



Progress Bulletin

April 2020

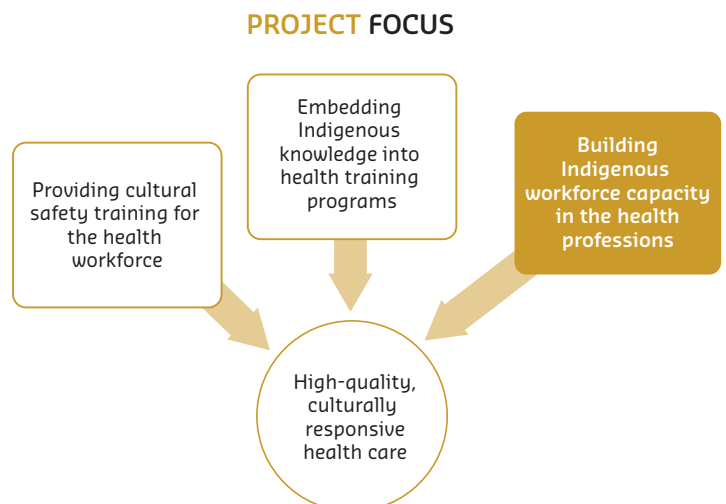
Dr Andrea Simpson
2020 NCSEHE Equity Fellow

Articulating pathways to higher degree allied health coursework programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

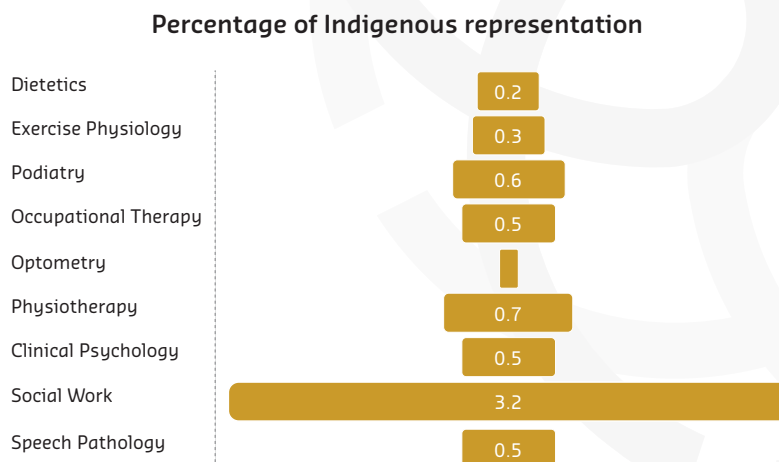
Project update

I would like to acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation and pay my respects to ancestors and Elders, past and present. The term 'Indigenous' will be used in this brief to acknowledge those from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage.

- This project is underpinned by the following policy documents:
 - *Pathways into the Health Workforce for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People: A Blueprint for Action* (2008)
 - *Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People* (2012)
 - *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Curriculum Framework* (2016)
 - *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2013–2023*
 - *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework — 2016–2023*
- Building Indigenous workforce capacity in the allied health professions is a vital part of reducing the health and equity burden faced by Indigenous people.
- In order to provide a health care system that provides a high-quality and culturally supportive environment for Indigenous communities, the following needs to be carried out across health professions:
 - building a workforce that is culturally sensitive and trained to work within Indigenous communities
 - embedding Indigenous knowledge throughout health care training so that the future workforce is culturally competent
 - building Indigenous workforce capacity.



- Only 0.4 per cent of university-qualified allied health professionals were registered under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS) in 2017 as Indigenous.
- Indigenous representation varies across allied health professions — social work has reached population parity with 3.2 per cent of their members identifying as Indigenous. The remaining professions vary from 0.1 per cent to 0.7 per cent Indigenous representation.



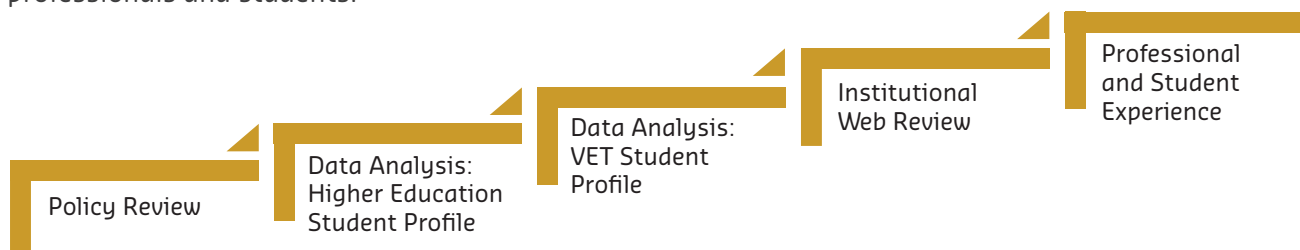
Indigenous Allied Health Australia. (2019). *Workforce Development Strategy 2018–2020*. Deakin: AIHA.

Research questions and methodology

This project aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the current policy landscape of inclusion for entry into select allied health professions?
2. What is the national profile of Indigenous students enrolled in select allied health higher degree study?
3. Which health-related Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses at Certificate IV and above offer the most potential in acting as pathways into higher degree allied health study?
4. What are the institutional factors linked with success in attracting and retaining Indigenous students in select allied health study?
5. How have Indigenous allied health professionals entered their chosen professions, and how was this experienced at an individual qualitative level?

In order to address these questions, a policy review will be carried out examining the inclusion of Indigenous peoples in education and training policies by allied health professional peak bodies as well as tertiary institutions. Secondly, national data from the Department of Education, Skills and Employment as well as the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in select allied health disciplines will be examined. Finally, semi-structured interviews and/or online surveys will be carried out with Indigenous allied health professionals and students.



If you would like to find out more about the project please contact me at a.simpson@latrobe.edu.au.

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