



AUSTRALIAN  
PHYSIOTHERAPY  
ASSOCIATION

# Physiotherapy: high-value care for all Tasmanians

Invest in physiotherapy and put patients first.  
Together, we can shape a healthier future  
for Tasmania.

Australian Physiotherapy Association  
2025 Tasmania Election Priorities

# Physiotherapy in context

Physiotherapists bring value-based and evidence-based expertise to patients and the health system. They are an important part of healthcare across the life span, with general practitioners referring more patients to physiotherapists than to any other single group. As primary contact practitioners, physiotherapists have the expertise to manage the care of patients at various stages of the chronic disease continuum.

In Australia, physiotherapists rank as the fourth largest group among registered primary healthcare professionals with 633 registered physiotherapists in Tasmania. Australia has the third highest number of registered physiotherapists. They work in a number of settings, including hospitals, private practices, community health centres and universities.

Physiotherapists are highly qualified health professionals who work in partnership with their patients to help people get better and stay well. They assess, diagnose, treat and work to prevent injury, disease and disability through evidence-based interventions.

Physiotherapists work within diverse contexts of practice, including primary and community care and inpatient and outpatient services across emergency, acute, subacute and post-acute care. Their role extends to injury prevention, rehabilitation, maintenance of functional mobility, chronic disease management, health promotion, patient and carer education, and occupational health and sport settings.

Physiotherapists are clinical leaders who work both individually and across multidisciplinary teams. The skills and training of physiotherapists equip them to work across a wide variety of conditions and disabilities to improve the health status of individuals throughout their life span. Physiotherapists also work to deliver improved population health outcomes within their local areas

## A physiotherapist can diagnose

Physiotherapists **diagnose** injuries and disorders associated with the musculoskeletal, cardiovascular and neurological systems.



## Physiotherapists use clinical reasoning for diagnosis and treatment



Physiotherapists have clinical skills across all anatomical and neurophysiological domains and use evidence-informed **clinical reasoning** to assist and advise the patient, their medical practitioner, caregivers and their healthcare team in ongoing management.

## Physiotherapists are regulated under the National Scheme

Physiotherapists must be **registered** with the Physiotherapy Board of Australia and meet the Board's registration standards to be able to practise in Australia.



# Invest in physiotherapy to advance health, improve care and increase value

Physiotherapy is essential care for many Tasmanians who live with musculoskeletal conditions. Too many Tasmanians cannot access services for prevention, early detection and quality care.

This means they have to live with chronic pain. Investing in publicly funded physiotherapy will advance health, improve care and increase value.

Reform begins by improving the patient pathway and physiotherapy plays an important role in this.

The Australian Physiotherapy Association (APA) has identified priority areas and solutions that will strengthen care for all Tasmanians, while also reducing inequity, through physiotherapy-led models.

We are calling on candidates for the 2025 Tasmania election to support **five policy priorities**:



Fund, support and embed **advanced practice** physiotherapists in Tasmania health primary care settings.



Invest in physiotherapy **non-operative pathways** and keep people out of hospital.



Invest in **multidisciplinary team care** and support a sustainable workforce in rural and remote areas of Tasmania.



Optimise the **expertise of physiotherapists** at the community and hospital interface through funded support care transitions to improve patient outcomes and reduce length of stay.



Recognise the role of physiotherapy in the primary care of injured workers within **WorkCover Tasmania**.

These priorities provide solutions for the incoming Tasmania Government to **invest in physiotherapy**, so we can realise real reform through improved access to essential care, reduced out-of-pocket costs and, most importantly, a decreased need for costly and inefficient treatments.

# Invest in physiotherapy and put patients first

Physiotherapy provides a path to better health for all Tasmanians. Opportunities exist for the next Tasmanian Government to leverage physiotherapy in leading health reform. Long wait times, fragmented services, inadequate funding, a lack of workforce sustainability and affordability factors mean that the current health system leaves too many people without access to the essential care they need. It is those most in need, our high-priority groups, who are disproportionately affected.

We see a key commitment from the Tasmanian Government to advancing our healthcare system. This includes enhancing hospital capacity, supporting the health workforce and improving access to essential services. With a focus on delivering more efficient and coordinated care, initiatives like the State Health Operations Centre are working effectively in streamlining the healthcare system, providing a seamless experience for patients. As the complexity of healthcare needs continues to grow, the next government needs to expand community treatment and support services to ensure that more people receive the care they need while alleviating pressure on hospitals.

The solutions that will fix healthcare lie in:

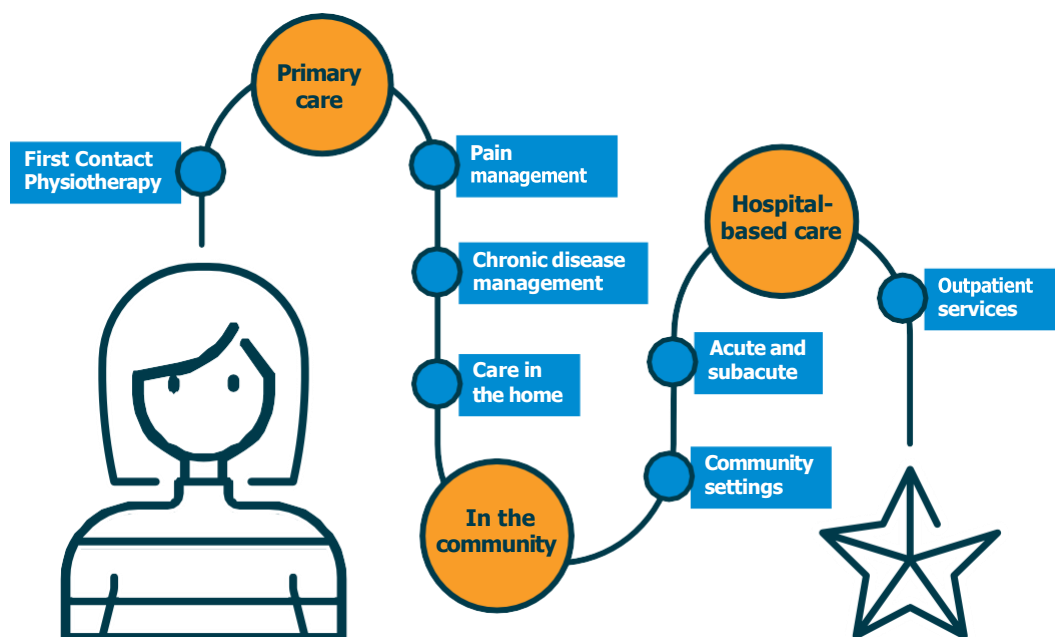
- valuing the skills of the entire health workforce
- integration
- lifting the structural barriers to strengthen access
- streamlining the patient journey.

It is through the priority areas and solutions outlined in this statement that we can begin to provide greater value to all Tasmanians.

In this statement, the APA presents ways to connect and integrate care. The solutions will help deliver on the four outcomes that governments and patients want—high-value care, reduced costs, improved efficiency and enhanced patient ownership of their own healthcare.

## How physiotherapy supports patient outcomes

A visual representation of the delivery of preventive care, treatment and rehabilitative physiotherapy services across the lifespan in selected populations and settings.



# Our solutions will improve the patient journey, deliver cost-effective services and enhance patient care:



## 01 Fund, support and embed **advanced practice physiotherapist roles** in hospitals and community settings

Advanced practice physiotherapists are an integral part of our hospital system, working as key members of multidisciplinary teams in emergency, outpatient, acute care and rehabilitation.

Increased funding of primary care-based intervention through **physiotherapy-led screening clinics** will ensure that patients can be managed without surgery, including for osteoarthritis of the knee and hip, spinal and neurological conditions, continence issues, gynaecological conditions and paediatric-specific disabilities. This will rely on strong policy leadership and a collaborative partnership between health service providers and Primary Health Tasmania.



## 02 Invest in physiotherapy in **non-operative care pathways** and keep people out of hospital

Physiotherapy provides alternative pathways that prevent unnecessary hospitalisation and reduce readmission rates.

By keeping people out of hospital in the first place, we address the urgent need to alleviate the current pressures on the public hospital system. Therefore, investing in physiotherapy is a critical component of health reform.



## 03 Invest in **multidisciplinary team care** and support a **sustainable workforce** in rural Tasmania

Including physiotherapy services in the delivery of multidisciplinary care in rural health settings is urgently needed to address vast unmet needs in rural and remote Tasmania.

Stronger models of care will enable integrated care, strengthen access to care and build the capacity of health service delivery in rural areas. A sustainable physiotherapy workforce in Tasmania Health is essential to provide optimal care for rural Tasmanians.



