



Sad News and Sorry Business Guidelines

A factsheet for Line Managers supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees

This factsheet provides Line Managers supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff with information about the Sad News and Sorry Business Guidelines, including paid and unpaid leave entitlements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

The guidelines support a culturally safe and inclusive workplace by recognising the cultural responsibilities Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff may have during periods of grief and mourning. The Guidelines, Toolkit and supporting resources are available on [here](#).

Metro North Health encourages Line Managers to work collaboratively with their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to provide culturally safe support and flexible arrangements wherever possible.

Sad News and Sorry Business

Sad News and Sorry Business refer to the cultural practices, cultural obligations and traditional mourning protocols observed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples following the passing or loss of a family member, Elder or someone of cultural significance. Everyone's cultural practices, cultural obligations and mourning protocols may differ.

These responsibilities may involve:

- Attending funerals and memorial services
- Participating in cultural ceremonies and mourning practices
- Travelling to communities and family networks
- Travelling to Country (Country refers to the ancestral lands and waters to which Aboriginal people have cultural, spiritual and family connections.)
- Supporting family and community members during periods of grief
- Fulfilling ongoing cultural obligations during periods of grief and mourning

What relationships are recognised under the Sad News and Sorry Business Guidelines?

[Cultural and kinship relationships](#) differ from Western definitions of immediate family. They may extend to include Elders, community members and non-blood relatives who hold important cultural roles.

Who can access Sad News and Sorry Business support?

The Sad News and Sorry Business Guidelines apply to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees across Metro North Health who are:

- Permanent employees
- Temporary employees
- Casual employees (subject to applicable employment provisions)

Employees are encouraged to discuss their circumstances with their Line Manager as early as possible to explore available leave and workplace support options.

What leave can be accessed under Sad News and Sorry Business?

Employees may be eligible for:

Leave Type	Typical Entitlement
Bereavement Leave	Up to 2 days paid leave for each eligible bereavement. Kinship and cultural family relationships are recognised.
Compassionate Leave	Up to 2 days paid leave when a close family or kinship member has a life-threatening illness or injury.
Paid Cultural Leave*	Eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees covered under the Health Workforce Agreement may access up to 10 days paid cultural leave each year.
Special Leave (Unpaid)	Up to 10 days unpaid leave may be available where appropriate.
Other Leave	Annual leave, long service leave or half-pay annual leave may also be considered if additional time is needed.

**Applies to eligible employees covered under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Certified Agreement.*

Your role as a Line Manager

Managers can support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees by:

- Completing the Cultural Practice Program
- Respecting cultural obligations and kinship relationships
- Supporting access to appropriate leave
- Applying the Guidelines fairly and consistently
- Taking a flexible and culturally appropriate approach to leave requests and evidence requirements (refer to the Guidelines and Toolkit if unsure)
- Seeking advice when needed

Support available to Line Managers

Line Managers can access guidance and support from:

- [Local Cultural Capability Officer](#)
- Local HR Partner
- [People and Culture](#)
- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team](#)
- Social and Emotional Wellbeing Officers
- [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#)

Early consultation is encouraged when leave arrangements or cultural considerations require additional support.

Further Enquiries

For any further enquiries please contact AskHR via phone 1800 275 275 or email MNAskHR@health.qld.gov.au. Open Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm