

Culturally Responsive Low Intensity Mental Health Services

Expression of Interest

South Western Sydney PHN

EOI title:	Culturally Responsive Low Intensity Mental Health Services; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities.
Issue date:	Monday 16 March 2026
Submission due date:	Thursday 23 April 2026
Place for lodgement:	Submissions can be made via SWSPHN's website www.swsphn.com.au

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Associated Attachments

- Attachment 1 - SWSPHN Commissioned Services Agreement (CSA) - Contract Terms and Conditions - Example
- Attachment 2 - SWSPHN Activity Work Plan Template (to be uploaded with submission)
- Attachment 3 - SWSPHN Budget Template (to be uploaded with submission)
- Attachment 4 - Information Session Invitation

PART A: Invitation and Overview of Tender

1. Invitation

Interested parties are invited to express interest to South Western Sydney Primary Health Network (SWSPHN) in accordance with the instructions outlined in this document for Culturally Responsive Low Intensity Mental Health Services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities.

Interested parties may apply for one or both community groups. If applying for both groups, separate responses are requested for each target community group, and it should be clear in your response which community group you are applying to service.

2. Background

SWSPHN is a not-for-profit organisation funded by the Australian Government, Department of Health, Disability and Aging (DHDA) with the key objective of increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of primary care services, particularly for those at risk of poor health outcomes, and improving coordination of care to ensure patients/clients receive the right care in the right place at the right time.

SWSPHN's region services seven Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Bankstown (pre-amalgamation), Camden, Campbelltown, Fairfield, Liverpool, Wingecarribee and Wollondilly (see Figure 1), with an estimated total population of 1,215,244 in 2021. Spanning an area of 6,243 square kilometres, with a combination of low and medium density housing, pockets of commercial and industrial areas and rural areas to the south and west, substantial population growth in the next decade is forecasted, driven by the South West Sydney Growth Centre.

The population living in SWS is culturally, linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse and it also has the largest urban Aboriginal community in metropolitan Sydney. For further information please see, Health of Our Region: <http://www.swsphn.com.au/healthofourregion>.

SWSPHN would like to acknowledge the Dharawal, Gundungurra and Darug Aboriginal people as the Traditional custodians of the land within South Western Sydney and pay respects to Elders both past and present. SWSPHN acknowledges Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders as the first people of Australia.



Figure 1 – SWSPHN catchment area

Overview of Procurement

The phased rollout of the Medicare Mental Health Check In (MMHCI) service in 2026 will provide guided and self-guided Cognitive Behaviour Therapy Based (CBT) programs that focus on helping people manage stress, worry, low mood and to stay well.

To prevent duplication, DHDA mandates that SWSPHN must reprioritise planning and the commissioning of low intensity mental health services to meet the needs of people who are unable to access mainstream services or for whom the service does not meet their needs.

This Expressions of Interest is seeking applicants to deliver low intensity mental health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and/or Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities within South Western Sydney.

SWSPHN may contract with one or more providers to achieve regional coverage, depending on the service areas and target cohorts proposed, and the overall quality and value of submissions.

2.1. Objectives

Commissioned Service Providers will operate within a stepped-care framework to offer brief, structured and evidence based low intensity mental health interventions. Services will be tailored to meet the specific needs of people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds.

2.2. Intended Outcomes

Consumers have reduced inequalities in accessing low intensity mental health supports across South Western Sydney Region.

Reduced levels of stigma associated with accessing mental health services.

Reduced rates of people escalating from mild to higher levels of mental ill-health.

Greater integration and collaboration of low intensity mental health services within the stepped care model.

People in South Western Sydney Region will have greater awareness and utilisation of mental health supports.

2.3. Out of Scope

The following are considered out of scope for this Procurement:

- Capital works: Funds cannot be used for capital works, construction or installing facilities or fixtures
- Services that replicate or duplicate existing service provision(s)
- Activity that is more appropriately funded through other funding bodies
- Activity that is not supported by clinical evidence
- Activities that primarily provide social support services or lifestyle interventions (psychosocial supports).

Examples include:

- Broader life skills building, including confidence and resilience
- Exercise, yoga or relaxation
- Day-to-day independent living skills
- Costs associated with research

- Services which require on-going funding from SWSPHN to be sustainable.
- Delivery of Low Intensity Therapies as an intake model for traditional psychological service.

3. Contract Term

The contract term is **1 July 2026 – 30 June 2027**, establishment and embedding phase timings will be dependent on the nature of proposed activities.