## 04 Increase access to **physiotherapy** in hospital and community settings

Physiotherapists play a vital role in Tasmania's hospital system and the community. They assess and treat a diverse range of patients and conditions. By investing in physiotherapy, we can improve patient flow through hospitals and emergency departments, providing more timely access to care. This will reduce the burden on the hospital system.



## 05 Recognise primary care physiotherapy in **workers compensation scheme**

Early and direct access to physiotherapy has been shown to reduce time off work, prevent acute problems from becoming chronic, reduce long-term pain and disability, and improve work function. Amending the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 to allow physiotherapist to issue Certificate of Capacity will remove unnecessary referrals and delays, improve patient outcomes and ease pressure on the broader health and compensation system.



## PRIORITY AREA ONE



### Fund, support and embed **advanced practice** physiotherapist roles in hospitals and community settings

Advanced practice physiotherapists hold high levels of clinical expertise to assess and independently manage specific patient cohorts. The APA is calling on the next Tasmanian Government to adopt and implement new ways for advanced practice physiotherapists to deliver care. This will reduce wait times in emergency departments, on hospital surgery waitlists and for specialist reviews.

Physiotherapy plays an important role in managing patient demand by redirecting patient admissions and lowering readmission rates. Advanced practice physiotherapists employ knowledge and skills across a wide range of musculoskeletal, cardiorespiratory and neurological conditions to improve people's health. They are highly trained and specialised professionals. Physiotherapists are a flexible and adaptable workforce and there are many who have been at the forefront of the advanced practice specialisation in Tasmania for more than 15 years.

#### **Priority 1.1 | More recognition for advanced practice physiotherapy roles**

##### **Action: Develop advanced practice physiotherapy roles to improve the patient journey.**

The APA is calling for further investment in developing advanced practice physiotherapy roles. This will ensure consistency in resourcing these roles across districts and networks, enabling the full potential of the workforce to be used. There are barriers in the current award that prevent the full recognition of skills held by advanced practice physiotherapists.

Advanced practice physiotherapists use advanced skills to assess, diagnose and manage complex medical conditions. The current award classification system fails to distinguish the unique role and responsibilities held by advanced practice physiotherapists, hindering appropriate recognition and funding allocation.

To ensure the sustainability and growth of advanced practice physiotherapy services, there is a need for a distinct classification within the tier 2 structure. By recognising the vital role of advanced practice physiotherapists and providing adequate funding mechanisms, healthcare organisations can optimise patient care delivery and promote the continued advancement of physiotherapy services within the hospital setting.

The APA calls for a new funding tier for advanced practice physiotherapy practitioners and clinics.

#### **Priority 1.2 | Triage and management of hospital specialist waiting lists**

##### **Action: Increase investment in physiotherapy-led screening clinics in local health districts and specialty health networks.**

For most musculoskeletal conditions, non-operative care is the most appropriate treatment. Advanced practice physiotherapists play a key role in the management of hospital specialist outpatient waiting lists by assessing and coordinating care pathways. Advanced practice physiotherapists have high levels of diagnostic agreement with their medical colleagues. Physiotherapy-led orthopaedic triage clinics are also seen as an effective alternative to usual care in the short, immediate and long term. These clinics are highly cost-effective and reduce the need for more hospital medical officers and specialists.

The APA calls for sustained funding for innovative service delivery models, which address the rising demands on health services, ensuring people receive the right care, at the right time, in the right place, with the right resources and by the right person.

## PRIORITY AREA TWO



### Invest in physiotherapy **non-operative pathways** and keep people out of hospital

Physiotherapy provides value to Tasmanian residents at all stages of life and in response to many different life events. However, physiotherapy is often underused, despite strong evidence suggesting that integrated care models that include physiotherapy services reduce the rates of hospitalisation and surgery. We need to instigate solutions beyond outdated medical-centric models to get the best health and efficiency outcomes.

Physiotherapists can make a greater contribution to primary healthcare to help prevent unnecessary hospitalisations. This will enable more timely and appropriate intervention.

Physiotherapists have the skills and knowledge to embed health promotion and prevention activities into routine care. The cost-effectiveness of physiotherapy interventions is proven in literature and through the cost-benefit analysis (Nous Group 2020), which builds a robust picture of the high-level impacts and value that physiotherapy provides to the healthcare sector.

#### Value of physiotherapy in Australia

Physiotherapy delivers an average net-benefit for a range of life events and stages.



