



## Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA) Media Release: Flinders University receive \$2 million training and student placement boost in Katherine

In partnership with Flinders University, Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA) welcomed the announcement by Regional Health Minister Dr David Gillespie on Tuesday, 1st of March for the \$2 million Commonwealth grant, which will fund allied health student placement programs that aim to increase access to allied health services in Katherine.

The funding will not only allow Flinders University to provide extensive, high-quality rural and remote student placement experiences but enable the expansion of the speech pathology student placement program as well as the introduction of an occupational therapy student placement program. In addition, the funding will provide a workforce pipeline of students to potentially return as graduates following positive service-learning experiences in the remote Katherine region.

With Katherine being a regional service centre for thousands of remote community residents, Dean Rural and Remote Health Professor Robyn Aitken said Flinders University's primary goal was to improve the health and well-being of the communities it serves, lives and works in. "Flinders is committed to supporting the next generation of health workers to work in a rural or remote location through successful placements and unique experiences," says Professor Aitken.

Between 2016-2019, just over one-third of students undertaking a placement in the Northern Territory (NT) took up positions in rural and remote Australia following graduation, and 81% reported that the positive experience led them to consider working in the NT.

“This program is helping to make a positive impact on the Katherine region, and it’s important that Flinders University Katherine campus supports and creates change to improve health outcomes,” said Kylie Stothers, Director of Workforce Development at IAHA.

IAHA is finding new ways to support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander allied health workforce. We strongly support this project and its components, including the development of a Katherine based approach to local education, training, and employment pathways. While Flinders University will take responsibility to lead the Katherine allied health placement program, IAHA is committed to partner in this program by:

- Supporting and facilitating culturally safe and responsive practice and mentoring
- Facilitating the placement of IAHA student members in the Katherine region
- Promoting health career opportunities to young people in the Katherine region, including role modelling from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health students and graduates
- Supporting the Aboriginal allied health assistants employed in the program through the provision of scholarships that IAHA will manage

IAHA look forward to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, families, communities, Flinders University Katherine campus and other key stakeholders to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and the workforce in the Katherine region.

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