

ALLIED HEALTH - STATING OUR INTENT

TO IMPROVE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Media Release – Allied Health... Stating Our Intent to Improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Wellbeing

19 March 2014

Thursday 20 March 2014 will be a momentous day in the allied health sector in Australia. Not only is it national Close the Gap Day, but it is also the day that Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA), Allied Health Professions Australia (AHPA), AHPA's 18 member organisations and 4 affiliate organisations sign a Statement of Intent to work together to achieve equality in health status and life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians by year 2030. It is based upon the Close The Gap Statement of Intent and has been adapted to align with the core business of the signatories. This is the first time such an innovative undertaking has occurred within the Australian allied health sector.

"As the statement says, the goal of this partnership is closing the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians on life expectancy, educational achievement and employment opportunities," said Ms Faye McMillan, IAHA Chairperson. "We have all agreed that in order to positively contribute to close the gap, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the right to equitably access allied health services that are available, affordable, acceptable and appropriate, provided by allied health professionals who are both culturally responsive and clinically competent."

"AHPA, our Member Organisations and Affiliates are committed to working with IAHA to build and strengthen the allied health workforce to meet the complex healthcare needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples," said Professor Lyn Littlefield, Chair of AHPA. "This includes increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people participating in the allied health workforce and strengthening the cultural responsiveness of all allied health students and graduates."

"Signing this statement is a significant first step towards building meaningful and sustainable partnerships between our organisations," said Ms McMillan. "We know that the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will only improve when we all work together."

The signing of the Statement of intent will occur at Parliament House on Thursday 20 March 2014 at 3.30pm and will be witnessed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Mick Gooda, the Hon. Minister Nash, Chief Executive Officers and/or Board Members from signatory organisations and representatives from a number of national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and other peak bodies.

AHPA is the peak body representing and advocating for the role of allied health professions in Australia and IAHA is the national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander allied health peak body.

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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