

#### Acknowledgements

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### Guide on using this document

Throughout the booklet there are a number of symbols that can be utilised when viewing this on your computer, phone or tablet.



If you open your phone or tablets camera application and point it at the QR codes throughout the booklet, it will redirect you to the standalone versions of the document on our website.







If you see these symbols throughout the document, clicking on them will redirect you to examples relating to the subjects.

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## Introduction

The National Framework for Determining Scope of Practice for the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Worker and Health Practitioner Workforce (the Framework) is designed to help identify and document the scope of practice of an individual Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Worker or individual Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioner.<sup>a</sup>

The Framework recognises what an A&TSI Health Worker/ Health Practitioner does can vary depending on the job and situation they work in. The Framework is designed to help health professionals and their employers to work through these issues and develop and define their own individual scopes of practice.

One of the key strengths of A&TSI Health Workers/Health Practitioners is their expertise in linking people with the care they need based on a deep knowledge of what's available and what and how things work where they are. This document is a guide. It does not define exactly what each A&TSI Health Worker/Health Practitioner can do. The range of health care provided by this workforce, as members of teams and independently, is very broad. It is also developing. The main idea of this document is to enable A&TSI Health Workers/ Health Practitioners to use their full range of skills so that they, their colleagues and the people they care for are safe.

The Framework commenced as a building block from the recommendations of the 'Growing Our Future': Final Report of the A&TSI Health Worker Project December 2011<sup>1</sup>, and is the result of contributions from a range of stakeholders across the country. Refer to the inside cover for acknowledgement of some of those involved in the development of this document.

#### Overview of the workforce

The A&TSI Health Worker/Health Practitioner workforce evolved from a need to provide culturally safe clinical and primary health care services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people whose health needs were not being met by mainstream services. A&TSI Health Workers/Health Practitioners are able to respond to local health needs and contexts and to perform a variety of different tasks depending on the services needed.<sup>2</sup>

There is a wide variation in roles an A&TSI Health Worker and Health Practitioner has, this can be dependent on:

- > Job Role and requirements
- > What electives were completed
- > during and after training.
- > Where they work
- > Legislation guidelines.

The A&TSI Health Practitioner role is regulated under the National Registration and Accreditation scheme (The National Scheme). The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia (ATSIHPBA) has been operational since 2012. Before 2012, the Aboriginal Health Practitioner role was only regulated in Northern Territory.

The purpose of regulation is to protect the public through setting standards that must be met in order for someone to become and remain registered.

ATSIHBA's role is to make sure everyone is working safely in whatever their job is (their scope of practice), and not in telling the employer what sort of job it needs to be.

Health ministers agreed that **National Registration** was required to protect the public by ensuring that only health practitioners who are suitably trained and qualified to practice are registered. Refer to point 3 *Authorised – Regulation, legislation & policy* under the *Scope of Practice Key Elements* in Section 1 of this document for more details.







a N.B. For the purpose of this document, both Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Worker and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioner will be referred to herein as A&TSI Health Worker/Health Practitioner. The Health Practitioner National Law (the National Law), as in force in each state and territory, protects the use of particular titles, rather than defining what a person can do in their job. Only those people who are registered with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioner, 'Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioner' or 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioner'.



#### What is a Scope of Practice?

Scope of Practice can be referred in two ways:



#### 1. A Professions Scope of Practice

This covers the **full range** of roles, functions, responsibilities, activities and decision making capacities that make up the profession.



#### 2. An Individuals Scope of Practice

**Individuals** working in these roles are educated, competent and authorised to perform as part of that profession regardless whether they are registered with ATSIHPBA or not.3

Some functions within the scope of practice of any profession may be shared with other professions or other individuals or groups. The scope of practice of all health professionals is influenced by the wider environment, the specific setting, legislation, policy and educational attainment. The scope of practice is also influenced by whether the health professional works as part of a team, how the team works, standards and the health needs of the population. Scopes of practice change with developments in health care and practise and the changing situations health professionals face in providing care.



The framework is designed to be used as a guide to develop a Scope of Practice for the A&TSI Health Workers and Health Practitioners.

#### SECTION 1

Describes the key elements of a Scope of Practice.

#### SECTION 2

Provides a step by step guide for health services, managers, and individuals to work together to develop and/or review the A&TSI Health Worker's/ Health Practitioners Individual Scope of Practice. A template has been provide in Appendix 1.





**SECTION 1** 

# **National Scope of Practice Framework**

In this rapidly evolving health care environment A&TSI Health Workers/Health Practitioners are continually incorporating new knowledge and skills into their practice and therefore scope of practice cannot be defined as a simple list of tasks or procedures.4

What A&TSI Health Workers/Health Practitioners are able to do and what patients need from them will change. The Framework (see Figure 1) is designed to be flexible, so it can remain helpful when circumstances change. By providing a broad, principle-based definition, it allows individual A&TSI Health Workers/Health Practitioners in any setting to reflect on their current scope of practice by comparing it to the definition below.

The scope of practice of an A&TSI Health Worker/ Health Practitioner is that which the person is educated, authorised and competent to perform. In accordance with this definition, an A&TSI Health Worker's/Health Practitioner's scope of practice is influenced by:

- > Education and Oualifications
- > Regulatory Environment
- > Health Service Setting
- > Knowledge and Skills
- > Level of Work Experience
- > Job Requirements
- > Supervision and Support
- > Area of Work
- > Registration with ATSIHPBA4

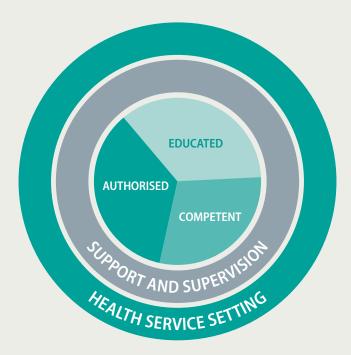
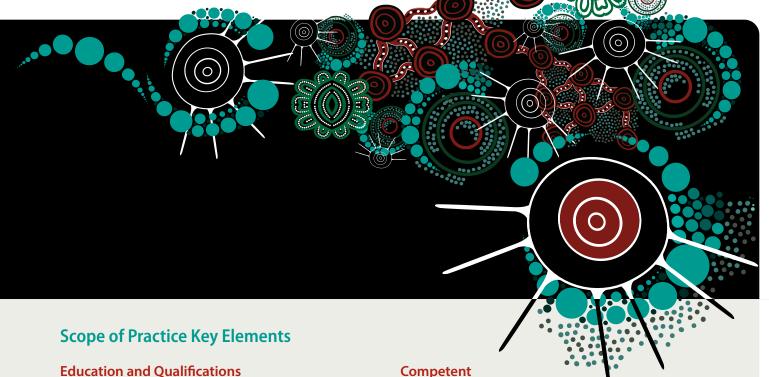


Figure 1. National Scope of Practice Framework for the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Worker and Health Practitioner Workforce



A&TSI Health Workers/Health Practitioners have a wide variety of qualifications – ranging from Certificate II level though to Advance Diploma qualifications. A&TSI

**EDUCATED** 

Health Workers/Health Practitioners are also likely to have completed numerous other accredited training programs and endorsements. Training and qualification requirements for A&TSI Health Workers vary among jurisdictions and employers, however the minimum qualification is recognised to be the Certificate II in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care. Qualifications may be obtained as part of a traineeship or apprenticeship, and commonly require a combination of workplace training and training through a Registered Training Organisation (RTO).

The Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care qualification contains a common set of units, skills and competencies) at the Certificate II and Certificate III levels, and then branches into two separate streams; the Primary Health Care and Primary Health Care Practice at the Certificate IV and Diploma levels. RTO's offer differing electives and therefore the electives that A&TSI Health Workers/Health Practitioners have completed as part of their Primary Health Care qualification will vary widely.

To register as an A&TSI Health Practitioner, the person has to have gained a qualification from an ATSIHPBA approved program of study or other ATSIHPBA approved qualification. To be approved by ATSIHPBA, education providers and the programs they offer must be accredited by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Accreditation Committee. ATSIHPBA approved programs of study are published on the ATSIHPBA website.

