

# ALLIED HEALTH - STATING OUR INTENT

TO IMPROVE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Media Release

Friday 17 March 2017

## Stronger Together: Allied Health Sector Continues Commitment to Close the Gap on Indigenous Health

In recognition of Close the Gap Day 2017, Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA), a national member-based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander allied health organisation and Allied Health Professionals Australia (AHPA), the peak body representing and advocating for the role of allied health professions, and its member and friend organisations will re-commit to 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. The Statement of Intent was first signed on 20 March 2014 and was the first innovative undertaking of its kind within the Australian allied health sector.

“The Closing the Gap Report released in February 2017 has shown that we are not on track to close the gap in life expectancy by 2031. This is simply not acceptable. If we are serious about reaching our targets then we need a greater commitment to build a culturally safe and responsive health system free of racism” said Ms Nicole Turner, IAHA Chairperson. “Allied health professionals are diverse and intersect across many sectors including education, community services, justice, aged care, disability and health and therefore they are key players in achieving positive health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.”

“Understanding the contribution we can make to close the gap brings with it a sense of shared responsibility to do our part. We firmly believe that we are stronger together in partnership for a whole-of-sector approach, led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, which is needed if we are to achieve sustainable, intergenerational change” said Ms Turner.

“AHPA, our Member Organisations and Affiliates are committed to continuing our work 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 our organisations and our professional members.”

The re-signing of the Statement of Intent will occur at Koorie Heritage Trust – Federation Square, Melbourne, Victoria on Friday 17 March 2017 at 3.30pm and will be witnessed by 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.

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 and NZ Arts Therapy Association, Australian & NZ College of Perfusionists, Australian Orthotic Prosthetic Association, Australian Physiotherapy Association, Australasian Podiatry Council, Australian Psychological Society, Australian Society of Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy, Audiology Australia, Australian Sonographers Association, Australasian Society of Genetic Counsellors, Chiropractors' Association of Australia, Dietitians Association of Australia, Exercise & Sports Science Australia, Optometry Australia, Osteopathy Australia, Orthoptics Australia, Occupational Therapy Australia, Rehabilitation Counselling Association of Australia, Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia, Speech Pathology Australia, Australian Diabetes Educators Association, Australian Hand Therapy Association, Australian Association of Practice Managers, Diversional & Recreation Therapy Australia and Hearing Aid Audiometrist Society of Australia, Myotherapy Association of Australia, Podiatric Association of Australia.

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**CLOSETHEGAP**