

Position Description

Position title:	First Nations Engagement Officer
Division:	CEO Office
Location:	National Hybrid
Reports to:	CEO
EFT:	Full Time / Part Time / including Job Share options
Approved by:	CEO April 2025

About us

The Australian Physiotherapy Association (APA) is the peak body representing the interests of more than 34,000 physiotherapists in Australia. It does so by advocating for access to quality physiotherapy services, providing leadership in the wider health landscape, creating lifelong information and learning opportunities for members, and working with stakeholders to support members' interests.

The APA acknowledges the important role that physiotherapy plays in achieving improved health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. As one of the largest registered health professions, the APA understands that having a culturally safe profession will support improved health outcomes for First Nations people.

We are striving to become an industry leader in advancing reconciliation in Australia and is looking to build and foster meaningful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The APA is proud to be a 5-Star Employer of Choice, Winner of the Association of the year award and have a vibrant and inclusive working culture that is underpinned by our core values:

Accountability | Excellence | Collaboration | Courage | Respect.

The APA provides a variety of employee benefits:

- 3 extra days of leave at the end of the year
- a mental health day
- hybrid working environment
- savings on a range of corporate partner products
- access professional development opportunities
- service awards at 5, 10, and 15 years of service...and lot's more

About the role

The Australian Physiotherapy Association (APA) is striving to become an industry leader in advancing reconciliation in Australia and is seeking a First Nations Engagement Officer to support us on this journey.

Reporting to the Chief Executive Officer, the First Nations Engagement Officer will be responsible for developing and fostering meaningful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, organisations and stakeholders. The role will support the APA's vision for a culturally safe profession that is seen as an aspiring career choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and improves health outcomes and access to physiotherapy services for First Nations people.

Key stakeholders

- APA Staff
- APA Executive
- APA Board
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Committee
- National Advisory Council
- External Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health bodies including but not limited to:
 - National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
 - State based Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations
 - Indigenous Allied Health Australia
 - Reconciliation Australia
 - Clontarf Foundation
 - Community outreach programs – eg Trimob, Indigenous Marathon project, Murri Carnival, Koori Knockout etc.
- Australian Physiotherapy Council
- Ahpra Physiotherapy Board
- Australian University Physiotherapy Programs

Key responsibilities

- Support the development of a targeted engagement strategy that will assist the implementation of the APA's Strategic Plan and Reconciliation Action Plan.
- Engage with the APA's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Committee to identify and implement partnership opportunities.
- Establish and maintain trust-based collaborative relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, Elders, health organisations, and advocacy groups. Act as a liaison between the APA and external First Nations stakeholders and support culturally safe physiotherapy services.

- Initiate, develop and implement effective communications and engagement activities to promote the physiotherapy profession both as a healthcare provider and a career option with the goal to increase Indigenous representation in the physiotherapy profession.
- Serve as a key point of contact between APA and First Nations organisations, ensuring open communication, collaboration and alignment with APA and community priorities.
- Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and physiotherapists by promoting APA initiatives such as research grants and study scholarships.
- Provide coordination for APA conference bursaries and scholarships as well as mentorship.
- Provide guidance on incorporating Indigenous knowledge, perspectives, and cultural protocols into APA's policies and programs.
- Foster a collaborative and engaged professional support network for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander issues and initiatives via the APA's PhysioHub platform.
- Connect relevant key stakeholders to help drive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander professional development, networking events and education opportunities.
- Contribute to and support the implementation of the APA's Reconciliation Action Plan
- Other duties as required or directed

About you and Selection Criteria

Strong Understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures & Health Contexts

- Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the historical and contemporary issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, particularly in relation to health and access to physiotherapy services.
- A deep appreciation of cultural protocols, traditions, and community structures and how they impact healthcare engagement.
- Experience working respectfully with First Nations peoples, including community-led approaches to health promotion and service delivery.

Experience in Community Engagement & Stakeholder Relations

- Proven ability to establish and maintain strong relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, Elders, health organisations, and advocacy groups.
- Experience engaging with external stakeholders, such as government agencies, First Nations health organisations, and allied health professionals, to improve healthcare access and outcomes.
- Strong interpersonal skills, including the ability to work collaboratively, negotiate, and advocate effectively.

Experience in Outreach & Health Promotion Programs

- Demonstrated experience in developing, delivering, and evaluating outreach initiatives aimed at improving health outcomes in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

- Ability to co-design culturally safe physiotherapy and rehabilitation programs in collaboration with community members and healthcare professionals.
- Experience facilitating community workshops, yarning circles, or education sessions to raise awareness of physiotherapy's benefits.

Program Development, Reporting & Advocacy

- Strong ability to plan, implement, and evaluate outreach programs, ensuring they align with APA's strategic goals and First Nations health priorities.
- Experience preparing funding proposals, reports, and submissions for government and stakeholder funding opportunities.
- A strong understanding of Closing the Gap, the Reconciliation Action Plan, and First Nations health policy frameworks.

Communication & Interpersonal Skills

- Excellent verbal and written communication skills, including experience in public speaking, delivering presentations, and preparing reports.
- The ability to tailor messaging for different audiences, including First Nations communities, healthcare providers, government representatives, and APA members.
- Experience creating culturally appropriate educational materials, such as videos, brochures, and social media content.

Ability to Travel & Work Flexibly

- Willingness and ability to travel to regional and remote communities as part of outreach programs.
- Ability to work flexible hours when required to engage with communities at appropriate times.

Relevant Qualifications & Experience

- A qualification in Physiotherapy, health promotion, public health, community development, First Nations studies, or a related field (or equivalent experience).
- Experience working in the allied health, First Nations health, or physiotherapy sectors is an advantage.

Highly Desirable:

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander applicants are strongly encouraged to apply as lived experience and strong connections to community are highly valued in this role.

The APA is a safe and inclusive workplace which values diversity of background, experience, and perspective amongst our team members. We welcome all applicants and commit to a fair and equitable recruitment process for all.

The APA honours the richness and importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures around Australia. We respect the thousands of years of custodianship of the lands on which we work, and we recognise the unique and valuable contribution Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander team members make to our workplace.