An A&TSI Health Worker's/Health Practitioner's scope of practice will also be COMPETENT influenced by their knowledge, skills and work experience. The health service will need to make an assessment of these, in addition to examining the person's qualifications. As with any health professional, recency of practice and continuing professional development (CPD) are considered in the assessment of A&TSI Health Worker/Health Practitioner competency.

To ensure that A&TSI Health Workers/Health Practitioners are able to practice competently and safely, they must have recent practice in their chosen scope and work place of practice. The specific requirements for recency of practice depend on the type of work, work setting, the level of experience of the A&TSI Health Workers/Health Practitioners and, if applicable, the length of absence from the chosen scope and practice. Organisations should have policies and procedures in place to ensure competencies are maintained.

CPD is how all health professionals maintain, improve and broaden their knowledge, expertise and competence, and develop the personal and professional qualities required throughout their professional lives. A&TSI Health Practitioners, are required to participate regularly in CPD that is relevant to their scope of practice. This is in order to maintain, develop, update and enhance their knowledge, skills and performance and to deliver appropriate and safe care. A&TSI Health Workers are not required by law to undertake CPD, but may be required to by their employer. It is important to undertake CPD to maintain and develop skills and safe practice. Also, A&TSI Health Workers/Health Practitioners should document their supervision and CPD plans, to reflect their scope of practice. Employers and others may have templates to assist with this.

### Scope of Practice Key Elements (continued)

#### **Authorised**

Scope of practice is also influenced by National,
State and local legislation, regulations,
standards, policies, frameworks, guidelines, and
protocols. All health professionals, including
A&TSI Health Workers and Health Practitioners,
have regulatory mechanisms which aim to
support them to protect the public. Generally these include
regulatory requirements on employers, having identified
position descriptions and supervision requirements.

#### **Relevance of National Registration**

For A&TSI Health Practitioners, these also include nationally determined statutory responsibilities such as a code of conduct, formal complaints arrangements and CPD requirements. In addition to these regulations, A&TSI Health Practitioners are registered with ATSIHPBA, which is responsible for setting the standards to be considered when determining scope of practice for a position or an individual in this group.

### Medication administration for A&TSI Health Practitioners relevant legislation

Although medication administration is a core unit in the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care qualification, each State and Territory has its own legislation in regards to handling, possession and administration of medications which relate to the entire health workforce. It is essential to refer to your local jurisdiction's legislation and policy when determining scope of practice in order to determine if an activity (particularly a clinical activity) is lawful.

#### Code of Conduct

For A&TSI Health Workers, their scope of practice will also be guided by relevant codes of conduct. In early 2015, all Australian state and territory government health ministers agreed to a National Code of Conduct for healthcare workers (National Code). State and territory governments are responsible for establishing the National Code in their jurisdictions. The purpose of the National Code is to protect the public by setting minimum standards of conduct and practice for all unregistered health care workers. This code of conduct applies to the provision of health services by health care workers who are not required to be registered under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law.

This includes A&TSI Health Workers who are not A&TSI Health Practitioners. More information on the National Code can be found on their website.



b This National Code, will apply to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Workers in states and territories in which it was established. However, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners will continue to be covered by the ATSIHPBA Code of Conduct.



#### **Support and Supervision**

The type of activities that a A&TSI Health Worker/Health Practitioner can undertake depends on the type of supervision and support available. It is therefore important to ask when developing scopes of practice:

- > What type and level of supervision is required to fulfil the role?
- > Is this support and supervision available?

There are various forms of supervision including operational and clinical supervision. There are also a range of supports that a A&TSI Health Worker/Health Practitioner may be able to access including professional support, mentoring support and cultural support.<sup>5</sup> As mentioned in Section 2, supervision, support and development needs should be included when documenting your individual scope of practice. Describing your plans for supervision within your scope of practice can assist to ensure the plans are agreed to and followed through. This plan can help provide increased feelings of support and ensure the development of skills.

#### **Health Service Setting**

In addition to understanding the A&TSI Health Worker's/ Health Practitioner's education, authorisations and competency, there are a range of other factors that influence a scope of practice. Most importantly, the scope of practice will be influenced by the needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local communities, including considering social and cultural determinants, and the needs of the health service. Other considerations that flow from these needs include the skill mix of the team, the models of care, and the job requirements. All these factors will influence the scope of practice for an A&TSI Health Worker/Health Practitioner.



