




AUSTRALIAN
PHYSIOTHERAPY
COUNCIL

Annual Report
2021 - 2022



THE AUSTRALIAN PHYSIOTHERAPY COUNCIL ACKNOWLEDGES
THE WURUNDJERI PEOPLE OF THE KULIN NATION WHO ARE
THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF THE LAND WHERE OUR
WORKPLACE VILLAGE IS LOCATED AND WE PAY OUR RESPECT
TO ELDERS PAST, PRESENT AND EMERGING.



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CHAIR'S MESSAGE

It is my pleasure as Chair of the Australian Physiotherapy Council to provide this message as part of our 2021-2022 Annual Report.

Despite a volatile international setting, and the challenges of a global pandemic continuing throughout FY 21-22, the Council has continued to deliver high quality, timely and robust accreditation, and assessment services. We saw staff return to work in our Melbourne office, and our Board once again personally connected and collaborated on key issues and opportunities for the organisation and wider profession. Our accreditation panel recommenced site visits on university campuses. We also resumed face to face clinical assessments of overseas qualified physiotherapists in our Melbourne Simulation Labs.

During this financial year, we have seen several changes across our governance groups. We thank our outgoing Directors of the Board, Kathy Grudzinskas and Shane Patman for their many years of service to the Council, and for their longstanding contributions to the physiotherapy profession. We welcome Belinda Lange and Michael Reynolds as our new Board Directors.

The Council has honoured its commitment to reconciliation by appointing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives to our Accreditation and Assessment Committees, and all Accreditation Panels.

Along with other key organisations in the Australian physiotherapy profession, the Council has reaffirmed our commitment to Ahpra's 2020-2025 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Cultural Strategy. We will continue to contribute to cultural safety for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander physiotherapy patients, practitioners, and students, and reiterate our continued commitment to achieving health equity by 2031.

The Council's Accreditation and Assessment services have seen ongoing growth within the past financial year. We now accredit and monitor 48 physiotherapy programs in 25 universities across Australia, and have received Expressions of Interest from three

new universities that are developing physiotherapy education programmes.

The number of overseas qualified physiotherapists applying for registration in Australia remains strong. The FLWR assessment pathway continues to be popular with physiotherapists from the United Kingdom, while India and the Philippines field the highest number of candidates for the Standard Assessment Pathway. Skills assessments, undertaken for the Department of Home Affairs, have grown significantly since borders re-opened and in response to global demand for skilled worker migration.

However, the Australian physiotherapy workforce remains under considerable stress concerning recruitment and retention. To solve these workforce challenges, the Council is collaborating with the Council of Physiotherapy Deans of Australia and New Zealand (CPDANZ), the Australian Physiotherapy Association (APA) and the Physiotherapy Board of Australia, alongside other professional leaders, to explore future options that align with the Council's revised Strategic Plan for 2021-2023, and recognise our critical role in ensuring the quality of tomorrow's physiotherapy workforce.

I would like to personally thank the dedicated physiotherapists who continue to contribute to our Accreditation and Assessment Committees and Panels, write our examination questions and scenarios, and assess our overseas qualified physiotherapists. Thank you also to our Board Directors and Committee members, to our CEO and Executive Management team, and all our staff for a stellar year.

CEO'S MESSAGE

The last 12 months have seen organisations such as the Australian Physiotherapy Council manage the ups and downs of operating in an external environment significantly impacted by the ongoing effects of COVID-19. Although we have been tested, our ability to respond, innovate and collaborate with partners has enabled us to realize another successful year.

As a people-focused organisation, we have recognised the impact of disruption on our staff, our partners and our customers, many of whom are seeking to migrate from abroad and become registered physiotherapy practitioners serving in the Australian healthcare system.

With the growing demand for physiotherapy services in Australia, the Council has sought to ensure that our methods, processes, systems and customer service support the flow of new university physiotherapy graduates and overseas qualified physiotherapists who gain registration and ensure safe and ethical physiotherapists in a range of clinical settings.

