

MEDIA RELEASE

IAHA welcomes the release of the 2024 Strategic Review of the Australian Apprenticeship Incentive System Final Report 24 January 2025

Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA) welcomes the release of findings of the 2024 Strategic Review of the Australian Apprenticeship Incentive System, which provides an in-depth analysis of the current apprenticeship framework and outlines key recommendations for its improvement.

The comprehensive review highlights the need for a more streamlined, targeted, and sustainable approach to apprenticeship programs across the country, emphasising the importance of enhancing the apprenticeship experience, better supporting employers, addressing critical skill shortages and better promoting equity. The review outlines strategic reforms designed to improve the apprenticeship system.

IAHA is committed to ongoing engagement with these recommendations and progressing a robust reform plan aimed at improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander apprenticeship outcomes. The vocationally trained workforce plays a key role in service delivery and the health and wellbeing of our communities and VET provides an important training pathway. IAHA welcome the following focus areas of the report.

Redesigning incentives to drive participation and retention

The review calls for the redesign of financial incentives to ensure they are more equitable and directly address the needs of industries, employers, and apprentices. A streamlined approach to these incentives will encourage greater participation, retention, and success within apprenticeship programs, benefiting both apprentices and employers alike. IAHA and IAHA Group Training welcomes the focus on the potential of high performing group training organisations in supporting trainees and apprentices as well as employers to increase traineeship uptake and success.

Meeting Australia's skill demands with tailored programs

In response to Australia's ongoing skills shortage, the review stresses the importance of aligning apprenticeship programs more closely with the needs of critical industries, putting healthcare trainees at the forefront. IAHA acknowledges the urgency of these skill demands and supports initiatives aimed at ensuring apprenticeship programs are better tailored to meet industry requirements, contributing to a more skilled and capable health workforce, including through the development of allied health assistants as an emerging and in demand workforce across healthcare and social assistance.

Expanding access and equity for underrepresented groups

A key focus of the review is to improve access to apprenticeships for underrepresented groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The report calls for targeted mentoring, culturally safe training, and strong community connections to create sustainable pathways for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to enter and succeed in apprenticeship programs. IAHA strongly supports this focus and is committed to continuing to equip our trainees with culturally

responsive tools, resources, and opportunities to thrive in vocational education and training (VET) and within the workplace. IAHA calls for this to include a focus on the role of all aspects of the traineeship system, including the role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Group Training Organisations.

Simplifying administration for better access

A more efficient and user-friendly administration system is crucial to the success of the apprenticeship framework. The review identifies the need for a simplified approach, ensuring that both employers and apprentices can easily navigate and access the incentives available to them. IAHA supports this initiative as a critical step in making the apprenticeship system more accessible and effective across the nation, including greater consistency between jurisdictions, as acknowledged on page 267 of the report.

Celebrating culturally responsive training models

IAHA have long advocated for – and worked to deliver on – place based and culturally responsive education and training models. While it is positive to see cultural safety recognised a system wide priority, Indigenous Allied Health Australia, alongside other community-controlled organisations, are demonstrating the profound impact of culturally responsive and community-centred training models. IAHA’s NT Aboriginal Health Academy, in partnership with IAHA Group Training and Fox Education and Consultancy, was honoured with the Industry Collaboration of the Year Award at the 2024 National Training Awards.

IAHA’s Chairperson, Nicole Turner, said "initiatives like the IAHA National Academy, highlighted in the report, showcase the best of Vocational Education and Training (VET) and the potential it holds for all Australians. However, this work is not inherently supported by current systems. The Final Report identifies key areas for positive reform that could further strengthen the sector and promote equity. IAHA is fully committed to working with the sector and governments to achieve lasting and meaningful change."

As IAHA continues to advocate for the inclusion and success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in apprenticeships and vocational education, it looks forward to collaborating with key stakeholders to ensure a more inclusive, equitable, and effective apprenticeship system for all.

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