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### **Waminda: Leading the way with aboriginal health worker retention rate**

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**Introduction:** Aboriginal Health Workers are key to prevention efforts for Aboriginal peoples by providing appropriate health care. Aboriginal Health Workers are often affected by high rates of employment turnover, stress and burnout. Waminda South Coast Women's Health and Welfare Aboriginal Corporation is leading the way with very high staff retention rates (94%). Exploring Waminda's strengths can help provide leadership for other health services.

**Methods:** Qualitative case study: Ten semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face with current and past staff (last 5 years) employed as health and wellbeing workers at Waminda. Participants were asked six broad questions exploring what factors influenced their length of employment at Waminda. Interviews were transcribed verbatim. Themes were identified using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis framework.

**Results:** Five main themes were identified. Staff valued: The satisfaction they received by giving back to Community; the culturally safe working environment; strong relationships with co-workers and management, and trusting relationships with other service providers allowing for successful collaborations; strong leadership and management from supervisors and the CEO, and support from counsellors and psychologists; flexible working arrangements, opportunities for further study and role progression as well as recognition for work performed.

**Conclusion:** Implementing strategies to reduce staff burnout and turnover is paramount to a healthy workforce and continuity of patient care. Showcasing exemplar organisations can assist other health services to implement similar effective strategies.

#### **Biography**

Sara Deroy is a Public Health Honours student at the University of Wollongong, NSW, and Australia. Sara also works at an Aboriginal Health Service on the south coast of NSW. Her research interests include health services research in regards to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. She is passionate about closing the health gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and other Australians.

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