

# Strategic Plan

2009-2012



**ATSICHS**

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander  
Community Health Service Brisbane Limited

## Our New Identity



The ATSICHS Brisbane logo represents Universal themes of Indigenous life within Brisbane and it's surrounding areas representing both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures.

The Boomerang Element of the logo represents the first letter of the acronym - 'ATSICHS'. The detailed design within the Boomerang represents the connections between different locations within the Brisbane region that are connected by the Brisbane River.

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## Message from Chairperson

It is with great pleasure that I present the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service (ATSICHS) Brisbane Limited Strategic Plan for 2008-2011.

This insightful and carefully constructed plan represents a three (3) year vision for ATSICHS Brisbane and prescribes the key outcome areas in which activity of the organisation will be strategically focussed.

In preparing this strategic plan the Board of ATSICHS Brisbane recognised the significance of recent commitments of both Commonwealth and Queensland Governments to 'close the gap' in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. The Board therefore determined to align its priorities in service delivery with this new national agenda. In terms of health service delivery, a major focus over the next three (3) years will be on addressing the burden of chronic disease in our communities and ensuring a healthy start to life for our children. This will see ATSICHS Brisbane focus effort on building integrated and multi-professional approaches to improved maternal and child health care and the prevention, treatment and management of chronic disease.

Delivering comprehensive primary health care to a significant and increasing population (approximately 30,000), dispersed within the greater Brisbane/South East Queensland Region presents a major challenge for ATSICHS Brisbane. In response, ATSICHS will embark on a regional development strategy to expand provision of comprehensive primary health care services within the Region, commencing with the establishment of new/additional primary health care facilities into North Brisbane (Northgate) and Logan (Woodridge) in the 2008/2009 Year.

Funding the future expansion of primary health care services necessary to achieve our vision of 'closing the gap' will require ATSICHS Brisbane to look beyond existing 'grant' funding arrangements and explore new approaches aimed at generating additional/alternative income streams. In particular, ATSICHS will look to maximise Medicare income through new business models and partner with mainstream public AND private providers to leverage access to mainstream funding and resources. Making progress towards financial independence is a key strategic priority for ATSICHS Brisbane.

In addition to securing additional funding and resources to expand health services, ATSICHS will actively interrogate opportunities for reducing costs in non-core/health functions.

These opportunities will be explored in partnership with other Community Controlled Health Services within the Region and our peak body – the Queensland Aboriginal & Islander Health Council (QAIHC).

Achieving our vision of ‘closing the gap’ in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health requires an adequate and appropriately skilled workforce. Building a sustainable and competent workforce therefore remains a priority for ATSICHS Brisbane to 2011 and beyond, with ATSICHS Brisbane to focus significant effort on enhancing its internal systems and capacities while also seeking to establish

ATSICHS Brisbane as a ‘Teaching Centre’ in collaboration with local universities and research centres.

As a Community Controlled Health Service, ATSICHS Brisbane distinguishes itself from other/mainstream providers of health care through our unique relationship with communities of the Region. Through our model of community control, it is our communities that exercise ultimate control and ownership of the health service through their participation as Members of the organisation.

ATSICHS Brisbane also recognises that good clinical care, whilst critical, is not sufficient to bring about the health gains

necessary in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and that our health service must move beyond the four walls of our clinics to empower our communities to adopt healthy lifestyles. Empowering our communities through engagement will be a major area of activity for ATSICHS Brisbane in the next triennium.

Responding effectively to the health needs of our communities requires that ATSICHS Brisbane develop strong and robust internal systems to manage growth. Building the governance and management capacity of ATSICHS Brisbane is a key priority to 2011.

To our partners and others committed to improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the greater Brisbane/South East Queensland Region, I strongly encourage you to embrace this plan and work with us to achieve our shared vision of ‘closing the gap’ in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. As we renew our commitment to improving health and well-being of our communities, I wish to thank our communities and partners for their continued support.

**William Gorham**  
Chairperson

## Vision Statement

“Towards equity in health – closing the gap in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander outcomes”.

## Mission Statement

The mission of the organisation is to ensure that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the greater Brisbane region have access to culturally safe and comprehensive primary health care through ATSICHS:

- providing leadership in the provision of health services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Brisbane and surrounding areas
- operating a sustainable service with strong community and client support
- providing comprehensive primary health care services through its model for service delivery across the region
- establishing partnerships and innovative approaches to service delivery
- overcoming barriers to service access that relate to a range of cultural, health status and socio-demographic factors
- contributing to the development of a competent and sustainable workforce in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health
- improving the knowledge base in relation to urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health

## Our core values

The mission of the organisation is to ensure that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the greater Brisbane region have access to culturally safe and comprehensive primary health care through ATSICHS:

- **Community control of primary health care** – ATSICHS supports community control, participation and decision making as a fundamental component of the health system
- **Cultural respect** – ATSICHS recognises the cultural diversity that exists amongst its clients and that the rights, views, values and expectations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are respected in service delivery
- **Holistic approach** – ATSICHS has adopted a view of health that encompasses the well being of an individual, family and community and recognises the broader social, cultural, spiritual and environmental influences on health
- **Health sector responsibility** – ATSICHS recognises that responsibility for improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health rests with the health system as a whole and that it can play a key role in ensuring responsiveness of the sector
- **Working together** – ATSICHS recognises the importance of working with a range of government, non-government and private providers to ensure co-ordination of efforts and maximum benefits to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- **Local decision making** – ATSICHS is committed to local level consultation and input into health service planning and delivery
- **Promoting good health** – ATSICHS recognises the importance of illness prevention as a fundamental component of its health service delivery
- **Building capacity** – ATSICHS recognises the ongoing need to build capacity for improved health outcomes: through both its services and mainstream services, as well as in the workforce, physical infrastructure and data management.
- **Accountability** – ATSICHS is committed to being accountable for the improving the health of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of the greater Brisbane area.

## Key developments for ATSICHS

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service (ATSICHS) Brisbane formally commenced operations in 1973 at a converted shop front in Red Hill.

In 1976, ATSICHS moved to South Brisbane where the service continued to expand and in 1981, the Council of Management again sought new premises to accommodate the many programs that the service was providing. In 1985, ATSICHS moved to 10 Hubert Street, Woolloongabba, in a location that was historically close to where large numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples lived in Brisbane. In 2006, ATSICHS was moved to temporary premises in West End as a result of plans for the construction of a major tunnel in Brisbane.

In 2008 the organisation formally changed its name to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service (ATSICHS), in recognition of the two distinct cultural sub-groups that make up the Indigenous population of Brisbane.

In 2009 ATSICHS will complete major capital works projects and commence expanded operations into Woolloongabba, Woodridge and Northgate.

ATSICHS has now grown to be one of the largest Indigenous community organizations in Queensland, and proudly remain community-controlled and managed. It is the only Aboriginal community controlled health service operating in the greater Brisbane region, and provides a diverse range of health and ancillary services in a culturally appropriate setting to Indigenous clients throughout the Greater Brisbane Area with the main service located in West End in Brisbane and with satellite services at differing times over its history in the suburbs of Inala, Woodridge, Acacia Ridge and Sandgate.

The current range of services include: general clinic, dietician and diabetic educators; family and child health; antenatal clinic; paediatric clinic; youth clinic and services; women's health; men's health; eye clinic; podiatry clinic; healing centre; hearing clinic; dental; welfare; and hospital liaison services.

As a primary health care service, ATSICHS plays a key role in ameliorating the impact of social, political and environmental factors on health status by enhancing access to culturally appropriate and high-quality services that target priority conditions at key stages across the life course.

## Where we want to be in 2012

This strategic plan represents a three year vision for ATSICHS and the key outcome areas in which activity of the organisation will be strategically focused.

Key components of the plan aim to see ATSICHS as follows:

- The major service provider to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the greater Brisbane area
- Involved in a range of innovative partnerships and service models for improved access to comprehensive primary health care to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the greater Brisbane area.
- Participating in a regional model for comprehensive primary health care delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities of south-east Queensland
- Providing significant input into national reporting and debate about the health status and strategic responses for urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Implementing governance and management reforms for enhanced service models and moves towards financial independence



## Current pressures and future challenges

It is important to align priorities for service delivery with the major national agenda to close the gap in Indigenous outcomes, with the following key measures to be achieved:

- To close the life expectancy gap within a generation;
- To halve the mortality gap in children under age five within a decade;
- To halve the gap in literacy and numeracy achievement within a decade;
- To halve the gap in employment outcomes within a decade;
- To at least halve the gap in attainment at year 12 schooling by 2020; and
- To provide all four year olds in remote communities with access to a quality pre-school program within five years

In terms of health service delivery, a major focus will be on addressing the burden of chronic disease in Indigenous communities and ensuring a healthy start to life for Indigenous children. This will therefore require a significant focus on building integrated and multi-professional approaches to improved antenatal/postnatal care and the prevention, treatment and management of chronic disease.