Recurrent funding is not guaranteed and will be determined following the outcome of contract reviews and further availability of funding.

4. Funding

The total available funding for this activity is: **\$335,666.00 ex GST**.

The funding outlined above is exclusive of GST. GST is payable.

The funding may be divided across multiple service providers in our region. Funds will be committed at the discretion of SWSPHN via the EOI evaluation and contract negotiation process.

Respondents are asked to demonstrate how the funds will be allocated across the 2026-2027 financial year and provide a detailed budget using the budget template provided.

SWSPHN may propose an alternative allocation of these funding amounts depending on the indicated budget and activities submitted.

Funds will be expended in accordance with the indicative cost caps in the table below.

Component	% Cost Cap
Indirect support and administration costs/operating costs including the following: Rent, utilities, telecommunications, HR, finance, IT, insurance, banking and audit fees, recruitment, contract management and administration costs	Up to 20%
Direct service/salary costs	80%
Total	100%

5. Eligible Organisations

Submissions are sought from private, government, non-government, community-based or Aboriginal community-controlled organisations with demonstrated capacity and capability to deliver the service model in accordance with this EOI.

Respondents may wish to apply as a partnership or consortia. Consortia or partnerships must have a single lead organisation identified for the purpose of the contract and all other engagements, including intake and referral, with SWSPHN.

SWSPHN may award agreements to one or more organisations based on the outcome of this EOI.

Services must be delivered within the local government areas of Camden, Campbelltown, Fairfield, Liverpool, Wingecarribee, Wollondilly, and Bankstown (pre-amalgamation).

The respondent must not be, or have a current, nor during the term of the Agreement (if successful), affiliation, partnership, sponsorship, funding arrangement, or other form of involvement with any gambling organisation, gambling operator, gambling-related association or generate revenue from gambling.

6. Specifications

6.1. Target Population

People from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander or Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities that are experiencing mild mental ill-health, including situational or emerging mental health concerns.

Respondents may apply to support one or both community groups. If applying for both groups, separate responses are requested.

6.2. Eligibility Criteria

People from either Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander or Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds who:

- Are aged 16 or older
- Live within the South Western Sydney Region
- Experience difficulties accessing mainstream mental health services, or for whom these services do not meet their needs.

6.3. Ineligibility Criteria

People who are not from an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander or Culturally and Linguistically Diverse background.

People requiring moderate to severe mental health services.

People with mental health support needs requiring longer term traditional psychological therapies.

People with mental health support needs more appropriately suited to existing services / provisions including the Medicare Mental Health Check In.

6.4. Service Activities

The services provided must be at no cost and focus on helping people cope with stress, anxiety, worry, panic, or low mood. Service activities should specifically outline any adaptations made to proven models of care to ensure they are accessible and fit for purpose for the target populations. Services can include, but are not limited to, low-intensity CBT via face-to-face 1:1 or group services.

Success factors for services that will be established:

- Locating services where the target populations can easily access them.
- The ability to self-refer and low stigma associated with accessing the service.
- Using a range of marketing modes to promote low intensity mental health services.

6.5. Specified Personnel

The successful applicant will be required to maintain staff/subcontractors that have the necessary skills, training and cultural competencies to deliver evidence-based, low intensity psychological services for the duration of the contract term. Registration, credentialing or recognition as a mental health professional is preferred.

7. Requirements

7.1. Governance Requirements Including Clinical Governance

Successful applicants will require:

Capacity to implement policies and procedures to supervise, assess and mitigate operational risk. SWSPHN documents that will form part of the agreement entered into with successful applicants can be found here:

[Commissioning healthcare | South Western Sydney PHN](#)

Capacity to ensure the fidelity of services to proven models of delivering low intensity psychological services and ensuring the services are culturally appropriate and accessible.

Ability to ensure that the workforce delivering the service has the necessary skills and accredited training required to deliver the model of service.

Capability and knowledge to screen for risk, routinely monitor a consumer's progress and support consumers to move to more appropriate services if required.

7.2. Data and Reporting Requirements

Services would be required to maintain appropriate client and service data collection and outcome measurement arrangements to meet Departmental Primary Mental Health Care Minimum Data Set requirements and broader reporting requirements.

