

MEDIA RELEASE

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Author cultural identity matters in rural health research

The Australian Journal of Rural Health has announced an initiative to explore the introduction of 'author cultural identity' in relevant research papers published in the Journal.

Indigenous researchers and Journal Associate Editors Dr Mark Lock (Ngiyampaa) and Associate Professor Faye McMillan (Wiradjuri) will lead the initiative for the National Rural Health Alliance.

Journal Editor-in-Chief Russell Roberts says, "The concept of introducing cultural identity as a component of an author's credentials could be a meaningful action to acknowledge and respect Indigenous authors involved in rural health research and manuscripts".

"This arises from the challenge of understanding the cultural provenance of papers, beyond the identifiers of name, qualifications, university affiliation, funding sources and author contribution," Professor Roberts said.

Dr Lock says the initiative heralds the beginning of a collaborative process and he's proud to signal this action during Reconciliation Week – *More than a word. Reconciliation takes action.*

"We will engage with Indigenous authors, organisations and networks within Australia, and seek opinions globally through the Journal's International Advisory Board, including from North America and Aotearoa/New Zealand," Dr Lock said.

Associate Professor McMillan, who is also a Deputy National Rural Health Commissioner, says, "We believe it's really important that the initiative is developed in collaboration with Indigenous researchers dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of rural and remote community members".

Professor Donald Warne, a member of the Journal's International Advisory Committee and an Oglala Lakota man from South Dakota says, "It is vital that Indigenous researchers are recognised and duly acknowledged, and that the research being published is culturally appropriate".

Alliance Chief Executive Officer Gabrielle O'Kane says the Journal is respected internationally for its Indigenous rural health research and wants to show leadership in strengthening the governance around the cultural identity of academics in Australia.

"This is particularly relevant to the cultural background and authenticity of authors writing about Indigenous people of Australia and Torres Strait. It would also provide the journal editors, reviewers and readers with a sign of the ethics and quality of the research," Ms O'Kane said.

Ends.

Dr Mark Lock is available for comment on 0416 871 616.

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