We are pleased to share that our Accreditation now has an even greater focus on cultural safety and alignment with the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards, including collaborative practice and team-based care.

The Council's updated physiotherapy Accreditation Guide requires education providers to demonstrate how they are developing culturally safe physiotherapy graduates, and education providers are required to map the curriculum to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Curriculum Framework.

The inclusion of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples on every Australian Physiotherapy Council Accreditation Panel provides expert insights on the appropriateness and effectiveness of education providers' programs to demonstrate how they meet the Accreditation Standard's requirements. This has strengthened our ability to assess programs for cultural safety.

Our organisation strives to develop and deliver new and innovative models of service delivery, which has led to investment in the Remote Clinical Assessment Research project, conducted in partnership with researchers and university partners. This multi-year project has looked at the evidence and case for offering clinical assessment in a remote mode and will continue to investigate the long-term possibility of a fair, reliable, robust and sustainable model.

Our Technology, Corporate Services and Engagement departments provide enabling services that underpin the core activities of the Council. Along with the assistance of external service providers, the Council ensures that it grows its reputation as a leading organisation, acting with the utmost integrity and transparency and adopting best practices. The ongoing technology improvements will deliver secure, efficient and user-friendly systems.


We are grateful to the many partners, including the Council of Physiotherapy Deans of Australia and New Zealand (CPDANZ), the Australian Physiotherapy Association (APA) and the Physiotherapy Board of Australia, that we have collaborated with as we seek to address the workforce and physiotherapy profession challenges we collectively face.

The Council remains committed to upholding the standard of physiotherapy practice, through our work as the only accreditation and assessment authority for physiotherapy in Australia.

To view the Council's audited financial statement, visit the [ACNC website](#).

Anton Barnett-Harris





Ensuring Australia
has the safest, most
ethical physiotherapy
practitioners

THE COUNCIL'S ROLE

The Australian Physiotherapy Council is the only accreditation and assessment authority for physiotherapy in Australia.

On behalf of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) and the Physiotherapy Board of Australia, we provide accreditation services to Australian tertiary education providers who are educating entry-level physiotherapy students to become safe, ethical and competent physiotherapy practitioners.

The Council also supports the Australian physiotherapy workforce by assessing the qualifications, knowledge and skills of overseas-qualified physiotherapists for registration and migration purposes. Our assessment pathways are designed to enable overseas qualified physiotherapists to demonstrate that they meet the Australian Physiotherapy Practice Thresholds.



OUR PEOPLE & VALUES

Nimble and Brave

—
quick to change direction when it's needed

Innovative and Excellent

—
thinking differently to achieve the highest quality outcomes

People Obsessed

—
a compassionate and people focused organisation

Our Village

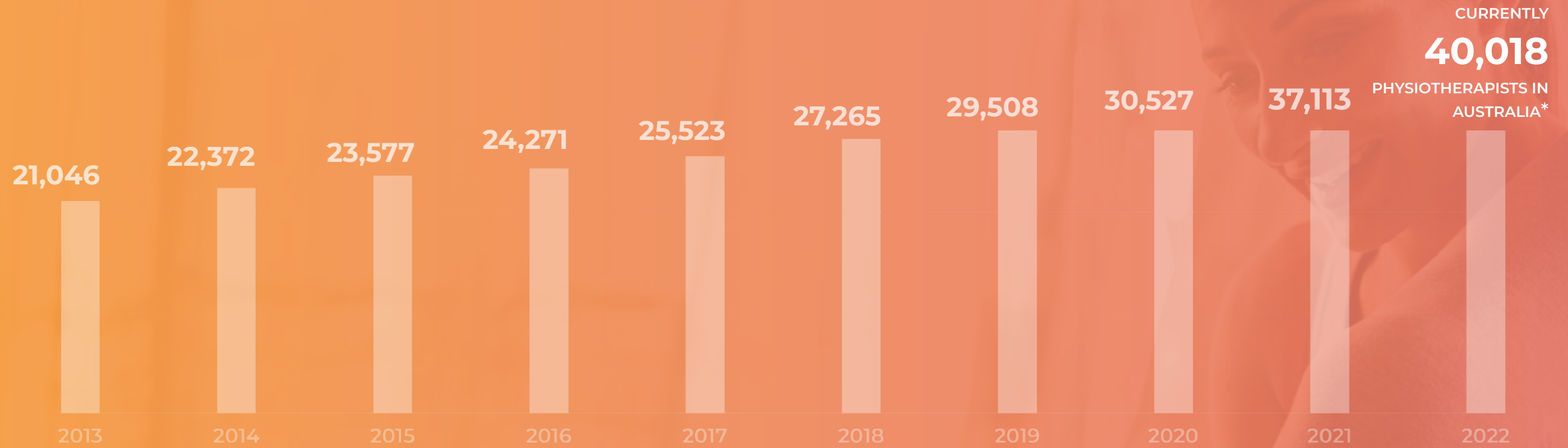
—
an empowering, fun and collaborative culture