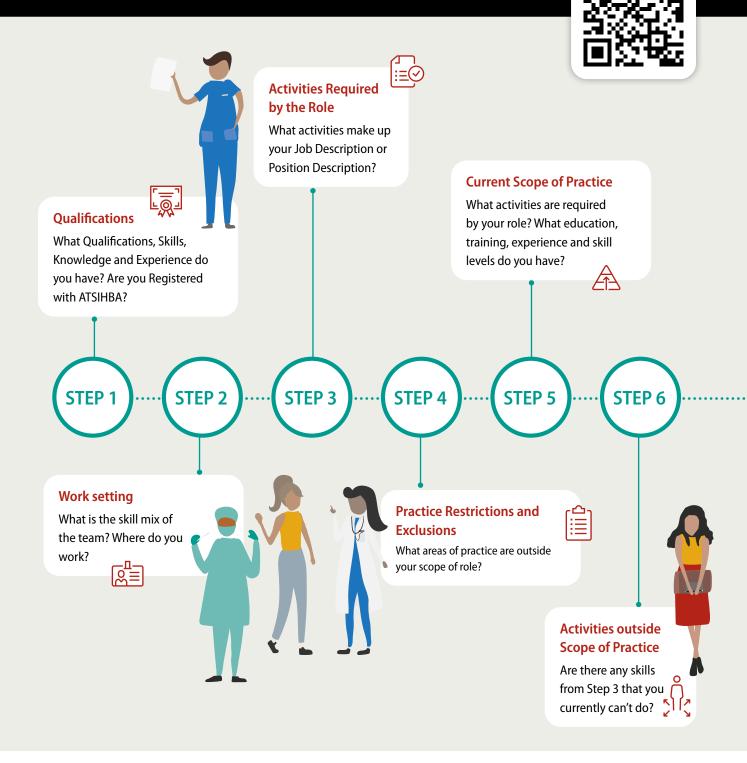


c Operational supervision refers to day-to-day managerial supervision of an A&TSI Health Worker/Health Practitioner to assist them in their performance of their duties and in meeting the policy and legislative requirements for employment (e.g. performance development, orientation, rostering, mandatory training). Clinical supervision is for an A&TSI Health (e.g. performance development) and the policy and legislative requirements for employment (e.g. performance development). The policy and legislative requirements for employment (e.g. performance development) and the policy and legislative requirements for employment (e.g. performance development). The policy and legislative requirements for employment (e.g. performance development) and legislative requirements for employment (e.g. performance development). The policy and legislative requirements for employment (e.g. performance development) and legislative requirements for employments (e.g. performance development). The policy is the policy of the policy ofWorker/Health Practitioner who works in a clinical role and aims to ensure client safety. It is often provided by a Registered Nurse, Medical Practitioner, Oral health professional or senior A&TSI Health Pracitioner

