

20 December 2021

Media Release: Outcome of the 5-yearly review of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Training Package

All professions in the health care system should be valued equally. And, this is why NAATSIHWP is disappointed with the Australian Industry Skills Committee (the Committee) decision to oppose the upgrade of the Cert IV in Practice to a Diploma of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice.

The case for endorsement was presented during the 12 November 2021 meeting. Although support to update the five non-practice qualifications was provided, the Committee decided there was '*insufficient evidence of industry support*' for superseding and eventually deleting the current Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice with the proposed Diploma in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice (Diploma of Practice). More about the Committee's decision can be found [here](#).

We consider the committee's decision is a step in the wrong direction. Support for this change would have provided a key means of elevating the role and increasing the professional recognition of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners. Essentially it would have reinforced and validated what we have always known - that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners are trained to high professional standards.

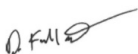
In this regard, an independent assessment of the current Certificate IV confirmed that the qualification aligns to Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Level 5 (the Diploma level standard) and, a further independent assessment of the Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) requirements of the proposed Diploma of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice confirmed that the LLN requirements were no more onerous than those of the current Certificate IV Practice.

Since NAATSIHWP's establishment just over a decade ago our members have always shown a commitment to taking our workforce forward and delivering a high standard of primary health care. Witnessing the ongoing growth and development of the workforce is a source of pride, and motivates NAATSIHWP to keep striving for greater recognition and investment in our professions.

Going forward, we urge industry stakeholders to act in solidarity and help us to expand the workforce and increase the professional recognition of this profession. Investment and support to grow and embed this workforce can be achieved without adding costs to health service budgets by implementing models of care that more effectively utilise the provider claims process available for these professions through the Medicare system.

Our communities must have access to culturally safe and responsive care no matter where they are, and a strong, valued and highly skilled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker and Health Practitioner workforce is key to this end.

Yours in Solidarity



David Follent
Chairperson
NAATSIHWP