The Council is a people focused organisation. This value underpins everything we do, how we work, and the way we serve our customers and stakeholders. Across our organisation, we are individuals from diverse countries, lived experiences and walks of life, united in our commitment to bring our talents, capabilities and expertise to the common purpose of 'ensuring tomorrow's physiotherapy workforce'.

Our People include the Board of Directors, Executive team, staff members, committee members, assessors, panel members, and actors.

The Council is strongly committed to creating and maintaining an environment that is welcoming, safe, equitable and socially inclusive of all peoples. We place value and dignity on every human life and welcome and respect all people regardless of gender, age, race, gender identity, health status, relationship status, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status and religion.

PHYSIOTHERAPY IN AUSTRALIA



CURRENTLY
40,018
PHYSIOTHERAPISTS IN AUSTRALIA*

* From Physiotherapy Board of Australia as at June 2022

THE COUNCIL

ACCREDITED AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES

48
PHYSIOTHERAPY PROGRAMS ACCREDITED ACROSS 25 UNIVERSITIES IN 21-22

3,066
PHYSIOTHERAPY ENROLLED FIRST YEAR STUDENTS IN 2022

2,155
PHYSIOTHERAPY GRADUATES IN 21-22

ASSESSED OVERSEAS PHYSIOTHERAPISTS

753
ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENTS IN 21-22

743
CULTURAL SAFETY TRAINING COMPLETIONS IN 21-22

638
WRITTEN ASSESSMENTS IN 21-22

443
CLINICAL ASSESSMENTS IN 21-22

ACCREDITATION

Accredited university physiotherapy programs: Our Accreditation team continued to manage the accreditation of 48 entry-level physiotherapy programs across 25 universities in Australia. The Council is proud to contribute to the high-quality Australian education provided to physiotherapy students, as they become practitioners who are knowledgeable, clinically competent, digitally savvy and culturally safe.

Overcame disruptions: The Council's Accreditation service provision to universities educating physiotherapy students continued despite ongoing disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Our experiences of adapting to the changing external environment over the last several years have led us to innovate and modify how accreditation services are delivered, including accreditation panel meetings and site visits, conducted both virtually and in person. This enabled all university programs to retain their accreditation status and continue educating the future workforce of Australian physiotherapists.

Committed to cultural safety: In demonstration of the Council's commitment to using accreditation as a lever to increase the physiotherapy profession's cultural awareness and safety, the Council updated the Accreditation Evidence Guide which strengthened the accreditation requirements for developing cultural safety in physiotherapy programs' curriculum.

The Council employed additional accreditation assessors who bring important Indigenous perspectives and insights to the accreditation of university entry level programs. Their appointment has increased the value that the Council offers to programs, providing advice and cultural perspectives to include in curriculum development and delivery and for universities seeking to create culturally safe learning environments for Indigenous physiotherapy students and staff.