7.3. Insurances

The successful respondent, must maintain insurances of:

- \$20 million public liability
- \$10 million professional indemnity

- Up to \$1 million cyber security insurance
- Workers compensation as required by Law

SWSPHN will only enter into an Agreement with a respondent who has the necessary insurance cover. The insurance must cover the respondent and SWSPHN against any liability arising out of, or in connection with, the performance of Respondent's obligations under the Agreement.

PART B: SWSPHN Tender Process

8. Timeline

The below table provides indicative timelines for this procurement:

Activity	Date
Notice of Upcoming Tender	09 March 26
EOI open	16 March 26
Information session	25 March 26 @ 10am
Last queries date	20 April 26 @ 5pm
EOI Closing date	23 April 26 @ 5pm
Evaluation period	24 April 26 – 28 May 26
Successful applicant notified and contract negotiations commence	May 26
Contract execution	June 26
Unsuccessful applicants notified	June 26
Full implementation and service delivery commencement	01 July 2026

9. Information Session

Respondents are invited to attend an information session to be held on **Wednesday 25 March 2026 at 10am**. see Attachment 6: Information Session Invitation.

The purpose of the meeting is to provide an overview of the EOI, outcomes sought, the process for submission and to allow potential respondents to ask questions.

Please follow the instructions on the Information Session Invitation to register.

All questions and answers as well as PowerPoint slides, will be posted to the SWSPHN website within one (1) week of the meeting.

10. Enquiry Procedures

Any questions in relation to this EOI should be lodged, in writing, via email tender@swsphn.com.au

Questions will be addressed, and the response will be posted on the website and updated once a week. All respondents will see the question and answer however, all identifying information of the organisation will be removed.

10.1. Last Queries Date

Respondents should lodge their questions via email before the last queries date.

Last queries date: **Monday 20 April 2026 at 5pm.**

11. Submission Lodgement

Respondents must submit their EOI through SWSPHN's website www.swsphn.com.au. Application submissions via any other means aside from the SWSPHN website will not be considered and will be returned to the respondent.

The deadline for the submission for this EOI is **Thursday 23 April 2026 at 5pm.** Any submissions submitted after this time will not be considered.

12. Evaluation Process

A response to this EOI does not guarantee the respondent and SWSPHN will enter into a formal funding agreement. Responses will be evaluated against the evaluation criteria. A secondary process for evaluating EOIs may take place.

Submissions will be evaluated for full compliance with any mandatory requirements identified in *Part A Invitation and Bid Rules* and *Part B Specification and Requirements*. Respondents are reminded that any requirements identified as mandatory are considered to be of fundamental importance to the satisfactory delivery of the goods and/or service, and a fully compliant response is required.

12.1. Evaluation Criteria

SWSPHN will accept one submission per target group, per organisation. Respondents will be evaluated and scored against the following general criteria.

General Required Criteria

The Evaluation criteria is set out below:

- Demonstrated capacity to deliver proven models of mental health supports for consumers from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and/or Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds.
Weighting: (35%)
- Evidence of strong connections to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and/or Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities across South Western Sydney and understanding of their unique mental health needs.
Weighting: (35%)
- Detailed Activity Workplan that aligns with this EOI and demonstrates capability to collect minimum data reporting requirements.
Weighting: (20%)
- Comprehensive budget that clearly aligns with the activities presented in the Activity Workplan that represents efficient and effective allocation of funding.
Weighting: (10%)

Unscored criteria

- \$20 million public liability Insurance per claim
- \$10 million professional indemnity Insurance per claim
- Up to \$1 million cyber security insurance per claim
- Evidence of relevant accreditations
- Agreement with the standard SWSPHN Commissioned Services Agreement (CSA)

Respondents shall provide supporting information to enable the criteria to be assessed, by completing every section of the submission. General Required Criteria will contribute to 100% of the total assessment. All the criteria must be satisfactorily addressed. Unscored criteria must be addressed but will not be individually scored. A respondent who does not address the unscored criteria may not be considered for evaluation.

12.2. Proposal Shortlist Criteria

SWSPHN reserves the right to short-list a limited number of respondents, based on its initial assessment and continue detailed evaluation of this smaller group of respondents to the exclusion of all others.

If SWSPHN chooses to include a shortlisting stage in its evaluation process, it is not, at any time, required to notify respondents or any other person or organisation interested in submitting a proposal.

12.3. Secondary Evaluation Process

There are occasions when a secondary evaluation process is required. SWSPHN may request further clarification, where appropriate, of the response but need not make the same request of all respondents. This may occur as a part of the original plan or be necessary to differentiate between short listed submissions.