In developing its strategic response to this national agenda, ATSICHS has identified the following five key challenges:

- **Geographic distribution of the Brisbane Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population** - The ATSICHS is currently the only Aboriginal community controlled health service operating within the greater Brisbane area, which now has an Indigenous population of nearly 30,000 people. This represents a considerable increase in the population base of the Brisbane City local government area of around 12000, and since it began operations in the early 1970's. It also has experienced a shift in the distribution of the population, with many outlying suburbs now having large numbers of Indigenous residents.
- **Primary health care services** – While the Commonwealth government has historically funded Aboriginal community controlled health services to deliver primary health care, recent initiatives in urban areas have encouraged mainstream services to take on this role. ATSICHS is very supportive of the health system as a whole taking responsibility for Indigenous health, but this requires leadership from within the community controlled health
- sector. Initiatives such as “brokerage” funding and the establishment of super clinics require the Aboriginal community controlled health sector to re-position itself within this overall approach to primary health care delivery
- **Partnerships** – ATSICHS will require a number of strategic partnerships in order to achieve its objectives and in response to increasing political pressure. The identification of key contributors and the nature of such collaborations represent important priorities for the organisation
- **Service limitations** – Given the size and distribution of the Brisbane Indigenous population, the emergence of new partners and providers and the current funding levels, ATSICHS needs to ensure good health service planning and prioritisation of needs within its catchment area
- **Governance and management capacity** – the growing complexity of decision making requirements and need for a business model to guide the operations of ATSICHS, along with the proposed enhanced models of service delivery require high level technical and management skills. The need to build capacity in these areas is critical and will require a rethink of current approaches to board membership and organisational development.

# Strategic Goals

In order to achieve its vision for the organisation in 2012, ATSICHS aims to achieve the following 5 goals:

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## **Build a sustainable and competent workforce**

Recruiting and retaining a skilled workforce is critical to successful service delivery and improved health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

### **Strategies**

In order to achieve this goal ATSICHS will:

- Undertake workforce planning, to inform the number and skill mix of workers required, and based on health needs and priorities for service delivery within the greater Brisbane area
- Ensure systems for recruitment, retention, ongoing professional development and performance appraisal are implemented and monitored
- Establish a teaching centre in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health in collaboration with local universities and research centres
- Foster interdisciplinary approaches to service delivery and value a multi-disciplinary team approach to comprehensive primary health care

## **Make progress towards financial independence**

Opportunities now exist for ATSICHS to increase its income from sources other than government grants and to establish a stronger financial position.

In order to achieve this goal ATSICHS will:

- Reform management and governance systems to establish a viable long term business model for the operations of the service
- Increase the uptake of Medicare items in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health
- Explore opportunities for business relationships in the delivery of health services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the greater Brisbane region
- Achieve economies and efficiencies in its operations through the establishment of a regional service hub and shared services with other Aboriginal community controlled health services in the south-east Queensland region

## Empower the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community through engagement

In order to achieve this goal ATSICHS will:

- Undertake community health needs assessment and service planning that prioritises issues across the greater Brisbane region, including transition of primary health care services to local community control
- Develop a communications strategy to ensure ongoing community feedback and input into service planning and reporting processes
- Implement appropriate community education to improve self-management and adoption of practices that will lead to a reduction in risk behaviour
- Ensure that future governance arrangements take account of the diversity and geographic distribution of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population across Brisbane

## Expand provision of PHC services across the region

In order to achieve this goal, ATSICHS will:

- Continue to provide services from its base clinic
- Expand its service provision to areas of identified need for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations within the greater Brisbane area
- Ensure compliance with relevant quality standards and a commitment to ongoing quality improvement processes
- Respond to current Commonwealth government initiatives

through innovative models of service delivery and in partnership with mainstream providers

- Develop and deliver specific programs in response to the “Closing the Gap” agenda, in particular chronic disease prevention and management, and maternal and child health
- Develop systems for improved monitoring and reporting on health outcomes and shared access to clinical data for key stakeholders within the region
- Establish a primary health care network of services to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in south-east Queensland

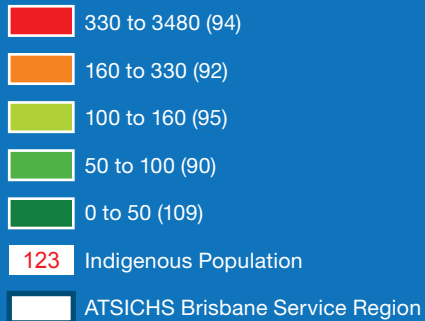
## Governance and organisational development

