



IAHA Media Release

New Occupational Therapy Accreditation Standards Increase Focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Wellbeing

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Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA) commends the Occupational Therapy Council (OTC) for developing, and the Occupational Therapy (OT) Board of Australia for approving, bold new OT Accreditation standards that significantly increase the focus on the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

"What a great outcome it is for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, IAHA, higher education facilities, the occupational therapy profession and more broadly all Australians" said Chontel Gibson, Aboriginal woman, occupational therapist and key driver of the IAHA submission to OTC. "I am looking forward to seeing the immediate and long-term practical implications of this outcome."

"We welcome the new OT Accreditation Standards," said Ms Faye McMillan, Chairperson of IAHA. "They have the potential to build the capacity of education providers to produce OT graduates who have the skills, knowledge and experiences to work effectively with and deliver culturally responsive care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples."

"A culturally responsive health workforce is imperative," said Ms McMillan. "Health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will only be improved when healthcare is delivered by health professionals who are better prepared to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. All health profession graduates need to be both clinically competent and culturally responsive to affect positive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health outcomes."

"Accreditation Standards for Medicine and Nursing have already set the bar for education providers in the development and implementation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curricula and working collaboratively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities," said Ms McMillan. "IAHA challenged the OT Council in our review submission to develop OT Accreditation Standards that met or exceeded these standards. We are pleased they took on board many of our recommendations and dared to lead the way for other allied health professions."

"The new OT Accreditation Standards now more explicitly address the processes, structures and curriculum requirements needed in order to produce graduates able to work with and deliver culturally responsive care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people," said Ms McMillan. "It is our hope that other allied health professions will follow the lead of OT Council and OT Board of Australia."

Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA) is the national peak body representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander allied health professionals and students. For further information, please visit www.iaha.com.au.

The new OT Standards can be found at the OTC website <http://otcouncil.com.au/>

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