ASSESSMENT

Delivered assessment of overseas qualified physiotherapists: The Assessment team continued to manage the high demand for assessments of overseas qualified physiotherapists (candidates). The Council offered several assessment pathways for candidates that catered for various qualifications, skills and experience.

We saw growth in the number of practitioners lodging assessment applications as they sought to join the Australian physiotherapy workforce, despite some disruption caused by the pandemic during the year.

The remote written assessment continued to provide overseas qualified physiotherapists located around the world the opportunity to undertake this assessment on their journey to joining the Australian physiotherapy workforce.

The Council's streamlined FLYR Pathway saw its highest number of successfully assessed candidates since its introduction, with over 70 overseas qualified physiotherapists receiving their final certificates by June 2022.

443 clinical assessments were conducted within the Council's Simulation Lab, allowing overseas qualified physiotherapists to demonstrate how their clinical competency met the Australian entry-level standards.

In total the Council issued 138 final certificates by the end of June 2022, enabling overseas qualified physiotherapists to apply for registration with Ahpra. This was lower than usual due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Invested in physiotherapy research: The Remote Clinical Assessment Research project commenced in October 2021. The multi-year research project involves partnering with researchers and university stakeholders to gather and investigate data that will help inform the feasibility of and potential future models to deliver assessment services. The Council strives to employ the best practices by building our assessment methods on the foundation of solid research and evidence.

YEAR IN REVIEW



Managed pandemic disruptions whilst delivering accreditation & assessment functions

Continued to invest in risk mitigation & cybersecurity measures

Strong financial management led to successful results

Effectively managed staffing levels to respond to customer growth



Refreshed the Council's 3 year Strategic Plan

Remote Clinical Assessment Research Project commenced

Produced premium quality videos to promote the Australian physiotherapy profession

Produced animation for overseas candidates

YEAR IN REVIEW



Established Reconciliation Working Group to progress our reconciliation journey

Welcomed new Accreditation Panel members to bring cultural perspectives to accreditation activities

Board of Directors, Accreditation and Assessment Committee each include Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander representation

Accreditation Evidence Guide refreshed to strengthen cultural safety and NNSQHS Standards



Strong engagement with the Health Professions Accreditation Collaborative (HPAC) Forum

Strategically engaged with key stakeholders & leaders to support the physiotherapy workforce

Facilitated Physiotherapy Think Tank with key leaders from the regulator, profession & education sectors

Hosted quarterly international webinars for the Physiotherapy Regulation & Accreditation (PRA) network

GOVERNANCE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



MELISSA LOCKE
Chair



LUCY CHIPCHASE



BELINDA LANGE



MICHEAL REYNOLDS



MARK ROUND



LUKE MEEVE



KURT LACKOVIC

COMMITTEES

Accreditation Committee

Professor Lucy Chipchase (Chair)
Mr Toni Andary
Professor Wayne Hing
Ms Danielle Manton
Associate Professor Nicole Freene
Dr Roma Forbes
Mr Curtley Nelson

Assessment Committee

Ms Kathryn Grudzinskas (Chair)
Associate Professor Belinda Lange
Ms Susan Edgar
Dr Penny Moss
Ms Elizabeth Paull
Associate Professor Beatrice Tucker
Ms Taryn Jones
Mr Francis Nona

Audit and Risk Committee

Dr Kurt Lackovic (Chair)
Mr Luke Meeve
Ms Kathryn Grudzinskas

Nominations and Remunerations Committee

Mr Mark Round (Chair)
Mr Luke Meeve
Associate Professor Michael Reynolds

STRATEGIC PLAN



MOVING FORWARD



“The Council delivered another successful year in 2021 – 2022, despite the challenges and opportunities the ever changing environment continued to present.

We have demonstrated our commitment and investment in building a resilient, adaptable, strong for-purpose organisation with a strong reputation and track record, which positions us to move confidently into the future.

The Council's focus remains fixed on our organisation's purpose – ensuring tomorrow's physiotherapy workforce.”

- Anton Barnett-Harris



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