cadetship program. NSW Health has funded 88 scholarships for nursing and midwifery students in 2018.
- The Ministry of Health works in partnership with Local Health Districts and Indigenous communities to promote nursing and midwifery careers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and identify and support potential nursing and midwifery students.
- *The Good Health – Great Jobs: Aboriginal Workforce Strategic Framework 2016-2020* for NSW Health is intended to support Local Health Districts and Specialty Health Networks to grow and to develop their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce. This is in line with the *NSW Public Sector Aboriginal Employment Strategy (2013-2023)* which sets a target of 1.8% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation across all public service classifications.