



Sad News and Sorry Business Guideline

A factsheet for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees

This factsheet provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff with information about the Sad News and Sorry Business Guideline, 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 Guideline, Toolkit and supporting resources are available on QHEPS [here](#).

Metro North Health is committed to fostering a workplace where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are supported, respected and culturally safe during times of Sad News and Sorry Business.

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 Guideline 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 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	What is available?
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.*

What can staff expect from Sad News and Sorry Business leave

Metro North Health is committed to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff during Sad News and Sorry Business. Staff can expect their manager to:

- Treat them with respect and maintain confidentiality
- Recognise their cultural and kinship obligations
- Work with staff to explore appropriate leave and flexible arrangements where possible
- Support staff wellbeing throughout the process

If staff need additional support when returning to work, speak with a manager about flexible work arrangements, wellbeing support or ongoing cultural responsibilities.

Support available to staff

Staff don't have to manage it alone, if more [assistance](#) is needed, seek support through:

- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Team](#)
- [Staff Psychology](#)
- Peer Responder Program
- [Social and Emotional Wellbeing Officer \(SEWB\)](#)
- [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#)
- A support person of your choice

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