Falls  
Prevention  
\$1,320



Back  
Pain  
\$6,063



Stress urinary  
incontinence  
\$16,814



Osteoarthritis of  
the knee and hip  
\$3,772



Chronic  
neck pain  
\$3,416



Emergency  
department  
services  
\$24,028  
(over 24 weeks)



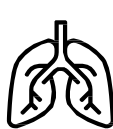
Parkinson's  
disease  
\$6,626  
(over 10 weeks)



Tennis  
elbow  
\$5,610



Cerebral palsy  
in children  
\$1,502



Chronic obstructive  
pulmonary disease  
\$2,436  
(over two years)



Orthopaedic  
outpatient  
services  
\$9,798

Source: Nous (2020)

Approach and methodology: Net-benefits were calculated accounting for quality of life improvements, the cost of service delivery, patient-time opportunity costs, the avoided costs of alternative or usual treatment, and calculated over a period of time. Please refer to full report for details. Nous Group. (2020). Value of Physiotherapy in Australia. Australian Physiotherapy Association. [https://australian.physio/sites/default/files/Report\\_FA\\_WEB.pdf](https://australian.physio/sites/default/files/Report_FA_WEB.pdf)

#### Priority 2.1 | Invest in physiotherapy-led early intervention and prevention strategies

**Action: Invest in publicly funded physiotherapy to increase the coverage of preventive health services in Tasmania.**

The APA is calling for improved access to physiotherapy services so all people in Tasmania, particularly priority populations, can receive support for the prevention and maintenance of chronic conditions. This should include greater use of and access to generalists, community and advanced practice physiotherapists to reduce hospital and medical clinic wait lists, lower healthcare costs and improve outcomes for patients.

Physiotherapists have a unique skill set in promoting physical activity with specific clinical populations across a broad scope including prevention and maintenance of chronic conditions, prevention of sporting injuries, and maintenance of function in those with a disability.

To improve access for patients at risk of chronic pain and disease it is essential that funded chronic disease and pain services are expanded to include physiotherapy as a preventative intervention. This will not only support earlier

intervention and better outcomes but also help reduce reliance on unnecessary procedures and waitlisted services.

Physiotherapists are well placed to embed health promotion and prevention into routine care, including for musculoskeletal conditions, spinal pain and osteoarthritis.

### **Birth trauma and incontinence**

Pelvic floor physiotherapy in an outpatient setting can help prevent and treat incontinence through pelvic floor assessment and teaching appropriate pelvic floor exercises. This can reduce the likelihood of birth trauma, incontinence, lower back pain and other complications post-delivery, which decreases surgical intervention rates and increases the quality of life for many patients.

### **Falls, fall-related fractures and hospitalisation prevention**

Publicly funded physiotherapy-led fall prevention programs keep older Australians out of hospital.

Physiotherapists are experts in designing and implementing falls prevention strategies to keep people active and independent for longer. Physiotherapists are training in maintaining and improving mobility, falls prevention and reduction, and minimizing harm from falls. They also provide high-value care, managing co-morbidities that contribute to falls such as incontinence and dizziness. Physiotherapy-led balance and progressive resistance programs are demonstrated to reduce the number of falls and falls-related injuries by 55 per cent in residential aged care. In the community, programs aimed at function and balance reduce falls by 24 per cent, helping older Australians to remain independent in their homes longer.

### **Osteoarthritis treatment and prevention**

Physiotherapy is a key part of managing osteoarthritis with physiotherapy-led programs helping to relieve pain, improve joint function and improve quality of life. Increased funding for community-based interventions that support early access to physiotherapy preventative services, will support the management of osteoarthritis without the need for surgery. primary care. Physiotherapy-led programs can help relieve pain, improve joint function and improve quality of life.

## **Priority 2.2 | Optimise patient outcomes during care transitions**

### **Action: Prioritise physiotherapy-led in-home care funding and packages.**

Physiotherapy improves patient physical function to facilitate a timely and safe discharge from hospital. It also reduces readmission rates by providing treatment and at-home rehabilitation for people with stroke, fall injuries, long hospital stays, traumatic brain injury, post-surgical conditions and chronic disease.

## **Priority 2.3 | Improve access to care pathways for chronic conditions**

### **Action: Prioritise access to physiotherapy for people with chronic conditions.**

Physiotherapy plays a vital role in the management of chronic musculoskeletal, pain, cardiorespiratory and neurological conditions. Current funding arrangements provide extremely limited access to allied health services for patients with chronic conditions. This is insufficient to address their complex needs, particularly given the growing demand for services.