A secondary process may include, but not be limited to:

- Clarification of particular aspects of the submission,
- Additional information on some aspect of the proposal,
- Responses to additional requirements,
- Negotiations on personnel, project delivery, milestones, and price; Or
- Short listed providers will be notified of the secondary process.

Secondary response may be requested in writing or in the form of further discussion, a presentation, or yarning circle.

12.4. Additional Bid Rules

SWSPHN will not be held accountable for any costs incurred in responding to the EOI, including responding to any secondary evaluation processes.

SWSPHN reserves the right to:

- Invite any person or entity to submit a bid;
- Extend the bid closing date;
- Vary the Specifications and Requirements at any time, subject to first giving each tenderer the opportunity to respond to the variations;
- Allow a tenderer to change its bid before the completion of evaluation of tenders, but only if the same opportunity is given to all tenderers;
- Exclude from consideration a bid that has not been submitted by the submission deadline;
- Consider or accept (at SWSPHN's sole discretion) any tender including without limitation a late tender or the tender of a tenderer who has failed to submit in accordance with these bid rules;
- Abandon this invitation process at any time;
- Clarify any aspect of a bid after the closing date;
- Seek the advice of external consultants to assist in the evaluation or review of bids;
- Make enquiries of any person or entity to obtain information about the tenderer and its bid;
- Seek information from any tenderer;
- Following evaluation of bids, invite revised bids or further information via presentation from one or more tenderers;
- Following evaluation of bids, negotiate with one or more tenderers;
- Negotiate with a tenderer for the provision of any part of the requirement, and to negotiate with any other tenderer with respect to the same or other parts of the requirement, and to enter into one or more contracts for all or any part of the requirements;

- Discontinue negotiations at any time with any tenderer; and propose revised or replacement contract terms at any stage in this procurement process in substitution for, or in addition to, the terms and conditions included.

Respondents can expect that SWSPHN will:

- Preserve the confidentiality of your confidential information;
- Afford every respondent the opportunity to compete fairly;
- Subject to SWSPHN’s right to terminate this process, consider a response which is submitted in accordance with these Rules by a tenderer who has:
 - Complied with expectations as to probity
 - For this EOI an external probity officer has been engaged. The external probity officer is Rochelle Kirk, rkirkconsult@gmail.com;
 - Provided the information required in this stage of the process as set out in this Invitation;
 - Co-operated with bid rules; and
 - Submitted its bid by the Closing Time

12.5. Complaints

If at any time during the tender process, a respondent considers that it has been unfairly treated, the respondent must first notify the Contact Officer in writing. If the matter is not resolved, the respondent may then contact the nominated procurement complaints officer below, and request in writing for the issue to be addressed.

Name:	Ben Neville via Mel McIntyre
Title:	Acting Director of Planning and Performance
Address:	Level 2, 1 Bolger Street Campbelltown NSW 2560
Email:	Melissa.McIntyre@swsphn.com.au
Phone:	(02) 4632 3000

12.6. Feedback

Feedback may be provided to unsuccessful respondents upon request. Feedback will only be provided at the end of the process following tender award, debrief or contract execution.

PART C: Response Evaluation

Part C contains the questions that require a response in order for the submission to be considered. Please note that strict word limits apply to the responses and responses should focus on the central points in the questions.

A template is provided for the workplan and budget. These templates should be completed with the inclusion of all the relevant financial components that are in scope for funding.

It should be clear in your response which community you are applying to service. If you wish to service both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities, we request you submit a separate application for each, clearly outlining your expertise with both community group.

Only responses submitted via the webform on the SWSPHN website ([South Western Sydney PHN | Health Organisation](#)) will be considered for evaluation.

Questions to be responded to that address the Evaluation Criteria

Criteria Question 1:

What mental health service(s) will you deliver and what evidence is there to demonstrate that this approach will achieve positive outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and/or Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities? Include in your response:

- Target group (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People OR Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Community)
- The modality of service delivery
- Location of services (if face to face)
- Target sub-groups e.g. young people, older adults, specific cultures and languages.

(max 1000 words)

Criteria Question 2:

What is your understanding of the unique needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people or Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities in South Western Sydney. What relationships do you already have with these communities, and how will these connections inform service delivery?

(max 1000 words)

Criteria Question 3:

Please attach a detailed Activity Work Plan using the template provided.

Criteria Question 4:

Please attach a detailed Budget demonstrating value for money using the template provided. Ensure the Budget aligns with the activities proposed.