

43rd APS Annual Conference



Media Release

23 – 27 September 2008: Hotel Grand Chancellor, Hobart Tasmania

New association launched for Indigenous psychologists

A new association for Indigenous psychologists will be launched today at the Australian Psychological Society's (APS) 43rd annual conference in Hobart.

The new Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association (AIPA) aims to increase the number of Indigenous psychologists in Australia, as well as ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to high quality mental health services.

"Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians need psychologists who understand their cultural, social and spiritual needs," said Dennis McDermott, AIPA member, Koori psychologist and University of New South Wales conjoint senior lecturer.

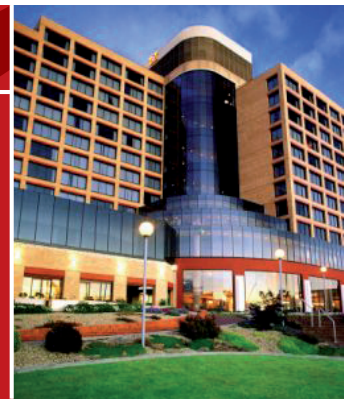
"Indigenous psychology takes a holistic approach. It looks at everything that's going on for the person and may bring in elders and extended family to help.

"There is a current shortage of Indigenous psychologists in Australia. AIPA and the APS want to ensure the psychology profession better reflects the proportion of the overall population that is Indigenous, which is 2.4 per cent. That means there ought to be almost 500 Indigenous psychologists.

"There are only 39 Indigenous psychologists in Australia that we know of, and 32 members of AIPA, so we have a fair way to go."

AIPA will offer leadership, training, professional development opportunities and networking events for registered Indigenous psychologists and university students.

<more>



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Please direct all media queries to:

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“To help increase the number of Indigenous psychologists, AIPA will provide greater access to scholarships, as well as support services and mentoring,” Mr McDermott said.

“AIPA will also offer education and training opportunities on psychological issues relevant to Indigenous Australians, to help bridge cultural divides.”

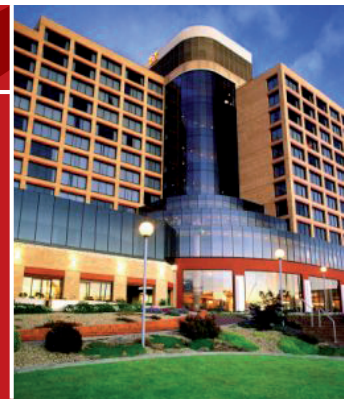
The concept for AIPA began in March 2008, when the APS hosted the first formal gathering of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander psychologists in Melbourne.

The APS will work closely with AIPA to help promote Indigenous mental health and well-being across urban, rural and remote communities.

For more information visit: www.psychology.org.au

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To coordinate an interview, please contact Elaine Grant on: 0412 683 068



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