Outpatient physiotherapy-led pulmonary rehabilitation programs provide education and exercise, empower chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and respiratory patients to self-manage, and reduce the risk of hospitalisation and complications while in hospital.

The incoming Tasmanian Government needs to invest in expanding physiotherapy-led programs for chronic conditions, particularly in rural and remote areas. Increased funding and support are essential to improve access, reduce healthcare burdens and enhance patient outcomes across the state.



## PRIORITY AREA THREE



### Invest in **multidisciplinary team care** and support a sustainable workforce in rural Tasmania

Every community across Tasmania deserves access to vital health services. However, many rural and remote communities have no access to physiotherapy services. This contributes to inequities in healthcare and adverse health outcomes. To address this, we need greater investment in publicly funded rural physiotherapy and prevention strategies integrated into the management and delivery of care.

There is a need to fund new opportunities to leverage the physiotherapy workforce to support healthier lives and drive system-level change to advance health, improve care and increase value. Workforce solutions must focus on facilitating wider scopes of practice and ensuring a greater emphasis on multidisciplinary care in the healthcare system. This cannot be achieved through continued reliance on the current payment models and traditional structures, which disincentivise integration. Current workforce models remain disjointed and suboptimal for the complex needs of our population and continue to add costs to the healthcare system. We call on the new government to consider workforce optimisation and planning to strengthen the healthcare system and health outcomes.

We call on the government to invest in education and training programs that foster skill development to ensure that the health workforce is equipped to provide high-quality, culturally safe, patient-centred care to our communities. To address the rural and remote workforce crisis, policy solutions must focus on workforce distribution beyond general practice workforce planning. Strategies to mobilise the physiotherapy workforce must extend to expanding access for First Nations people.

Rural health reform beyond medicine has been slow and fragmented. By embedding physiotherapy into multidisciplinary models we can reduce preventable hospital presentations and improve long-term wellbeing, ensuring that culturally safe, accessible and sustainable services are available to those in rural and remote areas.

#### Priority 3.1 | Strengthen access to rural physiotherapy

**Action: Provide funding for physiotherapy and allied health services to enable more integrated care, strengthen access and build the capacity of rural Tasmania's health service.**

Access is a key enabler of equitable health outcomes, and the Tasmanian Government must ensure that people who need physiotherapy the most can access it. Equitable access to physiotherapy remains a persistent challenge across both public and private settings. A statewide rural health strategy is urgently needed to address service delivery barriers and ensure physiotherapy is tailored to the needs of local communities.

We are calling for expanded support for rural funding models that enable fully integrated care that encompasses telehealth. Greater investment in incentivised, team-based care arrangements will improve access for patients and promote collaboration across the health system. These measures are critical to the long-term sustainability and success of physiotherapy services.

The APA's 2023 Workforce Census found that one-third of participants are willing to work rurally, especially those in the early stages of their career but required financial assistance to relocate. It is vital that funding allows for the scaling and replication of successful models of care beyond grant cycles. Expanding the capacity of primary health network and directly funding physiotherapy solutions will help address current gaps, support existing providers and foster workforce growth in rural areas.

#### Priority 3.2 | Build a sustainable rural physiotherapy workforce

**Action: Provide incentives to attract more physiotherapists to rural Tasmania and address vast unmet needs for care.**

The APA is calling on the next Tasmanian Government to provide support and initiatives that will grow Tasmania's rural and remote physiotherapy workforce. There needs to be a focus on improving policies, programs and infrastructure so we can attract allied health professionals to rural and remote areas and encourage them to stay.

Physiotherapists need to be incentivised to apply for these roles in the same way that general practitioners are. There should be recognition that physiotherapists are a highly skilled, supported and valued resource. We also need

to commit to improving income streams and positioning physiotherapy in rural areas as a viable career choice.

Federal strategies, including the Workforce Incentive Program, have failed due to a flawed design that directs funding through general practitioner clinics.

### **Priority 3.3 | Expand access to telehealth for rural and remote communities**

**Action: Invest in telehealth infrastructure to improve access to physiotherapy services in rural and remote Tasmania.**

Telehealth is a key solution to overcoming geographic barriers to physiotherapy care in rural areas. By investing in telehealth technologies, training and reimbursement models, we can expand access to services, reduce travel costs and improve patient outcomes. This will support the sustainability of physiotherapy services, enhance multidisciplinary care and ensure culturally safe, accessible healthcare for vulnerable populations including First Nations communities. Integrating telehealth into rural care models is essential for delivering efficient, patient-centred physiotherapy services.

