

## **Media Release: Creating Strong Pathways for Indigenous NT Youth into Health**

7 February 2018

Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA) and the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT) is today launching the Northern Territory Aboriginal Health Academy (NTAHA). The Health Academy will increase the number of young Aboriginal people completing year 12 and entering into the health workforce.

This project is an innovative community led learning model that is about re-shaping and re-designing how training is delivered to Aboriginal students in high school years. The model is strengths based and centered on ensuring training and education is delivered in a way that embeds the centrality of culture and has a holistic approach to health and wellbeing.

The model is designed to work collaboratively across health disciplines and sectors. There is an urgent, real need for health professions in sectors such as primary health care, disability, mental health, allied health, medicine and aged care; for providing a sustainable education, training and workforce development approach in the Northern Territory.

“This partnership with AMSANT to grow and develop the nation’s future leaders in health is critical to the success of the Academy. Growing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander allied health workforce is critically important in providing sustainable, culturally-responsive holistic healthcare” says IAHA CEO Donna Murray.

“An increase in the number of qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals is needed to positively address workforce shortages in rural and remote communities across the NT. Already, we are seeing students and their families engaging, and young mothers re-engaging in education through the Academy. They see it as a more flexible and meaningful pathway to sustainable employment in our communities”.

“Investment and support from our local organisations, employers and governments will ensure the success of the Academy. Schools, students and community need to know this will be a secure and sustainable approach to building our local workforce, many of whom will stay in our communities’ long term” said AMSANT CEO John Paterson

“A key principle of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community control and engagement, with culture the main overarching priority. Although this project exemplifies this ethos, it has not had the financial support of Government, except for the efforts of NT Department of Education. Nonetheless, it has strong support of key stakeholders such as Charles Darwin University, Flinders University and the NT Industry Skills Advisory Council.

“If Governments are truly committed to Closing the Gap then there needs to be greater support shown for community-driven initiatives like the NT Aboriginal Health Academy,” said Ms Murray.

**ENDS**

Indigenous Allied Health Australia is a national member-based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander allied health organisation.

AMSANT is the peak body for Aboriginal community-controlled health services (ACCHSs) in the Northern Territory and has played a pivotal role in advocating for and supporting the development of community-controlled health.

## **MEDIA CONTACTS**

Donna Murray, CEO, Indigenous Allied Health Australia

Phone: 02 6285 1010

Mobile: 0428 473 084

Email: [ceo@iaha.com.au](mailto:ceo@iaha.com.au)

Sharon Wallace, Workforce Policy Officer & Senior Aboriginal Health Practitioner, AMSANT

Phone: (08) 8944 6666

Mobile: 0427 391 461

Email: [sharon.wallace@amsant.org.au](mailto:sharon.wallace@amsant.org.au)