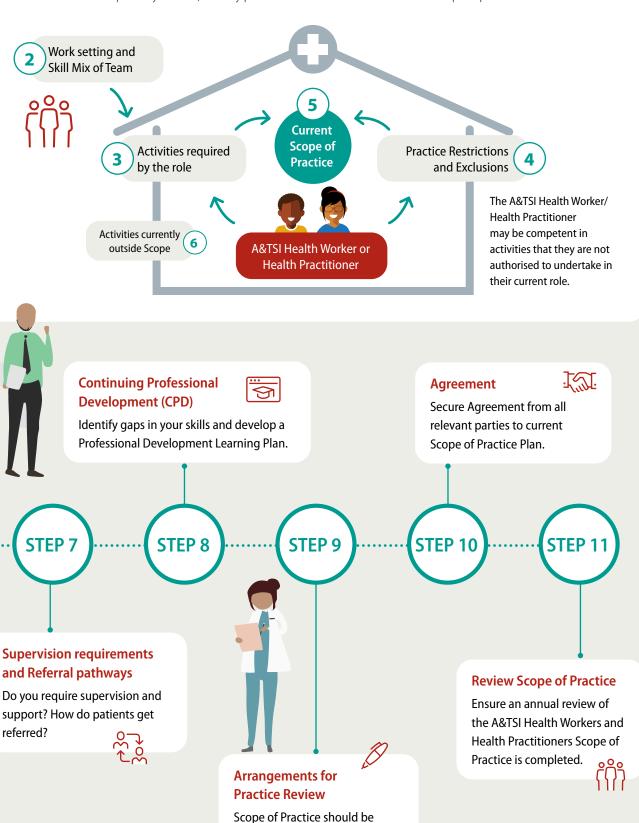
**SECTION 2** 

# **Guide for Determining Scope of Practice**

The following section is a step-by-step guide for determining an individual A&TSI Health Worker's and Health Practitioner's current scope of practice.<sup>6</sup> It is recommended that this process be undertaken jointly by the A&TSI Health Worker/Health Practitioner and their operational and clinical supervisors.



This figure shows how the current competencies of the A&TSI Health Worker/Health Practitioner overlap with the work context, the activities required by the role, and any practice restrictions to form the current scope of practice of the individual.



reviewed using the Tool for Determining Scope of Practice.

# Step-by-Step Guide for Determining **Individual Scope of Practice**



Personal qualifications, registration, skills, knowledge and experience



AIM: To document individual Health Worker's & Health Practitioner's qualifications (education), experience (competencies) and authorisations.

- > List the A&TSI Health Worker's/Health Practitioner's qualifications and previous roles.
- > Are they registered with ATSIHPBA?
- > Are there any endorsements, notations, conditions or undertakings related to this registration? You can check an individual Health Practitioner's registration status here: www. atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au
- > Summarise the A&TSI Health Worker's/ Health Practitioner's current skills, knowledge and experience.



#### Work setting and skill mix of the team



AIM: To describe the context of practice and identify the existing skill mix of the team.

- > Describe the setting or service in which the A&TSI Health Worker/Health Practitioner works. Is it a remote health clinic, a hospital, a mental health outreach service, or an urban primary health care service?
- > Consider the skill mix of the team including the mix of qualifications. The role relationship of A&TSI Health Workers/Health Practitioners within the health care team will vary according to the context and the various skills and experience of other team members and some functions within the scope of practice of any profession may be shared with other professions or other individuals or groups.
- > How does the skill mix of the team complement or overlap with the individual's skills and education?







#### Activities required by the role



AIM: To describe the context of practice and identify the existing skill mix of the team.

- > Look at the Position Description or Job Description and develop a list of activities that reflect the work setting, and service and community needs.7
- > Assess whether the A&TSI Health Worker/Health Practitioner is trained, competent, ready, and appropriately supervised/ supported to perform the listed activities.
- > Consider how the individual's experience, education and abilities match the Position Description.
- > Highlight the activities that are in line with the individual's experience, education and abilities.
- > Refer to the list of activities developed in this Step 3 as you go through the remaining steps.



#### Practice restrictions and exclusion



AIM: To identify areas of practice that are outside the scope of the role.

- > Define any activities that are outside the scope of the role and should not be performed because these activities are not allowed (or provided for) under law or workplace policy; or because there is currently no appropriate supervision for the activity available in the workplace.
- > This may include activities that are within the practice scope for individuals in similar roles.
- > This may include activities that the A&TSI Health Worker or Health Practitioner is competent to undertake and may have performed in previous roles.



#### **Current scope of practice**



#### AIM: To have a scope of practice that:

- Allows the individual to work to the extent of their education, training, experience and skill levels;
- > Supports the individual to gain experience and skills; but
- > Does not allow the individual to practice beyond the limits of what is supported by their education, training, experience, skill levels and available supervision.
- > Transcribe the activities that were highlighted in Step 3 to this section. These are the activities that can be undertaken by the individual in this particular role and represent their current scope of practice. This list does not need to be exhaustive, but should be indicative of the types of activities that the individual may perform in the role.
- > Asterisk the activities that require supervision and/or consultation. These include activities for which the A&TSI Health Worker/ Health Practitioner will require supervision only under certain circumstances (e.g. work setting, type of patient/client).



