



## IAHA Media Release

### First National Chief Allied Health Officer a Significant Milestone

14 March 2013

Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA), the national peak body representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander allied health professionals and students, welcomes the establishment of the Commonwealth's first Chief Allied Health Officer.

"We have long advocated for a Chief Allied Health Officer at a national level," said IAHA Chairperson Ms Faye McMillan. "The establishment of this position recognises the fact that allied health professionals, who collectively comprise around 20% of the current Australian health workforce, are an essential element in a responsive and equitable health system."

"Many Australians are unaware that the highly skilled health professionals who share in the delivery of their care often fall under the umbrella of allied health," said Ms McMillan. "Allied health professionals contribute to the identification, evaluation, management and prevention of disease and disorders; dietary and nutritional services; and rehabilitation services. They work across widely diverse settings, including but not limited to clinics, hospitals, rehabilitation centres, laboratories, schools, early childhood services, long-term care facilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Medical/ Health Services, community health centres, and home healthcare agencies."

"The increase in number of people living with complex and chronic conditions across both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations and the wider community has resulted in a greater need for a diverse range of allied health professionals working within all healthcare settings," said Ms McMillan. "Improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and communities demands a coordinated interdisciplinary approach and allied health professionals are an integral part of holistic, comprehensive and coordinated healthcare delivery."

IAHA Chief Executive Officer Craig Dukes said that IAHA remains committed to advocating for equitable access to culturally responsive allied health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

"We look forward to working closely with the new Chief Allied Health Officer and other key partners such as Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health and Allied Health Professions Australia as we continue to support and strengthen the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander allied health workforce," said Mr Dukes. "This new appointment is a significant milestone in the journey towards improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing."

For further information, please visit [www.indigenouslyalliedhealth.com.au](http://www.indigenouslyalliedhealth.com.au).

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