### **Priority 3.4 | Strengthen access to publicly funded first contact physiotherapy**

**Action: Focus on new funding models that formalise public physiotherapy in an integrated health system.**

Reform success is reliant on how we strategically prioritise access and outcomes and this will be achieved only through a much stronger focus on equity.

Most of all, it will require our leaders to find the policy courage to fund fully integrated models of care with innovative funding models.

Publicly funded physiotherapy means more than just access; it means empowerment, prevention and the opportunity for everyone to reach their highest level of health and wellbeing. First contact physiotherapy practitioners can manage musculoskeletal conditions effectively to reduce the load on general practitioners in primary care.

Importantly, as first contact professionals, physiotherapists have the experience, skills and clinical reasoning abilities to diagnose musculoskeletal conditions and determine appropriate care pathways.

Access to care, along with the patient journey through a complex health system funded by the Commonwealth, states and territories, urgently needs structural reform. In building workforce capability, we need a focus on both workforce planning and service redesign in order to deliver contemporary care models and clinical excellence.

Funding multidisciplinary teams allows for comprehensive care that addresses all aspects of a patient's health, improving outcomes through collaborative expertise. These essential shifts represent a more integrated, accessible and effective approach to healthcare.

### **Priority 3.5 | Fund student clinical placements**

**Action: Support funded clinical placement positions such as those we have recently seen for teachers, nurses and social workers.**

As an autonomous profession, physiotherapists are ready to enter the workforce upon graduation. To ensure they are well prepared, physiotherapy training programs must include funded clinical placements to provide the opportunity for students to implement their learning in a supervised environment.

With the recent introduction of the physiotherapy program at University of Tasmania, there is a growing demand for clinical placements. However, funding barriers are limiting the ability of public and private health services to support students. In private practice, legislative and financial constraints can make student supervision unviable, placing strain on the pipeline of future physiotherapists.

A sustained training system requires investment in student placements, early career support and teaching capacity across all settings. This is essential to building a workforce that meets community needs, especially as population growth and health reform drive demand for more integrated models of care.

Targeted funding for student placements is needed to strengthen the future workforce and overcome placement poverty

## PRIORITY AREA FOUR



Optimise the **expertise of physiotherapists** at the community and hospital interface through funded support care transitions to improve patient outcomes and reduce length of stay.

Faster treatment, better health outcomes and lower costs are required to meet current and future healthcare needs in Tasmania. The solutions that will fix healthcare lie in valuing the skills of the entire health workforce. Spending on physiotherapy will bring more value for money by reducing the need for costly secondary care.

Through Medicare Urgent Care Clinics and Minor Injury and Illness Clinics at satellite hospitals, we can test a new and more efficient pathway by having advanced practice physiotherapists work as primary care providers and first contact practitioners. This will provide faster access to diagnosis, treatment and care for patients with musculoskeletal pain and other conditions.

### Priority 4.1 | Put physiotherapy services in Urgent Care Clinics

**Action: Prioritise a publicly funded first contact physiotherapy service in Urgent Care Clinics and Minor Injury and Illness Clinics.**

Physiotherapy is key to ensuring continuity of care across the primary and acute care interface. The practice can help alleviate the workloads of general practitioners by diverting non-life-threatening emergencies and keeping these types of patients out of the emergency department. Rolling out first contact physiotherapy in primary care settings will benefit patients and the health system. It will lead to cost savings and free up the time of health workers.

Supporting physiotherapists to work at the top of their scope can address current inefficiencies in primary care and in the hospital sector

Advanced practice emergency department physiotherapists are already well embedded in the public healthcare system nationally, providing a sustainable and highly skilled workforce base from which to expand services at state level.

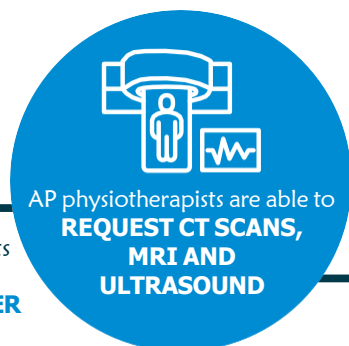
Expanding this workforce can help meet unmet patient need at the primary and acute care interface, including in the implementation of Medicare Urgent Care Clinics nationally. A significant proportion of the likely patient load in these clinics will be people with musculoskeletal conditions such as sprains, strains and spinal pain—conditions best managed by physiotherapists.

