



## IAHA Media Release - Allied Health Commitment to Close the Gap

20 March 2014

Closing the Gap on life expectancy, educational achievement and employment opportunities between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians is at the heart of an historic agreement signed by 24 national allied health organisations at Parliament House today.

The Statement of Intent between Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA), Allied Health Professions Australia (AHPA) and its Member Organisations and Affiliates aims to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing.

"On this day, Close the Gap Day, we are proud to witness so many national allied health professional organisations commit to this vital issue," said IAHA Chairperson Faye McMillan. "If there are other allied health organisations out there who would like to join us in the future and make their own commitment, we would actively welcome them.

"Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have the right to equitably access allied health services that are available, affordable, acceptable and appropriate, provided by professionals who are both culturally responsive and clinically competent.

"Australia has around 120,000 practising allied health professionals, we estimate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander allied health professionals to be less than 2% of that workforce.

"In addition to increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people participating in the allied health workforce, we are committed to strengthening the cultural responsiveness of all allied health students and graduates."

The agreement includes commitments to:

- contributing to comprehensive, long-term plans of action, that are targeted to need, evidence-based and capable of addressing the existing inequities in health services, in order to achieve equality of health status and life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians by 2030.

- advocating for culturally responsive health care services and health infrastructure for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples which are capable of bridging the gaps in health standards by 2018.
- supporting the full participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their representatives in all aspects of addressing their health needs.
- building on the evidence base and supporting what works in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, especially in allied health services, and relevant international experience.
- encouraging improved access to, and outcomes from, allied health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in all settings.
- respecting and promoting the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including by advocating that health services are available, appropriate, accessible, affordable and good quality.

Signatories of this Statement of Intent are:

Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA), Allied Health Professions Australia (AHPA), Australian Association of Social Workers, Australian Music Therapy Association, Australian & NZ College of Perfusionists, Australian Osteopathic Association, Australian Orthotic Prosthetic Association, Australian Physiotherapy Association, Australasian Podiatry Council, Australian Psychological Society, Audiology Australia, Australian Sonographers Association, Australasian Society of Genetic Counsellors, Chiropractors' Association of Australia, Dietitians Association of Australia, Exercise & Sports Science Australia, Orthoptics Australia, Occupational Therapy Australia, Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia, Speech Pathology Australia, Australian Diabetes Educators Association, Australian Association of Practice Managers, Diversional Therapy Australia and Hearing Aid Audiometrist Society of Australia.

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

