

ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH WORKER SKILLS RECOGNITION & UP-SKILLING PROJECT

The Road to Registration

BACKGROUND

- ▶ In 2012 HWA's *Growing Our Future Final Report* recommended assisting the existing health worker workforce to meet the qualification (Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice) for registration as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners via skills recognition and Upskilling training.
- ▶ In August 2013, HWA contracted JCU and its consortia to implement the "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Skills Recognition and Up-skilling Project" for two years.

PROJECT GOAL

- ▶ Deliver the necessary skills assessment, recognition and/or up-skilling training to eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers to assist them to qualify for a Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice.

UNEXPECTED EVENTS

- ▶ Reduced funding; closure of HWA; withdrawal of KAMSC (our more experienced RTO partner); the need to develop training resources for revised HLT40213 National Training Package; and TAFE North Cairns experienced organisational realignment.

REVISED PROJECT DELIVERABLES

- ▶ Deliver Upgrade 'Practice' skill set training units to 50 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers; and
- ▶ Provide RPL to 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers.

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ACHIEVEMENTS

- ▶ 200 Health Workers identified as interested in Skills Recognition and Upskilling training
- ▶ 127 applications received (+ 63 names of Health Workers supplied by Torres Strait Health Service)
- ▶ 53 Health Workers completed the two week residential Upgrade/'Practice' skill set training units
- ▶ 39 of these Health Workers received statement of attainment for all five units
- ▶ 13 of these Health Workers complete 169 additional units via RPL
- ▶ Nine Health Workers obtained the full Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice
- ▶ Ten have gained Health Practitioner registration with The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board (AHPRA) and a further 10 are awaiting a response to their applications
- ▶ A total of 386 units were successfully completed by the 53 students
- ▶ Identified a large unmet training need - 150 names of health workers remain on the waitlist for upskilling training
- ▶ Supported a local RTO in north Queensland (TAFE North Cairns) who now has the capacity to deliver quality Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice
- ▶ Facilitated collaboration between health industry and higher education regarding the exploration of issues and implications of the Health Practitioner training and registration

RECOMMENDATIONS

for future Upskilling Training:

- ▶ Time spent conducting a comprehensive selection process including using selection criteria and building relationships with employers and health workers is a solid investment in positive training outcomes
- ▶ Time spent building stronger relationships with employers and employees will not only ensure more satisfied students and employers but also assist in bridging the gap between the higher education sector and the health industry
- ▶ Future funding models need to allow for adequate face to face teaching time, especially time for students to practice clinical skills
- ▶ Language, Literacy and Numeracy Support needs be considered, planned for and adequately resourced.
- ▶ Respond to the large unmet training need by exploring strategies and funding to continue to support health workers to access upskilling training
 - ▶ Ongoing work is required to continue to promote collaboration between university, VET sector and health industry including leveraging the clinical capacity (technical expertise & infrastructure) of UDRHs, clinical schools and regional universities