



## **Communique 6 August 2020**

### **Joint Councils of Allied Health Professions Education, Australia**

The inaugural national meeting of Chairs **Joint Councils of Allied Health Professions Education, Australia** was held on 6 August 2020 via national videoconference.

The meeting was convened by the Chair of the **Australian Council of Deans of Health Sciences**, Professor Esther May and was attended by:

- **Council of Deans of Nutrition and Dietetics Australia and New Zealand**, Professor Eleanor Beck
- **Australasian Council of Podiatry Deans**, Associate Professor Caroline Robinson
- **Council of Physiotherapy Deans Australia and New Zealand**, Professor Prue Morgan
- **Australasian Council of Paramedicine Deans**, Dr Paul Simpson
- **Australian and New Zealand Council of Occupational Therapy Educators**, Dr Rosalind Bye
- **Head of Departments and Schools of Psychology Association**, Associate Professor Renata Meuter
- **Council of Pharmacy Schools, Australia and New Zealand**, Professor Debra Rowett
- **Australian Council of Heads of Schools of Social Work**, Professor Beth Crisp
- **Council of Heads of Exercise, Sport and Movement Sciences**, Associate Professor Jeanette Thom
- **Heads of Departments Speech Pathology**, Associate Professor Bernice Mathisen

This forum presents a unique opportunity to collectively, lift the visibility of pre-professional education and research in allied health and highlight the essential contributions made to the health and well-being of the community by these professions. This is particularly important at a time when institutions are implementing fiscal constraints and rationalising course offerings.

Members acknowledged the current and evolving situation with the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on program delivery and clinical education. Specifically, the massive and rapid change to exclusive on-line teaching and the limits on clinical placements particularly for final year students who must consolidate the necessary skills and competencies to enable safe transition to credentialing.

Members also shared concerns about the proposed changes to Commonwealth funding of allied health and social sciences education noting the risks such policy will place on the future workforce pipeline.

This comes at the same time the impost on universities to deliver health courses while also remaining COVID compliant, adds significant financial burden. Expenses are added to course delivery, which are not factored into the Job Ready Graduate package costings. Members agreed that coming together as a multi-professional group provided opportunities to more effectively influence policy at the national level. This collaboration will promote capacity to anticipate and shape change in the health and higher education sectors.

The meeting concluded with a commitment to working in partnership, harnessing the collective strength of the membership to influence health higher education policy and provide advocacy for allied health students and research.

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