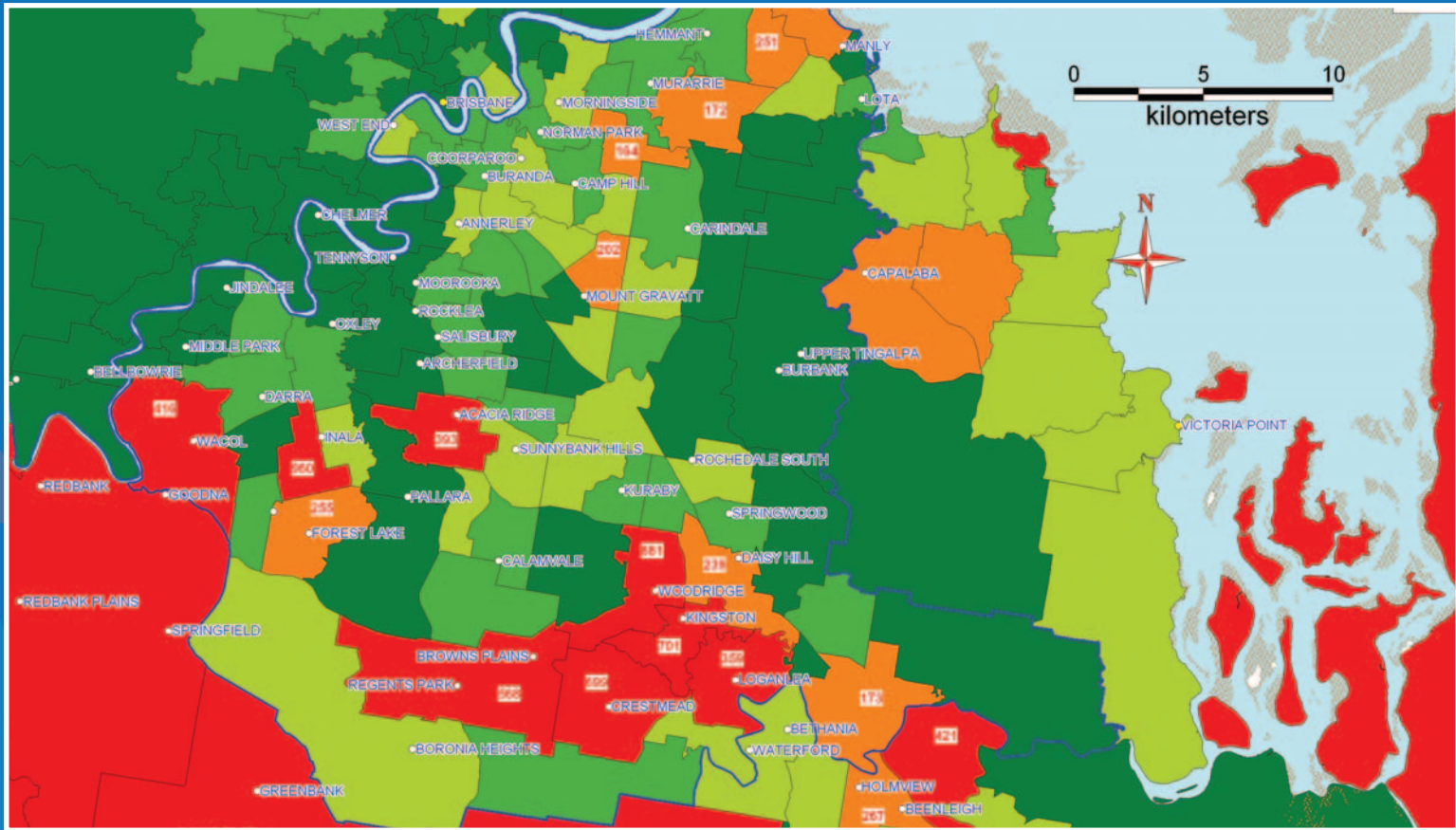
In order to achieve this goal, ATSICHS will:

- Review current governance arrangements to ensure an appropriate set of skills and representation to guide the organisation into the future
- Review current structures within the organisation to develop a model that encompasses the expansion of services across the region, new models of service delivery and appropriate linkages
- Reform the current workplace behaviours and relationships to align with the business model and future needs of the service
- Ensure that the organisation adopts a proactive approach to the political, service and community environments and has the capacity to respond accordingly.

# Brisbane North (including Caboolture) Region

## Legend:







**ATSIChS**

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander  
Community Health Service Brisbane Limited

60 Ferry Road WEST END QLD 4101

P O Box 8112 Woolloongabba QLD 4102

Tel : (07) 3393 0055 | Fax : (07) 3391 6196

[www.atsichs.org.au](http://www.atsichs.org.au)