### Advanced Practice physiotherapy roles require high levels of clinical expertise



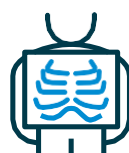
AP physiotherapists have the **ABILITY TO REFER** to public hospital

medical specialist-led clinics.



AP physiotherapists are able to **REQUEST CT SCANS, MRI AND ULTRASOUND**

AP physiotherapists are able to **INDEPENDENTLY ORDER AND INTERPRET X-RAYS** in EDs



In some states and territories,

AP physiotherapists are able to request **PATHOLOGY TESTS**



Trials of **PHYSIOTHERAPY PRESCRIBING** have occurred in QLD and WA where it was found AP physios with appropriate training can safely prescribe pain medication.

## Priority 4.2 | Create a more sustainable workforce by prioritising physiotherapy in hospitals and the community

### Action: Prioritise physiotherapy in the public hospital system.

Physiotherapists play an important role in patient recovery. They facilitate a safe hospital discharge, reduce the length of a patient's stay and prevent hospital readmission. This frees up valuable health resources.

To address the urgent public health workforce challenges faced by Tasmanian Health Service, there is a need to focus on supporting and retaining the current physiotherapy workforce, attracting and building new pipelines for talent, and adapting and innovating to find new ways of delivering care. A continued investment will allow Tasmanian Health Service to build a sustainable and supported physiotherapy workforce, resulting in the delivery of high-quality healthcare across Tasmania.



## PRIORITY AREA FIVE



### Recognise primary care physiotherapy in workers compensation scheme

The APA supports the continuing development of healthy and viable compensable schemes that enable physiotherapists to deliver timely, cost-effective and high-value healthcare, thus achieving mutually beneficial scheme outcomes.

Physiotherapists are used regularly by workers compensation insurers because musculoskeletal injuries account for the majority of work-related injuries.

#### Priority 5.1 | Enable streamlined physiotherapy service provision

**Action: Conduct a review of the *Tasmanian Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988*, giving Tasmanian physiotherapists the authority to sign work capacity certificates.**

Under the *Tasmanian Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988*, an application for compensation must be accompanied by a certificate issued by a medical practitioner. This legislative requirement creates unnecessary delays and inefficiencies particularly for injured workers who are often already receiving treatment from physiotherapists.

There is growing evidence that enabling physiotherapists to issue Certificate of Capacity will reduce waiting times, improve access to timely and effective rehabilitation and lead to a faster return to suitable work duties. Physiotherapists are highly trained in the assessment and management of musculoskeletal conditions and play a central role in rehabilitation and return to work planning.

In current practice, injured workers can directly access physiotherapists in private practice without a GP referral. However for certification, they must still consult a medical practitioner causing delays and duplicated effort. This legislative gap limits effective service delivery and places avoidable strain on the health system.

Allowing physiotherapists to complete the Certificate of Capacity particularly in cases where they are already the primary treating clinician, would streamline care, support earlier return to work and reduce time off work, prevent acute problems from becoming chronic, reduce long-term pain and disability, and improve work function.

In Victoria and New South Wales physiotherapists are able to write subsequent certificates of capacity and have shown a willingness and a strong interest in the treatment and certification of injured workers. These models have demonstrated success, with physiotherapists showing both capability and strong engagement in managing injured workers recovery and certification.

The APA urges the Tasmanian Government to amend the legislation to enable physiotherapists to issue Certificates of Capacity. This reform will enhance system efficiency, improve patient outcomes and support a more sustainable return to work framework for all Tasmanians.



# About the Australian Physiotherapy Association

The Australian Physiotherapy Association's (APA) vision is for all Australians to have access to quality physiotherapy, when and where required, to optimise health and wellbeing and for the community to recognise the benefit of choosing physiotherapy.

The APA represents more than **33,000 members**. We are the peak body representing the interests of Australian physiotherapists and their patients and a national organisation with state and territory branches and specialty subgroups.

The APA corporate structure is one of a company limited by guarantee. The APA is governed by a Board of Directors elected by representatives of all stakeholder groups within the Association.

We are committed to professional excellence and career success for our members, which translates into better patient outcomes and improved health conditions for all Australians. Through our national groups we offer advanced training and collegial support from physiotherapists working in similar areas.