#### Activities currently outside the **Scope of Practice**



AIM: To identify gaps between what the individual is expected to do and what their education, knowledge, skills and experience make it safe for them to do.

- > From the list in Step 3, transcribe the activities that are NOT highlighted. These are activities that are expected of the individual because of their job role, but are currently outside the scope of practice for the individual because they do not yet have the education, knowledge, skills and experience or appropriate supervision to perform them safely. Addressing this gap should be the focus of the CPD
- Now that the scope of practice has been defined, the remaining steps will focus on defining a framework around supervision and development.



#### Supervision requirements and referral pathways



AIM: To identify the supervision and support that the individual A&TSI Health Worker/Health Practitioner needs to do their job, and define the processes for referring patients/clients.

- > List the activities that were marked with an asterisk in Step 5 – these are the activities that require supervision.
- > Identify the type of supervision required and how that may vary (that is, direct, indirect, remote).
- > Identify the circumstances under which supervision is required, if this applies.
- > Identify who may provide supervision and how it will be structured.
- > These requirements may vary across different types of activities. The work setting may be unable to provide appropriate supervision for some activities, and these should be listed in Step 4 (Practice restrictions and exclusions).5
- > The A&TSI Health Worker/Health Practitioner and their supervisor should discuss and agree upon an appropriate referral process and referral parameters, considering the scope of practice of the individual and the particular (clinical) setting.
- > The A&TSI Health Worker/Health Practitioner and their supervisor should identify the process for practice referrals, and the conditions under which these would apply.
- > The A&TSI Health Worker/Health Practitioner and their supervisor should identify the processes for escalating patient care, and the conditions under which these would apply.





#### **Continuing professional** development (CPD)



AIM: To support the individual to maintain and potentially expand their scope of practice in order to provide safe and competent care.

Develop a CPD plan for the next 6-12 months that will fulfil the following requirements:

- > Ensure the A&TSI Health Worker/Health Practitioner can maintain their current scope of practice.
- > Identify any educational and/or experience/skills requirements the individual needs to meet in order to work at full scope of practice (if limitations apply).
- > Prepare the individual to perform the required activities that are outside their current scope of practice.
- Discuss and address the A&TSI Health Worker's/ Health Practitioner's career aspirations, and whether there are any CPD opportunities that may assist in achieving these aspirations.
- > Ensure that requirements for registration are met (if applicable).

An A&TSI Health Practitioner is required to undertake CPD as a condition of national registration. It is important that the A&TSI Health Practitioner discusses these requirements with their supervisor to ensure they meet ATSIHPBA requirements.



#### Arrangements for practice review



AIM: An A&TSI Health Worker's/Health Practitioner's individual scope of practice should be reviewed annually using the Tool for Determining Scope of Practice for an A&TSI Health Worker/Health Practitioner.

As the A&TSI Health Worker/Health Practitioner gains more experience and their CPD plan is implemented, their individual scope of practice will likely change and should be reviewed to:

- > Add activities or levels of responsibility as they become competent.
- > Ensure continuing competence to undertake activities.
- > Incorporate any changes to the required activities of the job role, work/legislative context, or available supervisors.
- > Update and communicate the CPD plan.
- > Agree on a supervision structure (e.g. fortnightly meetings, including expected duration and location of the meetings).

Consult the A&TSI Health Worker's /Health Practitioner's line manager in the development of this document, and ensure the final plan is endorsed.



#### **Agreement**



AIM: To secure agreement of all relevant parties to the current Scope of Practice plan.

> Ensure the A&TSI Health Worker/Health Practitioner, their supervisor and their line manager (or other relevant parties) have agreed (including agreement to the supervision and CPD plans) and have signed the document.



#### **Review Scope of Practice**

AIM: To ensure annual review of the A&TSI Health Worker's/Health Practitioner's scope of practice.

- > Set a date for review of the scope of practice.
- > Ensure the A&TSI Health Worker/Health Practitioner has a copy of the completed document.
- > Communicate this new scope of practice and plan to relevant health care team members.

#### **APPENDIX 1**

# **Tool for Determining Scope of** Practice for an Aboriginal and/or **Torres Strait Islander Health Worker/ Health Practitioner**



Personal qualifications, registration, skills, knowledge and experience



#### Personal details

Record the details of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (A&TSI) Health Worker/Health Practitioner for whom this scope of practice is written.

