



## IAHA Media Release – Allied Health Flies Under Budget Radar

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Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA), the national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander allied health peak body, hopes that the minimal mention of allied health in recent Australian government budget announcements does not reflect the importance the government places on allied health in meeting the holistic health and wellbeing needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

“IAHA supports the government’s commitment to building a sustainable health workforce that is well distributed and equipped to meet the diverse needs of all Australians, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and those living in rural and remote communities,” said Ms Faye McMillan, IAHA Chairperson. “However the health workforce comprises more than doctors.”

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing outcomes are strongly influenced by complex and interrelated factors including social, historical, political and cultural determinants,” said Ms Donna Murray, CEO of IAHA. “Allied health professionals are ideally placed to impact on these determinants as they operate within widely diverse settings across health, education, justice and community sectors. It will be essential the government recognises the potential negative health impact of cuts across these sectors as it reviews all Indigenous programmes.”

“IAHA welcomes an increased investment of a further \$13.4 million over the next 3 years in the nursing and allied health workforce,” said Ms McMillan. “Another 500 scholarships, administered effectively, have the potential to significantly increase the support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander allied health students and graduates.”

“We have concerns that the proposed introduction of a co-payment to visit a GP risks a negative effect upon access to allied health services in the primary health care context, given that access is largely dependent on GP referral,” said Ms McMillan. “Allied health professionals are critical players in a responsive and equitable health system that is able to accommodate the widely varying needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, many with chronic and complex conditions. Equitable access to this workforce is essential.”

“IAHA will continue to advocate for improved cultural responsiveness of the health workforce and the development and implementation of strategies to build and strengthen a sustainable allied health sector that values Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples,” said Ms Murray. “We commit to continuing to work with the government and our partners to achieve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health equity within a generation.”

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IAHA is the national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander allied health peak body.