



OCANZ commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Māori peoples' health and wellbeing

Acknowledgment of First Nations peoples

The Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand (OCANZ) respectfully acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia and Māori peoples of Aotearoa/New Zealand as the First peoples in each land mass and the proud custodians of the longest surviving cultures on our planet. We pay our respects to these traditional owners and honour their unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich and ongoing contribution to society.

Recognition of the Impact of Colonisation

OCANZ acknowledges the ongoing injustices caused by colonisation in both Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand and the trauma experienced by First Nations peoples as a result of past laws, government policies, actions and attitudes. We acknowledge the ongoing effects of racism and discrimination on the lives of First Nations peoples, many of whom continue to be impacted and disadvantaged from the effects of their displacement from families, their land and traditional culture. OCANZ is committed to working with and supporting First Nations peoples to ensure that such injustices are redressed. OCANZ also acknowledges the cultural determinants of health and supports strengthening First Nations connections to culture and country to build stronger individual and collective identities, a sense of self-esteem, resilience, and improved outcomes across the other determinants of health and wellbeing.

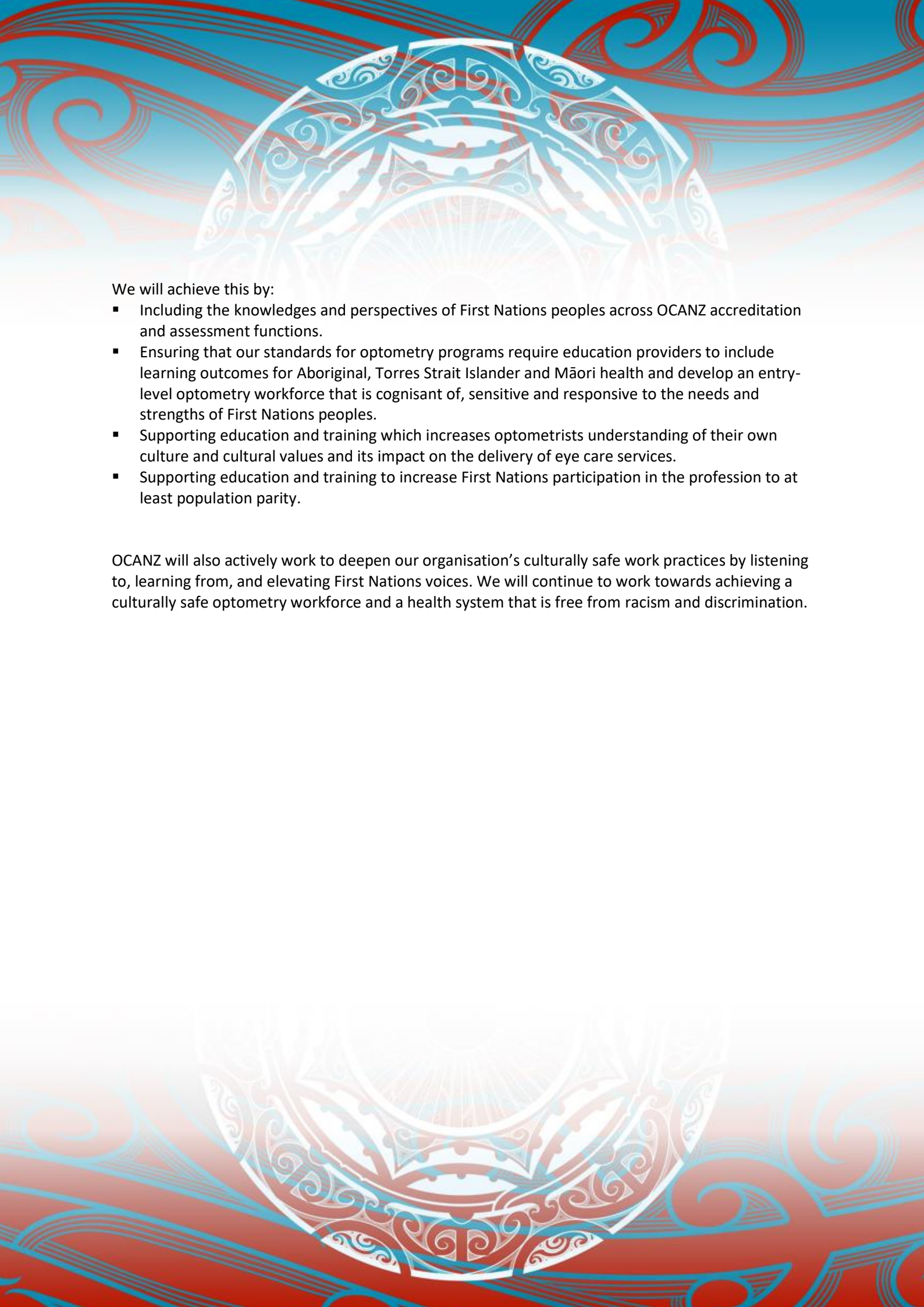
Partnering to Understand Culture

OCANZ supports learning about Indigenous culture and valuing and celebrating it in our mainstream society. OCANZ encourages reflective practice for health practitioners to include understanding of their own culture and worldview. We recognise that Indigenous culture includes unique connections to land, family, law, ceremony, language and knowledges. We recognise that increasing our understanding of cultural values in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Māori peoples will contribute to improving First Nations peoples' health and well-being and help health practitioners to provide safer, culturally responsive health care.

OCANZ Statement of Commitment

OCANZ purpose is to promote and protect the eye health of the public in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand by setting standards which assure the quality of optometric education, training and assessment. OCANZ is committed to working alongside First Nations peoples in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand to improve their eye health outcomes. A key component of our work contributes to making optometry services free of racism and inequity.

We support equitable access and outcomes to eye care services for Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Māori peoples, without stigma, racism and fear, and the right to equitable outcomes from care. Our aim is to ensure that optometrists entering the workforce (from university and overseas) are equipped with the knowledge and skills to provide culturally safe care. We further support the equitable representation of First Nations peoples in the profession through equitable access / admissions to culturally safe learning, training and employment.



We will achieve this by:

- Including the knowledges and perspectives of First Nations peoples across OCANZ accreditation and assessment functions.
- Ensuring that our standards for optometry programs require education providers to include learning outcomes for Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Māori health and develop an entry-level optometry workforce that is cognisant of, sensitive and responsive to the needs and strengths of First Nations peoples.
- Supporting education and training which increases optometrists understanding of their own culture and cultural values and its impact on the delivery of eye care services.
- Supporting education and training to increase First Nations participation in the profession to at least population parity.

OCANZ will also actively work to deepen our organisation's culturally safe work practices by listening to, learning from, and elevating First Nations voices. We will continue to work towards achieving a culturally safe optometry workforce and a health system that is free from racism and discrimination.