Name:

**Position** 

#### Qualifications

List nationally recognised qualifications and other accredited training programs and endorsements (include year completed).

#### **Previous roles**

Provide details on current and previous roles and the corresponding states/territories worked in over the last five years.

#### Registration

Details of registration with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia (ATSIHPBA).
\*ATSIHPBA is supported by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme see www.ahpra.gov.au

Registered with ATSIHPBA? Yes No

Endorsements:

Notations:

Conditions:

Summary of current skills/knowledge/ experience:





#### Work setting and skill mix of the team

Describe the work setting (e.g. remote clinic; urban primary health service; hospital). List the team members (including supervisors), their qualifications and current skills. Some functions within the scope of practice of any profession may be shared with other individuals. Discuss this skill mix and any overlap.

#### Work setting and skill mix of the team

Describe the work setting (e.g. remote clinic; urban primary health service; hospital). List the team members (including supervisors), their qualifications and current skills. Some functions within the scope of practice of any profession may be shared with other individuals. Discuss this skill mix and any overlap.





#### Activities required by the role

Starting with the position description (PD), develop a list of activities that reflect the needs of the health service and community. Highlight which of these activities are in line with the individual's experience, education and abilities.





#### **Practice Restrictions and Exclusions**

The A&TSI Health Worker/Health Practitioner and their supervisor should discuss and determine any particular activities which are outside the scope of the job role and which should not be performed, including due to legislation, workplace policy and/or a lack of appropriate supervision. These may include activities that the A&TSI Health Worker/Health Practitioner has performed in previous roles.





#### Current scope of practice

The A&TSI Health Worker/Health Practitioner and their supervisor should discuss and determine the individual's current scope of practice in the role, based on the activities <u>highlighted</u> in **Step 3**. Use the space below to define the A&TSI Health Worker's/Health Practitioner's current scope of practice. This is not intended to be a complete list of activities or responsibilities, but should be indicative of the types of activities that the A&TSI Health Worker/Health Practitioner may perform in the role. Mark with an asterisk (\*) the activities that require supervision.



#### **Activities currently outside the Scope of Practice**



#### Required activities currently outside scope

From the list of activities that the individual is expected to do (Step 3) copy below the activities the A&TSI Health Worker/Health Practitioner does not yet have the training, experience and/or skills to undertake. These are the activities that are not highlighted.



#### Supervision requirements and referral pathways



#### Supervision requirements and referral pathways

In consideration of the work setting and skill mix of the team (Step 2), any restrictions to supervision identified (Step 4) and the A&TSI Health Worker's/Health Practitioner's current scope of practice (**Step 5**):

- > determine their supervision requirements, including whether this should be direct, indirect or remote supervision; who can provide supervision, under what circumstances and how it will be structured – noting that these requirements may vary across different types of activities
- > list any activities in **Step 4** for which the service is unable to provide appropriate supervision
- > determine the process for referring and escalating patient/client care, and the conditions under which these processes would apply.



### **Continuing professional development (CPD)**

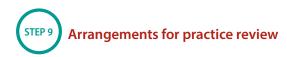


#### Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Develop a plan for professional development for the next 6–12 months. The plan should:

- > help the A&TSI Health Worker/Health Practitioner maintain their current scope of practice
- > identify any educational and/or experience/skills requirements the individual needs to meet in order to work at full scope of practice (if limitations apply)
- > address the A&TSI Health Worker's/Health Practitioner's career aspirations
- > ensure that requirements for registration are met (if applicable).

If the organisation uses a CPD template, complete it and attach to this document instead.





#### Arrangements for practice review

Using the supervision and support needs described in **Step 7**, agree on a supervision structure (e.g. fortnightly meetings etc. including expected duration and location of the meetings).



1/2

A&TSI Health Worker/Health Practitioner name:

Signed:	Date:
Supervisor name:	
Signed:	Date:
Line Manager name:	
Signed:	Date:



Date:

A&TSI Health Worker/Health Practitioner given copy of this document

**Next review of Scope of Practice due** 

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